



IAS 100

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MODERN INDIA



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EVOLUTION OF BRITISH PARAMOUNTCY OVER PRINCELY STATES

GENERAL SURVEY

By 1855-56, the British Empire in India was firmly established. Major portions of the country were under direct British rule. In other areas, Indian rulers were completely dependent on the British. In short, the British had emerged as the paramount power in India. This British paramountcy was established essentially by two methods: (a) by outright annexation through wars, and (b) by bringing the Indian states within the Subsidiary System which often led to their annexation on one pretext or the other. Mysore and Sindh are the best examples of outright annexation through wars. But it was the latter method which was frequently used by the British for establishing their paramountcy.

Under the 'system of Subsidiary Alliance', as evolved by Lord Wellesley, the Indian rulers paid for the maintenance of British troops while the British were in no way responsible for the administration, including maintenance of law and order, within the protected state. The increased expenditure on account of the maintenance of British troops was met by the Indian rulers by levying heavy taxes on the peasants. Assured by a sense of security, the rulers became indifferent to the problems of the people which led to financial crises and breakdown of law and order. Whenever this happened in a state, the British were quick to use it as an excuse for annexing the state. Thus the Subsidiary System created conditions for subsequent annexations.

The British also found other excuses for annexation. One such excuse was the application of the Doctrine of Lapse which was more frequently resorted to by Lord Dalhousie, though some others had done it before him. According to this doctrine, if an Indian king died without his own son to succeed him, his state was to be annexed by the British. The Indian tradition provided that if a king had no son, he could adopt his or his wife's near relation as his

son who became his successor. During Dalhousie's period, it so happened that many rulers of dependent Indian states died without leaving a male heir to the throne. Dalhousie annexed Satara (1848), Jaitpur and Sambalpur (1849), Bhagat (1850), Udaipur (1852), Nagpur (1853), and Jhansi (1854). Besides, the adopted son of the Peshwa Nana Sahib was refused the pension which the Peshwa had been receiving. Similarly, after the death of the Nawab of the Carnatic, his relative was denied the pension. The growing fears of the Indian rulers were further aggravated by the deposition of Wajid Ali Shah, the last Nawab of Avadh, and its annexation on the charge of mismanagement.

What was the essence of the British paramountcy?

The rapid strides with which British paramountcy had progressed in India since 1757 invariably affected the destiny of the Indian states that had arisen on the ruins of the Mughal Empire. Their relation with the British varied according to changing political conditions and personal views and ambitions of the different Governor-Generals. Yet the conviction which developed in the late 18th century and continued up to the early 20th century that the governance of the whole of India directly or indirectly by the British was part of a preordained system which had a considerable influence in shaping British policy towards the Indian states. We can examine this evolution of British paramountcy over princely states in three broad phases. During the first phase, lasting from 1757 to 1813, the British followed the policy of Ring Fence. In the second phase, covering the period from 1813 to 1858, its policy was known as the policy of Subordinate Isolation. The third phase, extending from 1858 to 1947 witnessed the policy of Subordinate Union.

POLICY OF RING-FENCE (1757-1813)

What was it?

During this period, the British, as Lee-Warner says, endeavoured as far as possible to live within a Ring Fence, and beyond that they avoided intercourse with the chiefs as the English Company was not yet strong enough to interfere in the internal affairs of the Indian states. More specifically the English Company neither had the strength nor the resources to defeat the Indian states. It was in fact only one of the important powers in India; the Marathas, the Nizams, the French, etc. being the other powers.

Warren Hastings, confronted with the task of safeguarding British territories against the encroachments of the Maratha and the militant rulers of Mysore, generally followed the policy of a Ring-Fence. The Pitt's India Act of 1784 even laid down that the Home Government should not approve of the intervention of her officers in India in the internal affairs of the Indian states. After the battle of Buxar, Avadh lay at the mercy of the British but they did not annex it. After the Rohilla war; Warren Hastings conferred the conquered territories on the Nawab of Avadh instead of retaining them; the First Anglo-Marathaa war ended in the restoration of the status quo by the Treaty of Salbai and the four Mysore wars benefited the allies of the British (Marathas and Nizam) more than the British themselves at least in the short term.

Yet it cannot be denied that during this period the Company did intervene in the affairs of the Indian states on a number of occasions. Warren Hastings, for instance, fought the First Maratha War (1775-1782) and the Second Mysore War (1780-1784) without any justifiable reason. Similarly, Lord Cornwallis fought the Third Mysore War (1790-1792) and annexed half of its territory. Lord Wellesley fought the Fourth Mysore War (1798-1799) and the Second Maratha War, and also compelled the rulers of Hyderabad and Avadh to sign the Subsidiary treaties with the Company. Lord Minto not only concluded the Treaty of Amritsar with Ranjit Singh but also granted protection of the Cis-Sutlej states whose very existence was being endangered by Ranjit Singh.

POLICY OF SUBORDINATE ISOLATION (1813-58)

During this period of 45 years, the British East India Company made all states subordinate to itself

by compelling their rulers to sign Subsidiary treaties with it. The Indian states, without exception, were prevailed upon to accept the Company as the paramount power in India. They were required to give either money or territory, so that the Company could maintain a Subsidiary force either in the concerned state or outside it for its protection. The concerned state could no longer appoint non-English Europeans in its service. It could not conduct any foreign relations except through the British government. In all its dispute with other states, it had to accept British arbitration. In turn, the Company promised the territorial integrity of the state. In practice, however, all the Indian states entering into subsidiary alliance, and being dependent on the Company for self-protection, began to suffer from all the evils of 'dual government' like those which had destroyed Bengal between 1765 and 1772. Regarding pitfalls of the Subsidiary system, Sir Thomas Munro rightly remarked that, it is the natural tendency to render the government of every country in which it exists weak and oppressive, to extinguish all honourable spirits among the higher grades of society, to degrade and impoverish the whole people.

The nature and significance of this phase of the evolution of British paramountcy over princely states is euphemistically brought out by Colonel Luard when he says, "This period is by far the most important in the history of the relationship of the states to the British government, step by step, solely against its will, the Company had been driven by inexorable fate to abandon its policy of Ring Fence and non-interference, and to pass through the system of subordinate alliance otherwise and generous policy of cooperative partnership which holds at the present day.

POLICY OF SUBORDINATE UNION (1858-1947)

The Revolt of 1857 made the British reverse their policy towards the princely states. Prior to the Revolt, the British had made use of every opportunity to annex the Indian states, but after it they abandoned the policy of annexation in favour of another policy known as the policy of 'subordinate Union'. During the Revolt, most of the native rulers had not only remained loyal to the British but had actively helped the latter in suppressing it. Their loyalty was now rewarded with the announcement that their right to adopt heirs would be respected and the integrity of

their territories was guaranteed against future annexation. As pointed out by Lord Canning in 1860 - "It was long ago said by Sir John Malcolm... that if we could keep up a number of Native States without political power, but as royal instruments, we should exist in India as long as our naval supremacy was maintained. Of the substantial truth of this opinion I have no doubt; and the recent events have made it more deserving of our attention than ever".

Like many other changes in British India, the new

policy of 'Subordinate Union' was slowly and gradually evolved, partly by written declaration of policy, but mainly by precedents and conventions. New policy was heralded by a definite pledge in the Queen's Proclamation (1858) that 'we here announce to the Native Princes of India that all treaties and engagements made with them or under the authority of the Hon'ble East India Company are by us accepted and will scrupulously maintained, and we look for the like observance on their part'. ■■■

BRITISH COLONIALISM IN INDIA

GENERAL SURVEY

The British colonial rule in India is generally divided into three stages. First stage (1757-1813) represents the mercantile phase. Second stage (1813-1860) represents the free trade phase and third stage (1860 onwards) represents the finance capital phase. During the mercantile phase the aim of all activity was to accumulate wealth. In order to pursue a favourable trade, the British company started aggressive policies in India. The government passed the Regulating Act and the Pitt's Indian Act to gain more and the direct control over the affairs of the company. The company officials transferred their fortunes acquired in Indian to England. The financial bleeding of India started with the British gaining hegemony over Indian territories. New revenue settlements were imposed upon the agrarian structure. They fought several wars, crushed many princely states and brought them under the colonial authority. Soon the mercantile phase came to an end.

By the dawn of the 19th century, the British became an industrial power following Industrial Revolution in that country. It was in need of raw material to feed its industries. The emerging capitalist class found the Company a stumbling block for its market. The Company's monopoly in India was bitterly attacked by the British industrial community. Thus, the need for raw material and markets for the British manufactured goods resulted in the formulation of free trade policy towards India. The special feature of this policy was that it was a one way traffic wherein British goods entered India virtually free while Indian products entering Britain faced high tariffs. The protective policy towards British trade was thoroughly guarded, leaving India-made products to face stiff competition.

The impact of such policy on Indian economy was ruinous. The traditional handicraft and cottage industry was disturbed, and faced virtual extinction. The displaced workers of this industry had no other means to survive except coming to the agricultural

sector. This policy, which started in 1813, practically continued till the very end of the colonial rule in mid-20th century though formally it was renounced in 1860. Having accumulated capital through such vicious policies, England by 1850's faced a different situation, where it could not invest its capital on its soil. It also had to compete with other industrial powers in Europe and America in trade and commerce. Finding India as a safe haven for its capital investment, it soon started establishing modern industries in India: its industrial policy only aimed at commercializing India. Basic industries were completely neglected. It tried to destroy the chances of Indian entrepreneurs who made attempts to start modern industries. By this large-scale building of infrastructure through massive injection of capital, the British enabled the growth of British economy. To facilitate smooth conduct of exploitation, the colonial power brought in several changes in Indian society and economy. Its judicial policy aimed at legitimizing its misdeeds, its social policy aimed at bringing a human face to its exploitation, while its educational policy was designed to provide cheap and loyal agents for promoting colonial interests.

DETAILED ANALYSIS

Stages of Colonialism and Changes in Administrative Structure and Policies

What is colonialism?

Colonialism generally means lust for territory, meaning expansion of a state's power beyond its border. It is related to a relationship in one area and its people are subordinate to another area and its government. Ever since the British acquired Indian territory its policies were framed within this context. The nature of its relationship with India changed according to the colonial interests.

Mercantilist Stage

The Mercantilism envisages that precious metals constituted national wealth and thus encourage maximum exports and minimum imports, the balance being settled by the flow of gold. With this motive the British fought crucial mercantile wars and established their monopoly over India. But soon the prevailing economic opinion had swung against the notion that a mere accumulation of wealth tantamount to increasing national interest. The aim of all activity now was the increase of consumable goods. The objectives of a proper government should be to stimulate the production of goods and services not merely to stock the exchequer with gold and silver. The changing industrial character of the British in the 18th century necessitated the imports of raw material in addition to the original imports such as spices, sugar and tobacco. Thus the supposed rule of the colony of India was to specialize in the manufacture of raw materials and other goods that would not compete with the mother country. Aggression became necessary for the pursuit of trade. The government approved the company in India to combine trade with warfare, fortifications, military production and political government.

The result was that the colonial power completed its hegemony over India. The establishment of its supremacy was followed by its plundering of India. The dual government in Bengal resulted in unashamed plunder. Drain of wealth from India started in the form of gifts. It became clear that the old Indian handicraft industries were redundant. The official mind proceeded towards a policy of converting India into a strong and stable supplier of raw material goods, which resulted in forced cultivation and the exploitation of the artisans.

The stage of free trade

The chief characteristic of free trade policy was the unrestricted entry of British goods in which Indian handicrafts were exposed to the fierce and unequal competition of the machine-made goods of Britain and faced extinction. It prevented direct trade between Indian and European or other foreign countries by the operation of Navigation Acts.

Throughout of the Napoleonic wars British politicians aimed at political domination in the adjoining French colonial possession throughout the world. Viewed in this context India was of crucial

importance. On the other hand the pressure from British industries against the company monopoly was ever increasing following the increase in the Company's political functions, the British government found it necessary to exercise a more positive control over the affairs of the Company. The result was the passing of the Charter Acts of 1813 and 1833. With this, the company's monopoly trade with India ended. The new stage of exploitation of India began.

Having established a tariff system in India favourable to Britain, it started crushing indigenous industry to the point of no return. Simultaneously with the drastic reduction of import duties on British imports in India, the British tariff was made stiffer for Indian commodities entering Britain. For instance in 1824 the Indian calicoes and muslins entering Britain were subjected to 67.5 per cent and 37.5 per cent duties. In fact protection was demanded and given to the prosperous and powerful shipbuilders against the relatively young Indian shipbuilding industry.

Even when there was no competition between Indian and British goods, Indian goods were treated in Britain as if they came from an independent country. Indian exports of sugar were particularly affected. In addition to the dutiable goods, there were items like silk exports and imports, which were totally prohibited in Britain until 1824, and even afterwards they were charged 25 to 30 per cent ad valorem duties.

To facilitate smooth functioning of exploitation, several changes were contemplated. The village autonomy was disturbed, police system and judiciary system were overhauled and new methods were introduced. From 1853 recruitment to civil services was made through competitive examination. However, in almost all branches of the government, Indians were excluded from being appointed to higher posts. To secure a supply of clerks and subordinate agents English education was introduced.

The Third Stage

By the middle of 19th century, the British rule over India had firmly established and the Crown overtook the sovereign rights of the Company in 1858. This period coincided with the maturity of England as the workshop of the world. Queen Victoria reign saw Britain accumulate vast quantities of capital to such an extent that not all of it could be profitably utilized at home. And India, with its amazing

potentialities of raw material, cheap labour and so forth, ruled benevolently but firmly by the British, seemed an obvious outlet for the British surplus capital.

It was also the period which saw the rapid spread of the Industrial revolution to other parts of the world. When the exports of British capital goods fell owing to the industrialization of the United States and the Western European countries, investment in British industries was diverted to home industry and the public sector. When this phase was over in about 1879, Britain was once again in troubled waters. The period from 1873 witnessed a favourable shift in terms of trade, a fall in the interest rate, equity prices, profit margins and commodity prices. Thus the easier flow of savings tended to seek safer avenues of investment even at somewhat reduced rate of interest. In the meantime, both American and European financial groups had been showing their capacity to compete with the British in foreign countries and hence the British investors were looking towards the Empire for investment opportunities. The availability of employment opportunities, particularly for middle class youth, was the greatest attraction of the Indian empire.

India had a stable and secure administrative structure and millions of acres of fertile and uncultivated land ready to produce all the food and raw material requirements of the mother country. Considering all this an observer said in 1857 that India is of infinitely more importance to Great Britain than all its other possessions of the Globe.

During the 1870's British industry began increasingly to feel the pressure of international competition from the rapidly industrializing nations. Whereby, in the succeeding decades Britain ceased to be the prime industrial nation. This declining importance in relation to other countries gave rise to two phenomena. One was the mounting vigour aimed at preserving the British market for local industries through retaliatory tariffs. The second phenomena was the rise in popularity of the so called 'New Imperialism' or 'financial capitalism'.

The result was the large scale development of infrastructure through massive injection of British capital as well as heavy public investment. Government intervened actively to enable the Indian economy to develop its resources fully so that India could play a significant role in the British economy.

The railways were built primarily for the movement of troops and for the dumping of British goods in every corner of India. Communication network was introduced for the purposes of upholding the British bayonet. Irrigation was given due attention for the commercialization of agriculture. Educational system was developed to ensure cheap and loyal agents. Foreign capital found employment in all major fields like government loans, railways, shipping industries, foreign trade, banking, mining and plantations. However it should be noted that the British capital investment in India was in reality first raised from India from the plunder of the Indian people, and then written down as debt from the Indian people to Britain, on which they had to pay interests and dividends.

The finance capital of Britain did not permit indigeneous capitalists to come up. The discouragement to Indian industrial development was, in fact, confined to administrative action or inaction, but was supplemented by positive tariff policy. It should be remembered that when the very weak cotton industry began to develop in 1860's and 1870's, agitation was immediately raised in England for the abolition of revenue import duties which operated also on cotton goods. Thus, under British rule, India underwent a commercial transformation and not an industrial revolution. In a way, Indian capitalism suffered from infantile paralysis and this distortion in the growth of capitalism can be felt even till today.

On the administrative side the managing agency system throttled the advancement of Indian industry. It was one of the main weapons for maintaining British control over Indian industrial development. Under this system a relatively small number of managing agency firms promoted, controlled and to a large extent financed the various industrial companies and enterprises, governed their operations and output and marketed their products. The cream of the profits passed, not to the shareholders, but to the managing agency.

Though these policies that aimed at developing India and linking its economy with that of Britain, the British hoped to reduce its own economic dependence on other countries. Thus colonial policies trimmed its sail according to the shifting breezes and necessities of British capitalism.

REVENUE POLICY

Permanent Settlement

Anxious to secure a regular payment of land revenue, the British decided to 'settle' the payment of the government demand with certain intermediaries who would hold themselves responsible for payment of the revenue. After prolonged deliberations 'permanent settlement' was introduced by Lord Cornwallis in Bengal and Bihar in 1793. Under this system, zamindars were given full rights of ownership over their estates, who were till now only revenue farmers. Lord Minto and Lord Wellesley, the successors of Lord Cornwallis, were great believers in large estates property rights, fixed revenues and fixed taxation; consequently they tried to introduce permanent settlement in the newly acquired regions of northern India. This happened in Orissa as well as certain parts of Madras Presidency in the first two decades of the 19th century.

Purpose and Impact: The important purpose of this policy was to create a new class of landlords based on the English model as the social buttress of English rule. It was felt that with the small number of English, holding down a vast population, it was absolutely essential to establish a social basis for their power through the creation of a new class whose interests, through receiving a subsidiary share in the spoils (One-eleventh) would be bound up with the maintenance of English rule. This contention was proved several times and the best example would be the 1857 revolt during which the landed aristocracy stood finely on the side of the British, which made Lord Canning to call zamindars as 'breakwaters' in the storm. Its impact on peasant cultivator was disastrous. Zamindars instead of living in their estates preferred to live in luxury in cities and became sort of distant suction pumps; literally sucking the blood of the peasants. As the income from land decreased due to high rents and taxes and increase in population, the gap between the zamindar and tiller began to grow wide. Thus, the greatest amount of agrarian unrest can be found in zamindar areas.

What was Ryotwari System

In Madras Presidency, when Thomas Munro was the Governor, the decision was taken to introduce the 'Ryotwari system', as permanent settlement would not be possible in the absence of zamindars in these

regions. Moreover, by this time (1825) the government had a well developed machinery of an administration and felt that it was capable of collecting revenue directly from the cultivator, thus avoiding financial losses which could occur under permanent settlement. Land revenue was assessed according to the fertility of the land and the net income from land during the previous 20 non-famine years. Under this system, there was a provision for periodical revision of land revenue once in 30 years. The gift of property rights was made to the cultivator in these areas, which in fact was a far better arrangement from the point of view of the peasantry than the Permanent Settlement. But the rigidity of crop production in India due to the vagaries of monsoons soon made Ryotwari ensure the bane of Indian agriculture. A large number of farmers grew indebted and land came to be grabbed by moneylenders who later established themselves as the new landed-oligarch.

Other Systems

In the united provinces of Agra and Awadh and also in Punjab, a new method of land revenue system was introduced known as 'Mahalwari' or joint village system. Under this system, the assessment was made on the principle of ownership farming. But all the owners of land in the 'Mahal' or village were made jointly responsible for payment of land revenue. The head of each village had a special responsibility for collecting land revenue. Under the Mahalwari system, provision was made for periodical revision of land revenue.

In the Central provinces, where the British took over the administration from the rulers, the land revenue system known as 'Malguzari System' was introduced. Under this system, the 'Malguzars', who were originally village officers, were given proprietary rights on land. Here too the government retained the right of making periodical revision of land revenue.

All these systems departed fundamentally from the traditional land systems of the country. All over the country, land was now made saleable, mortgageable and alienable. In fact, the entire structure of rural society began to break up.

JUDICIAL POLICY

In the early days of its rule, the Company was satisfied with the provision of courts of the trial of cases of the Europeans, and early in the 18th century.

Mayors' courts were established in the three Presidency towns, with the right of appeal to the local government in certain cases. In the King-in-Council, at the time of the transfer of Diwani to the Company, Clive set up what was known as the 'Dual system'. Under Warren Hastings, Collector was placed in charge of the local civil and criminal courts. Above these courts were the Sadr Diwani Adalat (for civil cases) and Sadr Nizamat Adalat (for criminal cases). The Regulating Act of 1773 brought into existence the Supreme Court of Calcutta which administered English law to the confusion of Indian litigants. Under Cornwallis, significant changes were made. These were the separation of judicial and executive powers in the district courts and the introduction of the Rule of Law. It was in the mid-19th century that the penal and criminal codes were completed largely due to the efforts of Lord Macaulay. The Indian High Courts Act was passed in 1861. In 1865, High Courts were established at Calcutta, Madras and Bombay and, a short time later, at Allahabad to replace the Sadr Courts of Diwani and Nizamat.

However, the development of judiciary was in line with other changes in the colonial administration. When Lord Ripon tried to remedy the evil by introducing the Ilbert Bill, there was a lot of opposition from the European community and the same could not be passed in the original form. The judiciary was used only to legitimize the exploitation of the colonial

rulers and their allies, viz. zamindars, moneylenders and civil servants.

SOCIAL POLICY

After establishing complete control over Indian territories and taking firm steps to encourage trade, Britain found it necessary to evolve a social policy to administer the country in a way favourable both for the country and the British Government. In this direction, it took several steps to ameliorate the social life of the people. The important among them are the abolition of 'Sati' (1829), prohibition of infanticide (1795 and 1802), enabling widows to get married by law (the Hindu widows' Remarriage Act of 1856), revival of the ancient heritage of India and even encouraging the expression of the people's opinion.

These reformatory activities were, however, carried as long as they did not come into conflict with commercial interests and profit motives, reform movement following the 1857 revolt. In fact, it started making alliance with the conservative classes thereafter. Thus, its progressive outlook and activities were occasioned because of the fact that the colonial power from the 19th century onwards propagated that it took on itself the responsibilities of bringing up the 'White man's burden'. But it can be said that whatever benefits that Indian society got from the British was because of the economics exploitation of the day associated with some fair principles in their home country. ■■■

BRITISH ECONOMIC POLICIES AND THEIR IMPACT

GENERAL SURVEY

Before the advent of the British in India, especially during the 17th and 18th centuries, India was the industrial workshop of the world in a pre-capitalist sense. It was endowed with fertile soil and a prosperous agriculture; a good geographical location and climate suitable for production, possessing mineral resources. Centres in Western India, Bengal and the Coromandal Coast had built up extensive international trading links, financed manufacturing in the interior, engaged in ship building and even developed sophisticated forms of banking and exchange. Such a prosperous India turned into a dumping house of finished goods from Britain and exporter of raw materials in the wake of crude and cruel imperialistic policies of British colonial rule.

A Bottleneck: The economic policies of the colonial power proved to be the chief bottleneck in the development of the Indian economy. The British rule resulted in the drastic changes in the system of land tenure and land ownership. In the commercialization of agriculture, in rural indebtedness, in growth of modern industry (though lopsided) and rise of capitalist class, the land revenue system introduced by the British caused a radical change in property relations in land. A new proprietary class, consisting mainly of businessmen, came on the scene. They looked up on zamindari as an income yielding asset. The main motive of the British behind this policy was to stabilize and increase its source of revenue and to create a loyal class of landlords in its colony to assist in its shameless and ruthless plunder of Indian economy. The impact was disastrous. The cultivators, unable to withstand the burden of rent and taxes soon turned into tenants-at-will.

Commercialisation: To feed its industries, the British transformed the self-sufficient Indian agriculture into a commercial enterprise. This transformation, though ending isolation of the village social and economic life, proved disastrous as it resulted in the decrease of food grain production, unprecedented rents and compound interest rates

coupled with natural calamities. It forced the peasants into the hands of money lenders. The legal protection under British law gave a further boost to the usurer to squeeze the cultivator of his meagre income. Neither the government's credit policy nor the debt legislations helped the indebted peasants to escape from the clutches of the moneylenders. The new land relations, rural indebtedness and the destruction of traditional handicraft and cottage industry by the British to save its own industry resulted in the growth of agriculture labour as there was no other means to survive. This in turn resulted in over-pressure on agriculture and during famines, this trend played havoc with millions of lives.

Drain of Wealth: Whatever was accumulated by the British in India throughout their stay was transported to their mother country, this type of exploitation is popularly known as 'drain of wealth'. This was in the shape of home remittances, gifts, gratitude's etc. If this was spent in India, it would have immensely benefited the Indian masses. The exchange policy monetized the Indian economy and facilitated easy transactions for the British financiers. It undermined the peasants' natural economy and destroyed the traditional economic ties. Its industrial policy aimed at crushing the growth of modern industries in India. However, despite the hostility of the British, modest beginnings were made in this sphere. The infant capitalist class had to wage a constant struggle against British to survive.

During the various stages of colonialism, the only motive behind the British policies was to plunder as much as they could, to which Karl Marx referred as a bleeding process with a vengeance. Not even a single aspect of Indian economy went untouched nor left unexploited. Thus, its agriculture became commercial; rural indebtedness grew by leaps and bounds; the world-famous handicrafts industry was destroyed; following the ruin of artisans and craftsmen, agricultural labour swelled; the country's richness was drained; the infant Indian industry was strangled; the rise of capitalist class curbed and famine-conditions were aggravated putting millions to death.

Agrarian Changes

In pre-colonial India, the zamindars were only tax farmers and could not extract the rent as matter of course through the ordinary legal channels. The peasants had hereditary and customary rights over land cultivation. However, these relationships changed radically with the advent of the British. The British decision to recognize the concept of individual ownership aimed at creating an enterprising and loyal class of landlords. Whether in the case of Permanent Settlement of Bengal in 1793, or the Ryotwari system that came into force in Madras, Bombay and the Punjab some decades later, the underlying principle was the idea of individual ownership. Land became the property of the individual. The feudal structure turned into semi feudal.

This policy paid rich dividends to the British in form of increased and stabilized revenues and a loyal landed aristocracy, but posed sharply the landlord-peasant problem. While the Ryotwari peasants faced exorbitant rates of revenue, the zamindari peasant suffered unprecedented oppression. Between 1800 and 1810, rents nearly doubled. Raja Ram Mohan Roy, himself a Bengal zamindar, admitted that the conditions of cultivators had not improved although the income of the proprietors had increased. The government conferred on the zamindars powers to confiscate the property and arrest the cultivator, leaving him no other means of redress against the illegal or unjust confiscation or arrest. The civil courts could do little because the settlement was made with no previous survey, on record of rights and without even a defined method of assessment. The zamindars' domination became an accepted fact to such an extent that the tenants who, in theory had substantial occupancy rights became tenants at will.

The burden of revenue led them into the firm grip of the moneylender and also towards cash crop cultivation which had disastrous consequences. The pauperization and appalling condition of the peasantry were echoed in Lord Cornwallis statement, when he said: 'I may safely assert that one third of the Company's territory in Hindustan is now a jungle inhabited only by wild beasts, which once was bustling with cultivators'.

How was Agriculture Commercialized?

In pre-British times, Indian agriculture had been characterized by self-sufficiency, geared mainly to produce food to meet the requirements of village and limited quantity of raw cotton and jute for local handlooms. However, conditions created by British rule encouraged a slow transition towards commercial

agriculture. The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 shortened the sea-route between India and England by over 3000 miles. By linking India with the international market where industrialization had created a steady demand for raw materials, by improving the mode of transportation, mainly railways, and by providing the necessary expertise for the improved cultivation of such crops, the British gave a sufficiently strong stimulus for the growth of such crops as cotton, jute tobacco, sugarcane, indigo, tea, coffee and poppy on a commercial basis. If the British encouraged commercialization for raw materials and food grains, the Indian peasants produced cash crops to pay his rents, interests and land revenue in cash.

Was it beneficial to India?

At least one positive aspect developed from this change. An active trade in agricultural produce emerged in the country. Now it was no longer necessary for any village or even a whole region to be self-sufficient in food grains and other necessities of life. The isolation and self sufficiency of the villages were now broken.

What were its negative impacts?

The disastrous consequences that the commercialized agricultural had were numerous. The peasants had to depend upon the vagaries of the international prices situation. Bombay's cotton for example after a spectacular increase earlier, experienced a sudden fall in the prices level in the late 1860s owing to the unsettled conditions in the USA.

Despite enormous increase in the foreign demand for Indian agricultural produce, the Indian peasants could not develop his agriculture due to lack of resources for technological improvements. The peasant met the new situation not so much by the extension of the area under cultivation, not by increasing productivity of land per acre but by substitution of commercial crops food grains, fodder, and other crops which proved disastrous and resulted in occurrence of a series of famines. The example of poppy seed cultivation will serve as a clear testimony to the blatant colonial attitude towards the Indian farmer and his food.

When the Crown assumed full control of India the opium revenue, next to that from land and salt, was the largest source of income to the Indian treasury, aggregating something over one tenth of its total income. The lands where opium was cultivated were among the best in Indian dominions. The

diversion of fertile land for poppy caused shortage of food grains and indirectly contributed to famine conditions. British statement, while defending the stand of the government of India with regards to the Indo-Chinese opium trade, argued that one of the great evils of China was over population and if opium was not imported from India, the Chinese would cultivate it in place of cereals and other food and thus deprive China of some of her fertile land for cereals.

DRAIN OF WEALTH

This form of exploitation was a peculiar feature of British colonial rule. In this sphere, major share of wealth earned by the British in India through various means was exported to England, depriving India of its profits. This accounted for home charge which were due from India to England on account of interest on debt, charges for civil administration, military administration, costs of army training, transport and campaigns outside India, besides charge on Indian finance, stores, guaranteed railways and irrigation works.

The plunder of this nature began from Bengal when British acquired Diwani rights. The profits made from duty free inland trade and the surplus from Diwani revenues were used to purchase Indian goods for export purpose. These purchases were called 'investments'. This type of income accounted for nearly 6 million pounds between 1758 and 1765, which in fact was more than four times the total land revenue collection of the Nawab of Bengal in 1765.

In addition to these extracts, there were other charges of the army such as rewards, pensions and gratuities which had to be paid every year. It is said that the pensions payable to the retired military officers amounted to almost half the salt tax gathered from the whole of India. The other cause of drain was the exchange rates fixed by the British government for India. Through this, India lost a lot of money. Large portion of the salaries received by the British officers in India was also sent by them out of India. There were also European and English traders, capitalists, planters, ship-owners, gold-miners, etc. who remitted every year huge amounts. William Digby calculated the total drain up to the end of 19th century and put it at 60,080 million pounds. The burden of home remittances became much more intensified in the 20th century absorbing even larger quantities of the productive resources of Indian people. In fact, the British capital invested in India was in reality first raised in India by the plunder of the Indian people.

There were loud protests against this colossal drain of wealth from India. It took a concrete shape in the writing of Dadabhai Naoroji, who led a bitter attack against the drain of wealth.

EXCHANGE SYSTEM

The long lasting result of colonial rule was the structural change brought about in the exchange system. The deep-going structural changes in the main sectors of Indian economy during the period of domination of industrial capital was contemplated by new features in the exchange system. The abolition of the East India Company's trade monopoly and the increase in imports of British goods compelled the colonialists to pay serious attention to the monetary and credit system in India.

In the pre-colonial period, as well as in the times of the EIC, the country had no unified monetary system. A large number of silver and gold coins of various values were in circulation. Even the value of the silver rupee was not the same in different parts of the country. At the time of trade - in other words, plunder - this monetary chaos was used to get more goods out of the country to enrich the merchants, traders, and black marketers. The industrialization however needed a single united monetary system. The exchange rate was all the more important for its promotion since the rupees earned from the sale of goods in India had to be changed into pound sterling.

New standards

By the two Acts of 1818 and 1835, India was put on the silver standard. The silver rupee of a set weight and silver content was proclaimed the basic monetary unit for the whole country. This tended to stabilize the fiscal revenue of the colonial administration and made it possible to introduce the cash system. However, the introduction of the cash taxes, especially in agriculture, undermined the peasants' natural economy and destroyed the traditional economic ties in the communities, which were founded chiefly on barter. It also helped to create a market for British manufactured goods and forced the peasants to produce commodities that were in demand in the market and that could be sold for cash.

BRITISH INDUSTRIAL POLICY

Since the advent of British, its only aim was the ruthless exploitation of Indian riches. The industrial policy was not any different from this trend. This policy proved disastrous to the development of indigenous capitalism and industry. By the middle of the 19th century, Queen Victoria's reign saw Britain

accumulate vast quantities of capital to such an extent that not all of it could be profitably utilized at home. India with its amazing potentialities of raw materials, cheap labour and so forth attracted British entrepreneurs for sale investments. Competition from the newly industrialized nations in Europe and America also chased Britain towards India. But its policy was not to make India an industrial capitalist economy, but to make it a dependent and underdeveloped economy. Its investments in plantations and mines, jute mills, banking, insurance, shipping and export-import appear undoubtedly significant innovations. But actually these were promoted through a system of inter-locking managing agency firms which usually combined financial, commercial and industrial activities, all working under the umbrella of foreign control, constantly inhibiting the development of Indian economy. Free trade policy, favours shown to British industry, foreign banking system working in conjunction with the government's financial and exchange policy, etc. made the Indian rising capitalist class panic-stricken. In several instances even Indian-controlled enterprises were dominated by foreign owned financial agencies.

Why did the British Introduce Modern Industry in India?

The basic economic conflict between the new Indian bourgeoisie and their British counterpart was regarding the abolition of cotton duties in 1880s. When the weak Indian cotton industry began to develop in the 1860s and 1870s agitation was immediately raised in Lancashire and Manchester for the abolition of the revenue import duties which operated also on cotton goods, where there was competition. They were abolished and in 1882 all import duties except on salt and liquors, were removed. The expansion of railways, instead of helping India, led to the opening up of vast and hitherto virtually untapped markets. The railway undertakings in India were glaring instance of state protection to British capital and indirect state bounty to British trade and industry at a time when Britain was boasting of free trade. Lord Dalhousie himself admitted that his object for the introduction of railways in Indian empire was to bring British

capital and enterprise to India, to secure commercial and social advantages to India and bring into the ports, products from the interior. The railways became an excellent means for accelerating the export of raw materials from India and opened up an extensive market for British industrial products. Thus, the railways helped the conversion of India into a hinterland of British industries, further diminishing the chances of indigenous Industrial development.

Labour: Policy behind Labour Acts was only another attempt to curtail the progress of Indian Industry. Labour legislations whose genuine motive was to improve the conditions of workers, could not have lost sight of the plantation labour while vigorously trying to apply the labour laws in the cotton and Jute factories in India. The motive in fact was not to help labour, but to discourage the growth of industries and especially cotton industry which was shaping into a bid rival for Lancashire and Manchester. The purview of the factory legislation did not extend towards the indigo planters under whom cultivators were practically treated like slaves.

Foreign Trade: India's foreign trade which was not beneficial to the masses as well as to the aspirant capitalist class made India to be a mere exporter of raw materials and market for based on Laissez-faire (e.g. tariff policy) as well as state intervention (e.g. labour legislation) had an adverse impact on the rise of a stable and strong industrial base. Though, during the first world war, the government due to military, strategic and competitive economic reasons proclaimed that industrialization was its official aim in the economic field, it did not do much to its progress. The industrial sector was starved of funds and a new principle was introduced - the principle of increased imperial preference of favoured rates for the entry of British manufactured goods. The tariff policy which was originally proclaimed to assist Indian industry was soon exploited for encouraging British Industry, costing heavily to the native industry. The imperial policy constantly and vigorously maintained and protected the obsolete economic structure of India in order to strain the emerging productive forces. ■■■

THE REVOLT OF 1857

GENERAL SURVEY

There was no aspect of public life which was untouched or unexploited by the colonial power. It completely disrupted the traditional economy. The colonial regime hurt the religious sentiments of both the Hindus and Muslims in India and activities of Christian missionaries created suspicion. Politically, the arrogance and dictatorial attitude of Lord Dalhousie and his predecessors shocked the traditional rulers of the country. His policy of annexation sent a wave of resentment over the country. The annexation of Awadh for misgovernment was the most dangerous step which put the government in bad faith. The conditions of Indian sepoys, employed in the British army, were heinous and unbearable. Slightest pretext was enough to play havoc, and this was supplied by the introduction of greased cartridges. The greased cartridges alone would not have, however, sufficed to provoke such an explosion, there was a mix of political, social, economic as well as religious factors.

The Revolt began and spread like wild fire through most of north India. It was put down only after severe military operations. The important incidents were:

- the siege of Delhi and its recovery by the British force in late September,
- the military operations around Kanpur and Lucknow and;
- the central Indian campaign in 1858 of Tantia Tope and the Rani of Jhansi.

In these events, several native Princes, Sikhs and certain other sections supported British operations. Besides, Deccan and south India was largely passive. It was fought with great ferocity on both sides, and reprisals were often savage.

There is also a general controversy on the nature and character of the revolt. Like - whether it was just a mutiny as the British called it or the first national war of Indian Independence as characterized by nationalist historians; whether it was a spontaneous

outburst of sepoy discontent or an organized and premeditated revolt; whether it was limited to the army or was it a popular rebellion.

However, the revolt of 1857 was the first and the most severe outburst of anger and discontent accumulated in the hearts of Indian people ever since the advent of British following the Battles of Plassey and Buxar. Though the apologists of imperialism dubbed it as a 'Sepoy Mutiny', the Indian historians have praised it as the 'First War of Indian Independence'. In the words of Nehru: "It was much more than a military mutiny and it rapidly spread and assumed the character of a popular rebellion and a war of Indian independence".

DETAILED ANALYSIS

Causes of the Revolt of 1857

It is in the very nature of colonial rule to exploit the conquered land. To quote Lenin: "There is no end to the violence and plunder which is called British rule in India". When the English established their authority through dual 'government' in Bengal, the financial bleeding of

ADMINISTRATIVE AND ECONOMIC CAUSES

- Annexation of Indian states deprived the Indian aristocracy of the power and position which they were enjoying earlier. Under the British rule all High Posts were reserved for the Europeans.
- New land revenue settlements made by the East India Company in the newly-annexed states drove poverty in the ranks of aristocracy and the peasants were the worst affected class due to the heavy assessments and ruthless manner of collection.
- The East India Company destroyed Indian Handicraft and Industry by using its power and made Indian industry an appendage of a foreign exploitative system.
- Further, the Indian Handicraft and Industry was adversely affected due to the loss of its consumers in the country in the form of princes and aristocrats.

India began. Introduction of Permanent Settlement, huge and revenue assessment, burden of debt, etc. The legal system, over-crowding and pressure on agriculture (due to de-industrialization) all led to the stagnation and determination of the peasants thus alienating them from the British. The machine-made cotton goods from England ruined the weavers. In fact, India underwent a commercial transformation and not an industrial revolution. Introduction of England and change in the nature of administration deprived the middle and upper classes of highly-paid posts. Those who enjoyed the power and privilege under the patronage of Indian States were now crumbled and crushed by the mighty British army. The British Company confiscated a number of Jagirs from landlords and talukdars, especially from Awadh (this shows why the revolt was so strong in this province). Even in the Deccan, the Inam Commission at Bombay, appointed by Lord Dalhousie, confiscated some 20,000 estates in the early fifties of the 19th century. Following the annexation of native states, thousands of soldiers serving them became jobless. For instance, as many as 60,000 families lost their livelihood when Awadh's army was disbanded. Even religious preachers, pandits and moulvis were divested of their livelihood with the extinction of native kingdoms. Thus peasants, artisans, and a large number of traditional zamindars and chiefs were seething with anger and were seeking an opportunity to strike at the new regime which had deprived them of their traditional hold and livelihood.

The new regime created suspicion among the Indians that they would be converted to Christianity. The activities of Christian missionaries and establishments of Chaplains and Churches strengthened this fear. The religious sentiments of the people were further hurt when a tax was levied on property held by temples and mosques. An Act was passed in 1856 called the 'General Services Enlistment Act', which imposed on the Indian sepoys the obligation to serve wherever required. They dreaded sea voyage and considered this measure to be against their religious customs. By passing the Convert Inheritance Act in 1850, the British made no secret of Hindu Widows' Remarriage Act of 1856, the abolition of the practices like Sati and infanticide and even the introduction of railways and the telegraph were viewed by the conservative sections of Indian society as an attack on their time-honoured customs and practices. The people at large were alarmed at the rapid spread of English education and Western civilization.

The Indians were considered no better than the drawers of water and hewers of wood'. The foreignness of British was exposed by its treatment of Indians who were subjected to the racial prejudices of the Englishmen. The latter took pleasure in calling Indian the creatures of an inferior breed, 'half Negro'. Dr. Majumdar points out the mood of the Indians when he says: "The impurity with which the members of the royal race could insult, humiliate, injure and even kill the Indian subjects was far more galling to the people than their political or even the more material losses they suffered at the hands of the British."

A wave of resentment rocked the country as a sequel to Lord Dalhousie's policy of annexation. Nana Sahib, the adopted son of the last Peshwa, Baji Rao II, was refused the pension which his father had been getting. Rani Laxmi Bai was not allowed to install her adopted son on the throne after the death of her husband (1853). Nagpur met the same fate. The abolition of titles of the Nawab of Carnatic and the Raja of Travancore was a rude shock to the native princes. The house of the Mughals was humiliated when Lord Dalhousie announced in 1849 that the successors of Bahadur Shah Zafar would not be allowed to use the historic Red Fort which is their Palace and must move to a place near the Qutub Minar. To add insult to injury, Lord Canning announced in 1856 that after the death of Bahadur Shah Zafar, his successor would not be allowed to use the title of king. Awadh was annexed to the Company's dominions in 1856 without satisfactory reason, although its ruler had always been faithful to

SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS CAUSES

- Like every conqueror, English rulers of India were rude and arrogant towards the subjects and described the Hindus as barbarians with hardly any trait of culture and civilization, while the Muslims were dubbed as bigots, cruel and faithless.
- There was discrimination on the basis of religion in the administration and Judiciary between the Indian and Europeans.
- Indians were called as 'nigger' and 'Suar'.
- In the Religions Disabilities Act of 1850, provision was made that change of religion did not debar a son from inheriting the property of his father. This was seen by the Indians as an act of conversion to Christianity.
- Further, strange rumours were current in India that Lord Canning is specially charged to convert Indians into Christianity.
- Activities of Christian padris and Bethune towards woman education made Indian's feel that through education, the British were going to conquer their civilization.

POLITICAL CAUSES

- Lord Dalhousie annexed Punjab, Pegu and Sikkim by the right to conquest.
- Satara, Jaitpur, Sambhalpur, Baghat, Udaipur, Jhansi and Nagpur were annexed by the application of the Doctrine of Lapse.
- Awadh was the only state which was annexed on the pretext of the 'mis-governance'.
- The Regal titles of the Nawabs of Carnatic and Tanjore were abolished.
- The Pension of Peshwa Baji Rao II's adopted son called Nana Saheb was stopped.
- Lord Canning declared that the next Mughal prince would have to renounce the regal title and the ancestral Mughal palaces, this greatly angered the Muslims.
- The Indians held that the existence of all states was threatened and absorption of all states was a question of time.
- The annexation of Bhagat and Udaipur was cancelled and they were restored to their rulers.
- When Dalhousie wanted to apply Doctrine of lapse to Karauli (Rajputana), he was overruled by the Court of Directors.

the British Government (in fact, it was the immense potential of Awadh as a market of Manchester goods that prompted the imperialists to annex it).

MILITARY CAUSES

- Three-fifth of the recruits of the Bengal Army was drawn from Awadh and North-Western province and most of them came from high castes such as Brahmins and Rajputs who were averse to accepting that part of the army discipline which treated them on par with the low caste recruits.
- Since most of the recruits in Army were from Awadh, the annexation of Awadh on the pretext of mal-administration marked the rebellion mood in the army.
- In 1856, Lord Canning's government passed the General Service Enlistment Act which declared that all future recruits for the Bengal Army would have to give an undertaking to serve anywhere even outside India. This was considered by the caste Hindus as defiling of their religion because going overseas was considered by the Hindus as being polluted religiously.
- By the passing of the Post Office Act of 1854, the privilege of free postage, so long enjoyed by the sepoys, was withdrawn.
- In 1856, the Government decided to replace the old-fashioned musket "Brown Bess" by the "Enfield rifle". The loading process of the Enfield rifle involved bringing the cartridge to the mouth and biting off the top paper with mouth.

The impression regarding the invincibility of the British army was shattered when they were badly beaten in the First Afghan War, the Anglo-Sindh wars and the Santhal rebellion.

The Indian soldiers who became the ladder for the Britishers to climb to the paramountcy were looked down upon as inferiors by their superiors. They were poorly paid, ill-fed and badly housed. Indian soldiers, formerly occupying high positions in the armies of native princes, could not rise above the rank of Risaldar or Subedar. They were grievously shocked when they were deprived even of their foreign service allowance. They groused when they were required to go to strange and distant countries. The Bengal army consisted of Hindu sepoys of high caste who disliked menial services and dreaded sea voyage which, they believed, endangered their caste. Their discontent was expressed on many occasions before the Revolt of 1857 also. The pent-up emotions of the Indian sepoys burst forth in 1856 when they were ordered to use the new Enfield Rifles. The cartridges of which were greased with the fat of cows and pigs. The sepoys had to remove the greased covers of the cartridges with their teeth before loading them into the rifles. Both Hindu and Muslim sepoys refused to use these cartridges and felt that the English were defiling their religions. The issue of cartridges fell on the already existing grievances as spark on dry timber and very soon the whole country from the Sutlej to the Narmada was ablaze.

In February 1857, the 19th Native Infantry at Berhampur refused to use the cartridges but, before the tide could turn against the British, it was disbanded. In March 1857, Mangal Pande, a young officer of 34th N.I. at Barrackpur wounded his officer, an Englishman. He was hanged and even this unit was disbanded. This news travelled to Meerut cantonment. In May 1857, when the new cartridges were issued to 90 Indians in Meerut, 85 of them refused to use them. These 85 soldiers were court-martialled and sentenced to ten years imprisonment. After a few days the excited cavalymen attacked the jail where the 85 persons were imprisoned. The sky was rent with deafening shouts of 'Maro Firangee Ko'. The same night the mutineers marched to Delhi and thousand able-bodied civilians also joined them.

The British Garrison at Delhi could not resist the rebels and consequently fell into their hands. The Mughal Emperor, Bahadur Shah II, joined the revolutionaries after initial vacillations and was proclaimed Emperor of India. Here, the mutineers were headed by General Bakht Khan, the person responsible for leading the Bareilly troops to Delhi. The loss of Delhi lowered the prestige of the British

in India. To retrieve their prestige they put everything at stake and Sir John Lawrence sent a strong British contingent under John Nicholson. After a long siege of four months, the British were able to recover Delhi in September 1857. Bhadur Shah II was captured at the tomb of Humayun. Two of his sons and a grandson were shot in cold blood before his eyes. The emperor was deported to Rangoon where he died in the year 1862. The other highlights were the operations around Kanpur, Lucknow, Gwalior, Jhansi, Bihar and Faizabad.

The tide of revolt touched its zenith in Awadh where the common people the taluqdars went to help the dispossessed Nawab, Wajid and Ali Shah. General Collin Campbell himself marched towards Lucknow at the head of English and Gorkha soldiers. Finally, Lucknow fell into the hands of the British after a fierce battle in March 1858.

Sir Hugh Rose led the British forces against the rebels in central India. The Rani of Jhansi was holding out with the help of Tantia Tope. Jhansi was taken by heavy attack in April 1858, but Rani Lakshmi Bai slipped away and managed to occupy the stronghold of Gwalior. Finally, the Rani; 'the best and bravest' of the rebel leaders, as Sir Hugh Rose described her, fell fighting in June and Gwalior fell into the hands of the English. Tantia Tope carried on a guerrilla campaign in the traditional Maratha fashion with great skill until April 1859 when he was caught and hanged.

In Bihar, the revolt was led by Kunwar Singh, a Zamindar of Jagdishpur, who played a dominant part in the revolt despite his old age. He fought the British in Bihar and then joined Nana Sahib's forces and took part in various encounters with the English in Awadh and central India. He died in April 1858 leaving behind a glorious record of valour and bravery.

Maulvi Ahmadullah, a native of Madras, led the revolt at Faizabad. The Muslim community under his command took part in various battles in Awadh and Rohilkhand. He was, however treacherously killed.

At Kanpur, the struggle was led by Nana Sahib. The British commander Hugh Wheeler, finding the odds heavy against him, surrendered in June 1857. Only with the arrival of a large force under General Havelock was Kanpur recaptured after defeating Nana Sahib in a hotly contested battle in June 1858. In the meantime, Tantia Tope was successful in winning over the troops at Shivajinagar and Morar by appealing to their sense of patriotism. With the concerted strength of these troops, Nana Sahib and Tantia Tope recaptured Kanpur in November 1858. But this was only a short term victory. The British under Campbell, won a decisive victory against the force of Nana Sahib in a battle. Nana Sahib fled towards

Nepal where he probably died after sometime.

Officers	Places where they suppressed rebellion
John Nicholson	Delhi
Havelok, Outram & Sir Colin Campbell	Lucknow
Sir Colin Campbell	Kanpur
Sir Hugh Rose	Jhansi
Col Neill	Banaras

Leaders	Their fate after the revolt
Bahadur Shah Zafar	Imprisoned and deported to Rangoon where he died natural death.
Nana Saheb	Fled to Nepal
Begum Hazrat Mahal	Fled to Nepal
Khan Bahadur	Died fighting
Rani Laxmibai	Died fighting
Kunwar Singh	Died fighting
Maulvi Ahmadullah	Died fighting
Tantia Tope	Treacherously murdered in the forest of Central India.

By mid-1853 the revolt was violently crushed. It is not necessary to follow the complicated operations of the British to put down the Great Revolt. But it can be said that it was a popular revolt in north India, as was evidenced by the British operations against entire villages in almost all the places where the uprising took place.

Nature of Revolt: Divergent views

Divergent opinions have been expressed regarding the nature of the great outbreak of 1857. These views may be broadly divided into two categories. One section considers it as primarily a mutiny of sepoys though in certain areas it drifted into a revolt of the people. The other category expresses a feeling that the revolt was really a rebellion of the people rather than merely a mutiny of the soldiers and goes further to state that it was indeed the first war of Indian independence. Both these views need a detailed examination before coming to a conclusion.

After much uneasy and unconvincing argument, British historians, anxious to minimize Indian grievances and to preserve the good faith of their country, for many years insisted that the rising was nothing more than a sepoy mutiny. They viewed it as a wholly unpatriotic and selfish attempt with no native

Western Historians	Their Views about the nature of Revolt
Sir John Lawrence and Seeley	"Sepoy's Mutiny".
L.E.R. Rees	"A war of fanatic religionists against Christians."
T.R. Holmes	"Conflict between civilization and barbarism."
Sir James Outram	"A result of Hindu-Muslim conspiracy."
W. Taylor	"It was a Mohammedan conspiracy making capital of Hindu grievances."
Benjamin Disraeli	"A National rising."
Prof. Stanley Wolpert	"It was far more than a mutiny.... yet much less than a first war of Independence."

Modern Indian Historians	Their views about the Revolt
V.D. Savarkar	"A planned war of National Independence."
R.C. Majumdar	"Neither first nor National nor War of Independence."
Dr. S.N. Sen	"What began as mutiny ended as a war of Independence."
Dr. S. B. Chaudhary	"Revolt of 1857 can be bifurcated into two sub-divisions; mutiny and rebellion."

leadership and no popular support. The main pillars of this comforting belief were that the Sikhs remained loyal and that the native states which had escaped annexation were mostly neutral. The British concentrated on the greased cartridges, the activities of the rebellious sepoys, and the British campaigns of 1857-58. The civil unrest which accompanied the mutiny was made to look insignificant or ignored altogether. But the popular participation in the revolt is an open secret. The speed with which it spread and the swelling mass sympathies cannot be ignored in characterizing the revolt. The fact that the British army burnt and massacred villages in large numbers shows how popular the revolt was.

Indians, generally speaking, subscribe to the view of V.D. Savarkar who called it the 'First War of Indian Independence'. But a general revolt or a war of independence necessarily implies definite plan and organization. The circumstances, under which Bahadur Shah, Nana Saheb, Rani Lakshmi and others cast in their lot, with the mutinous sepoys, were rebelling, are sufficient to expose the limitations of the theory that it was a struggle for independence. All the leaders had their own axes to grind. Bahadur Shah's association with the rebels was half-hearted. Rani Lakshmi of Jhansi offered to stop her resistance if her adopted son was recognized as the legal heir to the throne.

The sudden and unexpected way in which the unity spread across the country has always excited the suspicion that it must have been planned in

advance. Many Englishmen could, in fact find no explanation for this baffling outbreak other than deliberate conspiracy. The wide circulation of chapattis just before the outbreak of 1857 is regarded by many as an important evidence in favour of an organized conspiracy. But this mysterious circulation of chapattis in the villages of northern India does not provide any satisfactory explanation. The chapattis apparently meant differently to different people and to many signified nothing at all. Thus, it will be totally misleading to say that the revolt was the result of careful and secret organization.

It would also be a travesty of truth to describe the Revolt of 1857 as a national war of independence. National, it certainly was not, for the upsurge of the people was limited to mainly North India. Moreover, nationalism of the modern type was yet to come. No leader of the revolt had even the slightest idea of what sort of power should replace British authority once it was overthrown. Moreover, in this violent upheaval, the civil participants were not so much against the political supremacy of British as against the whole new order of things which they were importing into India. A large section of people, in fact, actively cooperated with British during the revolt. Thus it can be said that the so-called first war of independence was neither first nor national nor a war of independence. It was definitely something more than a sepoy mutiny but something less than a national revolt. It took place everywhere in the name of one sovereign and under one flag. The rapidity with which the revolt progressed and the vast area over which it spread proves that it enjoyed, in that area at least, strong mass support.

Religious flavour: The war was fought as much for Swadharma as against the discontentment. Religious grievances formed an important ingredient

of the dynamite that caused the explosion. A 'maulvi' aur a 'pundit' used to be attached to every regiment to administer the spiritual needs of the men. Fakirs (beggars) are reported to have played an important part in the espionage services of the rebels. Though religious feelings strengthened the courage and compose of the rebels, it did not make them fanatical. Religion heightened the appeal of the revolt but its content remained predominantly political. Its leaders were temporal, not spiritual, spokesmen of society.

Reasons of Failure

- The Revolt of 1857 was limited to the areas of Awadh, Rohilkhand, Delhi, Kanpur, Western Bihar and some portion of Central India. A large part of the country remained not only unaffected, but also helped in suppression of the revolt.
- A large section of society, particularly the middle class intelligentsia and barring the peasantry class of Oudh the peasants as well as the lower castes were totally kept away from the revolt.
- The Superior weapons and better discipline in the British Army and use of Electric telegraph was far advanced against the old-fashioned and traditional weapons of Indian soldiers.
- The Revolt was ill-organized.
- Indians had no match to the exceptional military leader's the East India Company had in the form of Lawrence, Nicholson, Outram, Havelok and Edwards.

Was it backward looking?

The revolt reflected the social ethos of the time. It was infused with traditional as well modernist ideas. Any assessment of its character must carefully review this duality at its core. This revolution, however, was an attempt to return to the earlier and traditional relation in rejecting the new classes who had supplanted them, the old and traditional ruling classes were assisted by their former subjects. In fact, it can be said that it was the decaying reactionary element, the discontented princes and feudal forces, which led the opposition. They were joined by common people who were groaning under the burden of over taxation, rack-renting and social humiliation. The revolt was thus a feudal upheaval.

Failure of the Revolt

Lack of planning, organization and leadership were some of the most important causes for the failure of the revolt. The leaders had no clear cut plans and targets. The movement lacked a leader who could command obedience from all and put up a concerted action. The leaders of the revolt

Impact of the Revolt

- The Administration of the India was transferred from the East India Company to the Crown by the Government of India Act, 1858. The Act of 1858 provided for the appointment of a Secretary of State for India, who was to be assisted by an Advisory Council of Fifteen. Eight members are to be nominated by the Crown and seven members are to be selected by the Court of Directors.
- The Queen's announcement declared against any desire for extension of territorial possessions and promised to respect the rights, dignity and honour of native princes.
- Indian army was thoroughly re-organized, the strength of European troops in Indian army was increased from the pre-1857 figure of 45,000 to 65,000 and the number of Indian troops reduced from the pre-1857 figure of 238,000 to 140,000. All higher posts in the army and police were reserved for Europeans.

could never agree on a common plan. They were mutually jealous and continually intrigued against one another. In fact, these personal jealousies and intrigues were largely responsible for the Indian defeat.

It was a tragedy that some of the Princes helped the British to suppress a bid for freedom by their compatriots. Sikh princes of Nabha, Patiala and Kapurthala and the rulers of Hyderabad and Gwalior openly helped the British with men and money. Holkar and Sindhia remained loyal to the British. Regarding Sindhia's help, General Innes says: "His loyalty saved India for the British".

The money lenders (who were the targets of attack by the villagers) and educated Indians (who thought that the British would destroy the feudal forces) also did support the revolt. Besides, Bombay, Madras, Bengal, Rajputana and western Punjab did not participate in the revolt.

The superior resources of the British in men, money and materials, their control over the seas, better means of communication at their command and the help from the natives put them definitely in an advantageous position.

Significance

It was a glorious landmark in history in as much as Hindus and Muslims fought shoulder to shoulder against a common enemy. Though the revolt was unsuccessful, the spirit of the people remained unshaken. The revolt left an indelible impression on the minds of the Indian people and thus paved the way for the rise of a strong national movement. In the words of Dr. Majumdar

- 'It has been said that Julius Caesar when dead was more powerful than when he was alive. The same thing may be said about the revolt of 1857. Whatever might have been its original character, it soon became a symbol of challenge to the mighty British power in India. It remained a shining example before the nascent nationalism in India in its struggle for freedom from the British yoke'.

After the revolt of 1857, the British rule in India underwent major transformation in its policy. It started protecting and fostering the princes as its puppets. The reactionary social and religious survivals were jealously guarded and preserved against the demands of progressive Indian opinion for their reform. After initial harsh treatment of Muslims, the rulers started talking for the betterment of the Muslim subjects. Realising that Hindu-Muslim unity would

pose a serious danger to them, the British re-employed the policy of "Divide and Rule"

Direct consequence: The direct result of the revolt was the end of the Company's rule and the passing of the responsibility of the Indian administration of British India into the hands of the British Queen and the Parliament. The Board of Control was abolished and the Board of Directors was done away with. An Office of Secretary of State for India with a 15-member council was constituted for the administration of India. The designation of the Governor-General was changed to Viceroy. While he remained Governor General for the provinces under his rule, he came to be known as Viceroy while dealing with Nawab, Rajas and native princes. The army was reorganized thoroughly. The economic exploitation of India became more serious and much wider. ■■■

RISE AND GROWTH OF INDIAN NATIONAL MOVEMENT

GENERAL SURVEY

Before the Revolt of 1857, the British viewed India as one nation since it suited their immediate purpose. They were in the process of conquering India and they argued that the conquest of the entire sub-continent would alone provide administrative and political unity to this country. Thus, the conquest of India was justified on the ground of benefiting the people of this country. But, in the aftermath of the Revolt of 1857, when they realized the dangers of treating India as one nation, they reversed their stand. They gave up the policy of annexation as they realized that existence of the native states was useful to them. The policy of dividing the Indians was pursued with vigour and, therefore, it became necessary to discard the concept of one Indian nation. British historians and scholars also upheld that India was never a nation. It was a land of different languages, dresses, social customs, religions, races, ideas, etc. Politically too, it was never united. These scholars maintained that the attempts to unite it politically always failed miserably. The Indians developed the concept of nationalism only during the British rule. Thus, the British scholars have maintained that Indian nationalism was the heritage of the British rule.

The Indian scholars, however, have refuted this opinion of the British scholars. They have contested that India is undoubtedly a country of variety primarily because of the geographical vastness of the country and the liberal cultural attitude of its people. But behind all this variety in its culture, religions, manners, customs, etc., there has always existed a basic unity among the Indian people. Though India had remained divided politically and the efforts to bring about its unity always failed, culturally India has always remained united. Vedic religion, Sanskrit language, Hindu customs, places of pilgrimages which are spread all over India, values of life, etc. have always provided unity to India. Even the Indian Muslims have become part and parcel of this country politically and culturally. The British deliberately

divided the Muslims and Hindus leading to communal differences between the two communities. Thus, factors which contribute towards the formation of nationalism already existed in India. Yet, it is accepted that nationalism in the modern sense developed in India only during the British rule, especially in the later half of the 19th century.

As reaction to oppression

By the 1870s, it was evident that Indian nationalism had gathered enough strength and momentum to appear as a major force on the Indian political scene. However, it required the reactionary regime of Lord Lytton (1876-80) to give it a visible form and the controversy around the Ilbert Bill (1883) to assume an organized form. The Afghan war during the period of Lord Lytton adversely affected the economic resources of India. He arranged the Delhi Durbar to declare Queen Victoria as the Empress of India at a time when a large part of India was in the grip of famine and epidemic. He passed the Vernacular Press Act which curbed the liberty of Indian press, and his Arms Act was a means to prevent the Indians from keeping weapons. All these measures of Lytton fed the smouldering discontent against the British. These measures were followed by the Ilbert Bill which was presented in the Central Legislature during the viceroyalty of Lord Ripon. According to this Bill, the Indian judges would have the right to try Europeans as well. It was elementally opposed by the British residents in India, who collected funds, organized a systematic campaign against the Bill both in England and India and ultimately succeeded in getting the Bill amended so that it lost its very spirit. The Indians too organized an all-India campaign in favour of the Bill. Though their agitation failed, they learnt the most useful lesson that, in order to get their demand accepted by the government, they too must organize themselves on a national scale and agitate continuously and unitedly.

What was the role of early Nationalists?

The second half of the 19th century witnessed a strong national political consciousness and the foundation and growth of an organized national movement. During this period, the modern Indian intelligentsia created political associations to spread political education and to initiate political activity in the country. This political activity was to be based on new political ideas, a new intellectual perception of reality, new social, economic and political objectives, new forces of struggle and resistance; and new techniques of political organization.

The new political activity was to represent a turning point in ideology, policy, organization and leadership. The task was difficult since Indians were utterly unfamiliar with modern political work. Even the idea that people could organize politically in opposition to their rulers was novel one. Consequently, the work of these early associations and of the early political workers proceeded rather slowly and it took more than half a century to bring the common people within the fold of modern politics.

Ram Mohan Roy was one of the first Indian leaders to start an agitation for political reforms. He fought for freedom of the press, trial by jury, the separation of the judiciary from the executive, appointment of Indians to higher offices, protection of the ryots from zamindari oppression and development of Indian trade and industries. His agitation was carried on after his death by the radical Bengali Youth known as the Derozians. They started numerous public associations to discuss modern ideas and their application to India and a large number of newspapers and journals to propagate those ideas. Thus the germs of modern political consciousness were sown in the 1820s and 1830's by Ram Mohan Roy and the Derozians.

Pre-Congress associations

The first political organization to be started in India was the Landholder's Society at Calcutta in 1838, but it was started with the narrow aim of protecting the class interests of the zamindars of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. In 1843, the Bengal British Indian Society was organized with wider political objectives. In 1851, the British Indian Association was formed. Simultaneously, the Madras Native Association and the Bombay Association were established in 1852. Many similar associations and clubs were established in smaller towns and cities all over the country. Almost all of them were dominated by wealthy commercial or zamindari elements and were local in character. They worked for reform of administration, association of Indians with the administration and spread of modern education. These associations sent long petitions, putting forward Indian demands to the British Parliament.

The period after 1858 witnessed a gradual widening of the gulf between the educated Indian and the British Indian administration. As the educated Indian studied the character of British rule and its consequence for the Indians, they became more and more critical of British policies in India. The discontent gradually found expression in political activity. But the existing associations no longer satisfied the politically conscious Indians.

Issues taken up: Dadabhai Naoroji organized the East India Association in London in 1866 to discuss Indian questions and to influence British public opinion. Branches of the Association were organized in major Indian cities. Naoroji soon came to be known to his contemporaries and the succeeding generations of Indians as the 'grand old man of India'. His greatest contribution was his economic analysis of the British rule. He showed that the poverty and economic backwardness of India were not inherent in local conditions but were caused by colonial rule which was draining India of its wealth and capital. He was honoured by being elected thrice as the President of the Indian National Congress.

Justice M. G. Randade, Ganesh Vasudev Joshi, S. H. Chiplunkar and others organized the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha in 1870. The Sabha carried on active political education for the next 30 years. It also brought out a quarterly paper. The younger elements were also active in other parts of India. In 1884, M. Viraraghavachari, G. Subramaniam Iyer, Ananda Charlu and others formed the Madras Mahajana Sabha. In Bombay, Pheroze Shah Mehta, K. T. Telang, Badruddin Tyabji and others founded the Bombay Presidency Association in 1885.

The most important of the pre-Congress nationalist organizations was the Indian Association of Calcutta. The youth of Bengal had been gradually getting discontented with the conservative and pro-landlord policies of the British Indian Association. Now, led by Anand Mohan Bose and Surendranath Banerjee, these young people founded the Indian Association of Calcutta in 1876 with the aim of creating a strong public opinion in the country on political programme. The first issue taken by the new association for agitation was that of reform of the system of the civil service examination. The association sent Surendranath Banerjee as a special delegate to other parts of the country to canvass support for the agitation. He was perhaps the first modern Indian to gain all-India popularity. In order to involve the common people in the activities of broad political movement, the leaders of the Indian Association organized agitations in favour of the right of the

tenants against the foreign tea planters. The association also opened branches in different towns and villages of Bengal, and in many cities outside Bengal.

Though all the above organizations had served a useful purpose, they were basically narrow in their scope and functioning. They dealt mostly with local questions and their membership and leadership were confined to a few people belonging to a single city or province. Even the Indian Association, despite its efforts to become an all-India body through convening two all-India conferences, could not succeed in becoming a representative body of political workers and leaders all over the country.

Indian National Congress

The politically conscious Indians were increasingly becoming aware of the need for an all-India organization not only to provide a common forum for the meeting of minds and the formulation of a common programme of activity but also to carry on public education with a view to creating a broad-based freedom struggle. The social basis for such an organization was now well laid and enough experience had been gathered. Dadabhai Naoroji, Justice Ranade, Pherozeshah Mehta, K.T. Telang, etc. in western India, G. Subramania Iyer, Ananda Charlu, etc. in southern India, and W. C. Banerjee, Surenderanath Bannerjee, Ananda Mohan Bose, etc., in eastern India, simultaneously began to plan setting up of an all-India nationalist organization. The idea was given a concrete shape by the Bombay group of nationalist political workers who cooperated with A.O. Hume, an Englishman and retired civil servant, to bring together at Bombay in December 1885 political leaders from different parts of the country. These leaders formed the Indian National Congress, the first session of which was presided over by W. C. Banerjee.

Why was INC organized?

Sometimes it is remarked that Hume's main purpose in encouraging the foundation of the Congress was to provide a 'safety valve' or a safe outlet to the growing discontent among the educated Indians. He wanted to prevent the union of discontented nationalist intelligentsia with the

discontented peasants. By patronizing a mild political movement, he hoped to prevent it from getting out of control.

This explanation is, however, totally inadequate and misleading for the foundation of the Congress. At the most, it explains to a limited extent Hume's role in the whole episode. The Indians who actively worked for the creation of an all-India political organization represented new social forces that were increasingly opposed to the exploitation of India for British interests. They needed an organization that would fight for India's political and economic advancement. They were patriotic men of high character and were in no way stooges of the foreign government. They cooperated with Hume because they did not want to arouse official hostility to their early political efforts and they hoped that a retired civil servant's active presence would allay official suspicions. It should be noted that even Hume was moved by motives nobler than those of the 'safety valve'. He possessed a sincere love for India as well as its poor cultivators.

Significance

There is no doubt that with the foundation of the Indian National Congress in 1885 the struggle for India's freedom was launched in a small, hesitant and mild but organized manner. It was to grow in strength year by year and, in the end, involve the Indian people in powerful and militant campaigns against the foreign rulers.

It would, however, be wrong to look upon the Congress as the sole or even the chief medium for the spread of nationalist consciousness during the early phase, i.e. between 1885 and 1905. There were numerous other channels for the development and articulation of nationalism during this period. Numerous local and provincial political associations carried on day-do-day political agitation. Above all, the nationalist newspapers acted as the organizers and publicists of nationalism. Most of the newspapers of the period were not carried on as business ventures but were consciously started as organs of nationalist activity. Their owners and editors had often to make immense personal sacrifices. ■■■

EARLY NATIONALISTS AND MILITANT NATIONALISTS

A fundamental difference existed between the policy and programmes of the early nationalists and the militant nationalists. It is essentially due to this that the first group of nationalists (early nationalists) are described as the 'moderates', and the second group (militant nationalists) as the 'extremists' and the consequent periodisation of the Indian nationalist movement into the moderates era (1885-1905), the extremist era (1905-1919) and the Gandhian era (1919-1947). Though much can be said in favour of this division of the Indian nationalist movement, the basic continuities and changes involved in this periodisation are subject to diverse opinions. As a matter of fact, there has existed a general tendency to overlook some of the basic continuities from the early nationalist or the so called moderate era to the militant nationalist era or the extremist era. To see discontinuities or changes where none existed, and to over emphasize or wrongly interpret the change that did occur.

THE MODERATES

The moderates did not advocate a direct struggle for the political emancipation of the country, instead, they worked towards a number of political achievements. The most important of these activities were:

- completion of the process of unifying Indian people into a nation,
- creation of a national political platform,
- exposing the exploitative character of British imperialism,
- introduction of modern politics,
- creation of a feeling of self-confidence among Indians,
- promotion of the growth of a modern capitalist economy in India, etc.

They were fully aware of the fact that India was a nation in making and Indian nationhood was gradually coming into being and could not, therefore, be taken for granted. They were also aware that the

political leaders had to constantly work for the development and consolidation of the feeling of national unity irrespective of region, caste or religion. The economic and political demands of the moderates were formulated with a view to unite the Indian people on the basis of common economic and political programme.

Moderates' Programme

Moderates desired to create a national political platform on which all Indians belonging to different regions, religions and social classes could agree and which could serve as the basis for all-India political activity whose basic aim was not just good government, but democratic self government. The Indian National Congress, for instance, was established apart from other reasons with the hope to provide a national political platform and thus promote close contact and friendly relations among active nationalists from different parts of the country.

From the beginning the moderates believed that India should eventually move towards democratic self-government. But they did not demand immediate fulfillment of this goal. Instead, they suggested a gradual approach towards it. Their immediate political demands were extremely moderate. Initially, they demanded that Indians should be given a large share in the government by expanding and reforming the existing legislative Councils. They also demanded the widening of the powers of the councils and an increase in the powers of the members who were to be the elected representatives of the people. The Indian Councils Acts of 1892 and 1909 were passed mainly due to the efforts of the moderates, though these Acts did not secure much for the Indians. But by the turn of the 19th century, the moderates made good progress in their political demands. Their demands were no longer confined to petty reforms but were extended to full self-government, including full Indian control over all legislation and finances, on the model of the self-government colonies of Canada and

Australia. This demand was initially made by **Dadabhai Naoraji** in 1904 and later by **Gokhale** in 1905.

Economic Critique: Exposing the exploitative character of British imperialism and spreading their understanding of the British rule in India among the people was another important item on the agenda of the moderates. They took note of all the three forms of contemporary economic exploitation, namely, through trade, industry and finance. Realizing that the essence of British imperialism lay into subordination of the Indian economy to that of Britain, they strongly opposed the British attempts to develop in India the basic characteristics of the economy, viz., the transformation of India into a supplier of raw materials, a market for British manufacturers and a field of investment for capital. Moreover, in every sphere of economic life they advocated the lessening and even severance of India's economic dependence on England.

Agitations: Besides, they organized many agitations against all the important official economic policies based on the colonial structure. For instance, they organized a powerful all-India agitation against the abandonment of tariff duties on imports from 1857 to 1880 and against the imposition of cotton excise duties in 1849-96. This agitation played a major role in arousing country-wide national feelings and in educating the people regarding the real aims and purpose of British rule in India. Thus, all the efforts of the moderates finally resulted in the growth of an all-India opinion that the British were exploiting India and thus leading to its impoverishment, economic backwardness and under development.

Sovereignty: Another important programme of the moderates was the introduction of modern politics based on the doctrine of the sovereignty of the people and on the notion that politics is not the preserve of the ruling class only. They formed several political associations, including the Indian National Congress, to spread political education and to initiate political work in the country. This work was to be based on new political ideas, a new intellectual perception of reality, new socio-economic and political objectives, new forces of struggle and resistance and new techniques of political organization. It was to represent a turning point in ideology, policy, organization and leadership.

Capitalism: They also wanted to promote the growth of modern capitalist economy in India. They rightly believed that the British economic policies were responsible for bringing about the ruin of India's traditional handicraft industries and for obstructing the development of modern industries. Most of them

opposed the large scale import of foreign capital for investment in the Indian railways, plantations and industries on the ground that it would lead to the suppression of Indian capitalists and a further increase in the hold of the British over India's economy and polity.

Remedy: The chief remedy they suggested for the removal of poverty was the modernization of Indian life in all fields and, in particular, the development of modern industries, which are essential for the proper growth of a capitalist economy. But rapid industrialization required active state assistance and a policy of tariff protection. So, they urged the British government to aid Indian industries through financial subsidies, loans and guarantees through state-aided or controlled banks, by borrowing abroad and lending in India, by pioneering state-owned industries in fields such as steel and mining which Indian capitalists were too weak to enter, but which were essential for industrial development, by collecting and disseminating industrial and commercial information and by promoting technical education.

Constraints: The task was difficult for Moderates since Indians were utterly unfamiliar with modern politics. Even the notion that people could organize themselves politically in opposition to their rulers was a novel one. Consequently their work proceeded rather slowly and it took more than half a century to bring the common people within the fold of modern politics.

THE EXTERMISTS

The programmes of the militant nationalist or the extremists were almost similar to those of the moderates. Their programmes were built on their predecessors' programmes and their i.e., the moderates concrete exposure of the character of the British rule in India. But they differed from the latter in one important respect, i.e., the extremists demanded complete independence, while the moderates were content with democratic self-government as in the colonies of Australia and Canada.

However, this difference in their political goals was not substantial as the moderates were as much interested in the question of political power as the extremists. In fact, Tilak himself repeatedly pointed out that there were no real difference between him and the moderates regarding the goals of the national movement. The moderates did not strive for complete independence mainly because of the feeling that the time was not yet ripe for it. It is interesting to note here that even Tilak had no hesitation in going back time and again from the demand for complete independence to dominion status.

Thus, the basic difference between the early nationalists and the militant nationalists did not lie in their programme or in a different definition of the nationalist political goal. The real difference, if there was any, lay in their policies or the methods of struggle to achieve the agreed goals. In other words, the difference was not in the programmes or what was to be done, but in the policies or how it was to be done.

What were the Extremists' policies?

Some of the extremists deviated from the moderate method of peaceful and bloodless struggle in theory. In practice, however they too operated within its basic framework. The tenet was to serve as a basic guarantee to the propertied class that they would at no time be faced with a situation in which their interests might be put in jeopardy even temporarily. The only difference between the moderates and the extremists in this matter was in their attitude towards non-violence. It was a matter of personal conviction for most of the moderates though practical considerations too played an important role in determining their attitude towards non-violence. To the extremists, it was mostly a practical expedient. The extremists, therefore, did not condemn violence as such, though they themselves did not resort to violent methods.

More importantly, the extremists advocated the organization of mass struggle against British imperialism. This was, in fact, the most important and, perhaps the only significant difference between the policies of the extremists and those of the moderates. Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal, Lala Lajpat Rai and other extremists had infinite faith in the power of the masses for action and in the Indian people's capacity to bear the strain of a prolonged political struggle against imperialism. They believed that suppression by the government would not throttle the mass movement. It would instead, educate the people, arouse them further, strengthen their resolve to overthrow imperialism and lead to a heightened political struggle. They therefore, advocated the organization of a mass struggle against imperialism as a first step in making the masses politically active. They talked of bridging the gulf between the educated people and the masses though not all of them.

Different Concept: The extremists evolved a higher concept of the forms of political struggle in order to improve the techniques of political action. In other words, the extremists apart from employing the moderate forms of agitation gave a call for passive resistance, to cooperate with the government and to boycott, government service, government

courts and government schools and colleges. But they were unable to implement this concept fully and as a result, not transcend agitation (the form adopted by the moderates,) though their agitation was much more militant and effective than that of the moderates because the former had a broader base than the latter.

P-C-P strategy: The extremists too like the moderates, had adopted the P-C-P (pressure-compromise-pressure) strategy in order to attain completed independence. Because the extremists gave several calls for immediate independence, it is easy to be misled into thinking that their strategic approach was deferent. In fact, such calls were part of the same overall strategy. Every such call was succeeded by a set of immediate demands which had little direct relation to the demand for immediate and complete independence. So what changed after 1905 was not the basic strategy of P-C-P. The extremists were not working for the direct overthrow of British rule. They too emphasized the technique of negotiations backed by controlled mass action.

Different Mode: The extremists did, however, change the mode of persuasion or putting pressure. They put greater mass pressure behind demands. They shifted from intellectuals to the masses to a significant extent; and from memorials, petitions and resolutions; to processions, demonstration and large mass movements. The sanctions behind their demand were different and far stronger. But the political advance was still to occur by stages and through compromise, that is, ultimately through British consent and action.

Short-comings: While recognizing this different between the moderate and the extremist eras; we should also make a distinction between hope and the fulfillment. For one even at the height of the extremist movement in Bengal, the peasantry was not mobilized. The alienation between the educated extremist political workers and the masses was not lessened to any significant extent. In fact, the extremists did not even know how to go about the task. In practice what they succeeded in doing was to spread the movement deeper among the lower middle classes who were already brought within the ambit of nationalism in the moderate era.

Failure: The failure of the extremists inevitably led to revolutionary terrorism. Since most of the extremist leaders had wrongly defined their differences with the moderates (they had concentrated on 'action' and sacrifices rather than on the need to evolve a different type of politics), the young men brought upon an ideology of 'action' and sacrifice which were soon disenchanted with militant agitation, demanded 'action' and took recourse to individual terrorism.

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PARTITION OF BENGAL

The conditions for the emergence of militant nationalism had thus developed when in 1905 the partition of Bengal was announced and the Indian National movement entered its second stage.

On 20 July 1905, Lord Curzon issued an order dividing the rest of Bengal with a population of 54 million, of whom 18 million were Bengalis and 36 million Biharis and Oriyas.

It was said that the existing province of Bengal was too big to be efficiently administered by a single provincial government. However, the officials who worked out the plan had also other political ends in view.

They hoped to stem the rising tide of nationalism in Bengal, considered at the time to be the merve centre of Indian nationalism.

Risely, Home Secretary to the Government of India, wrote in an official note on 6 December 1904 as Bengal united is a power. Bengal divided will pull in several different ways. One of our main objective is to split up and thereby to weaken a solid body of opponents to our rule.

The Indian National Congress and the Nationalists of Bengal firmly opposed the partition.

Within Bengal, different sections of the population - zamindars, merchants, lawyers, students, the city poor, and even women - rose up in spontaneous opposition to the partition of their province.

The nationalists saw the act of partition as a challenge to Indian nationalism and not merely an administrative measure.

They saw that it was a deliberate attempt to divide the Bengali territorial and on religious grounds - for in the Eastern part Muslims would be in a big majority and in the western part Hindus - and thus to disrupt and weaken nationalism in Bengal.

It would also be a big blow to the growth of Bengali language and culture.

They pointed out that administrative efficiency could have been better secured by separating the

Hindi speaking Bihar and the Oriya-speaking Orissa from the Bengali speaking part of the province.

Moreover, the official step had been taken in utter disregard of public opinion.

Thus the vehemence of Bengal's protest against the partition is explained by the fact that it was a blow to the sentiments of very sensitive and courageous people.

The Anti-Partition Movement

- The Anti-Partition Movement was the work of the entire national leadership of Bengal and not of any one section.
- Its most prominent leaders at the initial stage were moderate leaders like Surendra Nath Banerjee and Krishna Kumar Mitra; militants and revolutionary nationalists took over in the later stages.
- In fact, both the moderate and militant nationalists co-operated with one another during the course of the movement.
- The Anti-Partition Movement was initiated on 7 August, 1905. On the day a massive demonstration against partition was organised in the Town Hall in Calcutta.
- From this meeting delegates dispersed to spread the movement to the rest of the province.
- The partition took effect on 16 October, 1905.
- The leaders of the protest movement declared it to be a day of national mourning throughout Bengal.
- It was observed as a day of fasting. There was a Hartal in Calcutta.
- People walked barefooted and bathed in the Ganga in the morning hours.
- Rabindranath Tagore composed the national song 'Amar Sonar Bangla', for the occasion which was sung by huge crowds parading the streets.
- This song was adopted as its national anthem by Bangladesh in 1971 after Liberation.

- The streets of Calcutta were full of the cries of 'Bande Mataram' which overnight became the national song of Bengal and which was sung to become the theme song of the national movement.
- The ceremony of Raksha Bandhan was utilized in a new way.
- Hindus and Muslims tied the rakhi on one another's wrists as a symbol of the unbreakable unity of the Bengalis and of the two halves of Bengal.
- In the afternoon, there was a great demonstration when the veteran leader Ananda Mohan Bose laid the foundation of a Federation Hall to mark the indestructible unity of Bengal.
- like Rabindranath Tagore, Rajani Kant Sen, Syed Abu Mohammed and Mukunda Das are sung in Bengal to this day.
- Another self-reliant, constructive activity undertaken at the time was that of National Education. National Educational Institutes where literary, technical or physical education was imparted were opened by nationalists who regarded the existing system of education as denationalising and, in any case, inadequate.
- On 15 August 1906, a National Council of Education was set up. A National College with Aurobindo Ghose as Principal was started in Calcutta.

The Swadeshi and Boycott

- The Bengal leaders felt that more demonstrations, public meetings and revolutions were not likely to have much effect on the rulers.
- More positive action that would reveal the intensity of popular feelings and exhibit them at their best was needed.
- The answer was Swadeshi and Boycott.
- Mass meetings were held all over Bengal where Swadeshi or the use of Indian goods and the boycott of British goods were proclaimed and pledged.
- In many places public burning of foreign cloth were organised and shops selling foreign cloth were picketed. The Swadeshi Movement was an immense success.
- An important aspect of the Swadeshi Movement was the emphasis placed on self-reliance or 'Atmasakti'.
- Self-reliance meant assertion of national dignity, honour and self-confidence.
- In the economic field, it meant fostering indigenous industrial and other enterprises.
- Many textile mills, soda and match factories, handloom weaving concerns, national banks and insurance companies were opened.
- Acharya P.C. Ray organised his famous Bengal Chemical Swadeshi Stores.
- Even the great Rabindranath Tagore helped to open a Swadeshi store.
- The Swadeshi Movement had several consequences in the realm of Culture.
- There was a flowering of nationalist poetry, prose and journalism.
- The patriotic songs written at the time by poets

Role of Students, Women, Muslims and the Masses

- A prominent part in the Swadeshi agitation was played by the students of Bengal.
- They practised and propagated Swadeshi and took the lead in organising picketing of shops setting foreign cloth.
- The government made every attempt to suppress the students.
- Orders were issued to penalise those schools and colleges whose students took an active part in the Swadeshi agitation; their grants-in-aid and other privileges were to be withdrawn, they were to be disaffiliated, their students were not to be permitted to compete for scholarships and were to be barred from all services under the government.
- Disciplinary action was taken against students found guilty of participating in the nationalist agitation. Many of them were fined, expelled from schools and colleges, arrested and sometimes beaten by the police with lathis.
- A remarkable aspect of the Swadeshi agitation was the active participation of women in the movement.
- The traditionally home-centred women of the urban middle classes joined processions and picketing. From then on they were to take an active part in the nationalist movement.
- Many prominent Muslims joined the Swadeshi Movement, including Abdul Rasul, the famous barrister, Liaquat Hussain, the popular agitator and Guznavi, the businessman.
- Maulana Abul Kalam Azad joined one of the revolutionary terrorist groups.
- Many other middle and upper class Muslims, however, remained neutral or, led by the Nawab of Dhaka (who was given a loan of Rs. 14 lakh by

the Government of India), even supported Partition on the plea that East Bengal would have a Muslim majority.

- In this communal attitude, the Nawab of Dhaka and others were encouraged by the officials.
- In a speech at Dhaka, Lord Curzon declared that one of the reasons for the partition was to invest the Mohammedans in Eastern Bengal with a unity which they had not enjoyed since the days of the old Musalman Viceroys and Kings.

All-India Aspect of the Movement

- The cry to Swadeshi and Swaraj was soon taken up by other provinces of India.

- Movements in support of Bengal's unity and boycott of foreign goods were organised in Bombay, Madras and north India.
- The leading role in spreading the Swadeshi Movement to the rest of the country was played by Tilak.
- Tilak quickly saw that with the inauguration of this movement in Bengal a new chapter in the history of Indian rationalism had opened.
- Here was a challenge and an opportunity to lead to a popular struggle against the British Raj and to unite the entire country in one bond of common sympathy. ■■■

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HOME RULE LEAGUES

- During the First World War, the nationalist feelings grew stronger, which outburst into rise of two Home Rule Leagues in India. One was founded by Tilak at Poona and the other by Mrs. Annie Besant at Madras.
- Mrs. Annie Besant was one of the firebrand politicians of the national movement. She was one of the leaders of the Theosophical movement and had adopted India as her home and worked for its social, educational and religious regeneration. She was disillusioned with the tone of the moderates.
- Like a true patriot, she wanted to do something tangible and concrete for the political liberation of India. It was with this aim in view that she organized the Home Rule Movement.
- Annie Besant was inspired by the Irish Home Rule Movement. In the Congress session of 1915, she proposed that a similar movement should be started in India. Bal Gangadhar Tilak and other extremists supported the move whole-heartedly. They felt that under the Moderates, the Congress organization had become lifeless and that it should be made more vigorous so as to win over mass sympathy.
- Tilak and Mrs. Annie Besant decided to put a new life in the national movement of India. They started two separate Home Rule Leagues to carry on propaganda all over the country in favour of the demand for the grant of Home Rule after the First World War. Tilak set up the Home Rule League in December 1915. Its headquarters were at Poona. Annie Besant set up a similar Home Rule League in September 1916. Its headquarters were at Adyar near Madras.
- The leaders of the Home Rule Movement followed constitutional means to achieve their aim. They shunned violent and revolutionary methods because they did not like to embarrass the British Government during the war.
- Tilak's activities were confined to Bombay Presidency and the Central province while Annie Besant popularized this movement in the rest of India. The branches of the league were set up all over the country.
- Tilak made a whirlwind tour of the country in 1916 and in his speeches he said, "Swaraj is my birthright and I shall have it." He said that Home Rule was the only cure of India's political ills and the grievances of the Indians. He preached the idea of Home Rule through his two newspapers - Kesari and Maratha.
- Annie Besant also toured the country and created a lot of enthusiasm among the people for the cause of Home Rule. She carried on the propaganda in favour of it in the newspapers named New India and Commonwealth.
- The movement reached its peak in 1917. The Government got panicky at the activities of the Home Rule Movement and it thought of suppressing it with a heavy hand. The Government made use of Defence of India Act to curb the activities of the agitators. Students were prohibited from attending Home Rule meetings.
- Tilak was prosecuted for his fiery and exciting speeches and his entry in Punjab and Delhi was banned. Important leaders of the movement including Annie Besant were interned.
- Various restrictions were imposed on the press by using the Indian Press Act of 1910. But the repressive policy followed by the Government only added fuel to the fire. Strikes, agitation and protest meetings were organized throughout the country.
- The government realized the seriousness of the demonstrations that broke out in support of the Home Rule League. The Indians seemed to be prepared to pay any price to achieve the Home Rule. Therefore, to appease the nationalists, the Secretary of State for India made a declaration on

August 20, 1917 announcing the British policy towards India.

- As a result, the Home Rule Movement died out gradually.

Importance of the Home Rule Movement

- It transformed the national movement into the peoples' movement as more and more people

began to take part in it. It worked as a light house when the political atmosphere in the country was full of disappointment. It put new life in the national movement.

- It gave definite shape and direction to the movement for Swaraj. It also influenced the foreign statesmen and several of the American leaders. Many British members also supported the demand for Home Rule to the Indians.

■■■

M.K. Gandhi had not played any leading role in the Congress and was unknown to the masses before his arrival in India in 1915. But, surprisingly, he became the undisputed leader of the Congress and the leader of masses within a short span of 5 years, i.e. from 1915 to 1920. Was this phenomenon an outcome of a skilful political game on the part of Gandhi or was it due to the circumstances? A number of factors contributed to the rise of Gandhi as the undisputed leader of the Congress.

Reasons for his rise

Satyagraha: A major factor responsible for the emergence of Gandhi in Indian politics was the success of his resistance, namely Satyagraha, based on truth and non-violence in South Africa. The South African experience (1893-1914) contributed in a number of ways to the foundations of Gandhi's ideology and methods as well as to his later achievements in India. Till 1906, Gandhi was a rising lawyer-politician. He followed the 'moderate' techniques of prayers and petitions in the struggle against racial discrimination, a totally new departure began with three campaigns of Satyagraha during 1907-1908, 1908-1911 and 1913-1914. The peculiar conditions of South Africa enabled Gandhi to bring together people of different religions, communities and classes.

South African experience: This South African experience projected Gandhi as an all India figure from the beginning of his work in India more than any other politician all of whom (like Tilak, Lajpat Rai or Bipin Chandra Pal) had essentially regional bases. The South African experience made him an international celebrity. Further, the connections which many South African Indians had with their original homes in different parts of the country helped to spread the name of Gandhi throughout India. Thirteen out of the first 25 inmates of the Sabarmati Ashram (1915) came from Tamilnadu, something which would have been inconceivable then for any other Indian leader.

Disappointment from Moderates: The disillusionment of the people with the methods and failures of the Moderates was another contributory

factor. The methods and techniques of the moderates did not include any technique for mass mobilization because, in their opinion, the masses were not yet sufficiently educated and enlightened to take part in the nationalist movement. Their achievements also did not bring about any substantial relief to the masses in general and the peasants and the workers in particular. So, the masses were eagerly waiting for a leader who could lead them in a movement aimed at removing their hardships.

Inability of Extremists: Equally important was the failure of the Extremists to reach and mobilize the masses. Though the extremists made a departure in theory from the methods of the Moderates by including mass participation in their methods and techniques of political agitation, they could not put it into practice essentially because they had doubts about their ability to control the masses once they are aroused. Thus, the Extremists too, like the Moderates, did not provide leadership to the eagerly waiting masses, though they believed that mass action could be a variable weapon for achieving their aims.

Failure of Revolutionaries: The failure of the Revolutionary Terrorists to achieve their main goal of expelling the British from India through the use of force was as much responsible as the above factors for the emergence of Gandhi. The Revolutionary Terrorists did not bother to involve the masses in their activities. Even if they wanted to do so, they would not have succeeded in their goals because of the essentially peaceful nature of the Indian masses.

Personality: Above all, the personality of Gandhi and his simple and saintly habits were also responsible of his emergence in Indian politics. Gandhi had a good knowledge of the people and hence deliberately cultivated certain simple and saintly habits or what the non-disciples usually consider Gandhian Fads such as vegetarianism, nature therapy, experiments in sexual self-restraint, etc. Also, his use of simple Hindustani in preference to English and of religious texts, travelling in third class, wearing simple cloth from 1921 onwards etc., had the same impact on the minds of the common people who at once took him to their hearts. Gandhi was thus firmly rooted in the

What is Satyagraha?

'Satyagraha' was based on truth and non-violence (ahimsa). Though Gandhi's 'Satyagraha' revised considerate originality and was, in fact a meticulously worked out philosophy, nevertheless was influenced by Thoreau, Emerson, and Tolstoy.

The term, Satyagraha was coined by Gandhi to express the nature of non-violent direct action of the Indians in South Africa against the racial policy of the government there. The literal meaning of Satyagraha is holding on to truth. He was anxious to distinguish Satyagraha from passive resistance (the method adopted by the Moderates). Passive resistance is an act of expediency where as Satyagraha is a moral weapon based on the superiority of soul-force or love-force over physical force. Passive resistance is the weapon of the weak, while 'Satyagraha' can be practiced only by the bravest who have the courage to die without killing. While in passive resistance the aim is to embarrass the opponent into submission, the aim of Satyagraha is to wean the opponent away from error by love and patient suffering. Passive resistance is static, while Satyagraha is dynamic. While passive resistance is a negative approach, Satyagraha is positive in content and it emphasized internal strength of character.

Techniques: There are different techniques of Satyagraha. Fasting is one technique, but it has to be applied generally against those who are bound by ties of close personal affection. Hijrat or voluntary migration is another technique of Satyagraha. Gandhi, however, made it very clear that people who adopt this technique should only aim at getting their legitimate rights and status and not be hostile to the other party. Thus, he felt that strikes and hartals could be effective weapons if they did not aim at destruction and sabotage. Gandhi would not consider scorched earth policy to be a technique of Satyagraha. He also ruled out underground activities. For him, means were as important as the end.

Indian traditions and it was from that fact that he drew his immense strength.

Satyagraha in India

In India, the first time Gandhi was obliged to resort to Satyagraha was in Champaran district in Bihar where he got the grievances of the indigo cultivators redressed in 1917. For the second time, he put the technique of Satyagraha into practice in 1918 at Ahmedabad in order to solve a dispute between the textile mill workers and the owners there. In the same year, he launched Satyagraha for the third time in the Khera district of Gujarat in order to force the British government to meet the peasants' demand of suspension of land revenue for the famine period. All

these Satyagrahas were launched to solve the local issues. But they provided him with the required experience to launch future movements at an all-India level.

The technique of Satyagraha, being based on non-violence, could easily attract the masses to participate in the nationalist movement. However, as a politician, Gandhi in practice sometimes settled for less than complete non-violence. This was evident in his campaign for military recruitment in 1918 in the hope of winning post-war political concessions. Further, his repeated insistence that even violence was preferable to cowardly surrender to injustice sometimes created delicate problems of interpretation. But historically much more significant than this personal philosophy (fully accepted only by a relatively small group of disciples) was the way in which the resultant perspective on controlled mass participation objectively fitted in with the interests and sentiments of socially-decisive sections of the Indian people. Indian politicians, before Gandhi, had tended to oscillate between moderate mendicancy and individual terrorism basically because of their inhibition about uncontrolled mass movements. The Gandhian model proved acceptable to business groups as well as to the relatively better-off or locally dominant sections of the peasantry, all of whom stood to lose something if political struggle turned into uninhibited and violent social revolution. In more general terms, the doctrine of 'ahimsa' lay at the heart of the essentially unifying role assumed by Gandhi, mediating internal social conflicts, contributing greatly to the joint national struggle against foreign rule, but also leading to periodic retreats and sometimes major reverses.

Gandhi's idea of 'non-cooperation'

To Gandhi, non-cooperation with the evil-doers; in this case the British government, was the duty of the virtuous man. It was considered by Gandhi as a mild form of agitation, and it was resorted to by him between 1921-1922 during the Non-cooperation Movement. This technique, with its programmes like the surrender of titles by the patriotic Indians conferred on them by the British, boycott of government schools and colleges by students as well as teachers, boycott of courts and other government services, boycott of foreign goods etc, had an immediate appeal to the masses who were suffering under the British rule.

Gandhi's views about 'civil disobedience'

Civil disobedience of the laws of the unjust and

tyrannical government is a strong and extreme form of political agitation according to Gandhi. Also, in his opinion, this technique can be more dangerous and powerful than armed rebellion and, hence, should be adopted only as a last resort. To the masses who had been the main victims of British imperialism and whose suffering reached the extreme point in the late 1920's due to the worldwide economic crisis (1929-32), this technique of agitation with its programmes such as the breaking of the notorious Salt Laws, picketing foreign cloth and liquor shops, hartals and strikes, non-payment of taxes (restricted to only a few areas) etc., seemed to be the only way to remove their sufferings.

Gandhian socio-economic programmes

His socio-economic programmes consisted of those of Khadi, village reconstruction, Hindu-Muslim unity, Harijan welfare, etc. To begin with, his

programme of Khadi and his anti-industrial theme had a real attraction of the peasants and the artisans who suffered heavily due to the process of modernization and industrialization particularly under colonial conditions. The programme of village reconstruction could immediately get him the support of rural folks who formed the overwhelming majority of Indian population. His programme of Harijan welfare, which included opening of wells, roads and temples and also some humanitarian work, aimed at improving the lot of the untouchables (called Harijans or the people of God by Gandhi), naturally endeared him to the hearts of these people. Thus, this programme indirectly helped to spread the message of nationalism down to the lowest and most oppressed sections of rural society and Harijans in many parts of the country developed a traditional loyalty towards the Congress which helped the party even after independence. ■■■

NON-COOPERATION MOVEMENT (1921-1922)

The Non-Cooperation movement was launched by the Gandhi-led Congress Party in January 1921 in order to pressurize the British to redress three of its grievances:

- Punjab wrong
- Khilafat wrong
- Denial of Swaraj

Punjab wrong: Indian leadership wanted the British to remedy the 'Punjab wrong', i.e., the British government should express its regret on the happenings in Punjab, particularly in Amritsar.

The government, determined to suppress the nationalist agitation against the Rowlatt Act of 1919 (under this Act, anyone could be arrested and imprisoned without any trial), decided to meet the popular protest with repression, particularly in Punjab. At this time was perpetrated one of the worst political crimes in modern history. An unarmed but large crowd had gathered on 13 April 1919 in the Jallianwalla Bagh (a garden) at Amritsar to protest against the arrest and deportation of two of their popular leaders, (Dr. Satya Pal and Dr. Kitchlu). General Dyer, who had been recently given charge of the town to restore law and order, had already issued a proclamation banning all meetings but it was not made public. The General now surrounded the garden and closed the only exit and opened fire on the large peaceful crowd without any provocation. This massacre of innocent people sent the whole of the Punjab into ferment. As a result, martial law was proclaimed throughout Punjab and the people were subjected to the most uncivilized atrocities such as crawling on the ground, flogging, being deprived of water and electric supplies, etc. People got a glimpse of the ugliness and brutality that lay behind the façade of civilization that imperialism and foreign rule professed.

Khilafat wrong: Indians demanded the government to remedy the 'Khilafat Wrong', i.e. the British should adopt a lenient attitude towards Turkey which stood defeated in World War I. The Indian Muslims became apprehensive of the fate of Turkey and its Sultan who was also the Khalifa or the religious head of the Muslims all over the world.

The Muslims, therefore, formed a Khilafat Committee under the leadership of the Ali brothers (Maulana Mohammed Ali and Shaukat Ali), Maulana Azad, Hakim Ajmal Khan and Hasrat Mohani. Its purpose was to organize a countrywide agitation if the position of the Khalifa was undermined. Britain announced its peace terms to Turkey on 15th May 1920 and decided to abolish the title of Khalifa enjoyed by the Sultan of Turkey. The Central Khilafat Committee adopted the Non-Cooperation resolution (suggested by Mahatma Gandhi) at its Bombay session on 28th May 1920. A meeting of the Hindus and Muslims was held at Allahabad on June 1st and 2nd, and an appeal was made to the government that Britain should offer better peace terms to Turkey and should not take away the title of the Khalifa. In case the government did not agree to their demand, they would refuse to cooperate with the government. Gandhi and many other Congress leaders viewed the Khilafat agitation as a golden opportunity for bringing the Hindus and Muslims together on the national front. Therefore, the Congress decided to cooperate with the Khilafat movement and club its demand with those of the Khilafat Committee.

Swaraj issue: Indians demanded a new scheme of reforms which would take India nearer to its goal of Swaraj. However, the word Swaraj was not yet properly defined by the Congress leaders at this stage.

But the British government had refused to annul the Rowlatt Act, make amends for the atrocities in the Punjab, satisfy the nationalist urge for Swaraj, and offer more lenient terms to Turkey. So, in June, 1920 an all party conference met at Allahabad and approved a programme of boycott of schools, colleges and law courts. The Khilafat Committee launched a non-cooperation movement on 31st August, 1920.

What was the programme of Non-cooperation?

The Congress, under the leadership of Gandhi, started the Non-cooperation movement in January 1921. The movement included some negative as well as positive programmes. The negative programmes were: surrender of titles and honorary officers and

resignation from nominated seats in local bodies; refusal to attend government or semi-government functions; boycott of government schools and colleges by the students and teachers; boycott of British courts by lawyers and litigants; boycott of elections for the councils as suggested by the reforms of 1919; boycott of foreign goods; refusal on the part of the military, clerical and labouring classes to offer themselves as recruits in Mesopotamia. These programmes were negative in nature as through these, Indians sought to refuse to cooperate with the British in administering and exploiting their country for the benefit of the foreign rulers.

Some positive programmes were also undertaken during the non-cooperation movement so that the Indians in general would not have to suffer unduly due to the above mentioned negative programmes and also in order to make the movement a success. They were: establishment of national schools, colleges, and private arbitration courts (known as panchayats) all over India; popularization of Swadeshi and revival of hand spinning and hand-weaving for producing Khadi (hand-woven cloth); development of harmony between the Hindus and Muslims; removal of untouchability and other measures for Harijan welfare; emancipation and upliftment of women. The first two programmes sought to remove the hardships caused to the people by the negative programmes, while the last three ensured the participation of Muslims, Harijans and women in the Non-cooperation movement.

Phases of Non-cooperation

Four phases may be distinguished in the course of the movement, specifically responding to successive calls from the Congress. During the first phase, i.e. from January to March 1921, the main emphasis was on students leaving government, schools and colleges and lawyers giving up practice. Even the 'charkha' (the spinning wheel) programme initially had a strong intelligentsia orientation; with students and educated urban people in general being urged to take up spinning on a voluntary basis as a symbol of their identification with the rural masses and as a quick road to Swadeshi. After spectacular beginning with massive student strikes at Calcutta and Lahore and eminent lawyers like C.R. Das and Motilal Nehru giving up their practice, this exclusively intelligentsia movement soon began showing signs of decline.

The second phase (April to June 1921) started when the Vijaywada session of the All India Congress Committee (AICC) found the country not yet sufficiently disciplined, organized and ripe for

civil disobedience. So, it decided to concentrate on raising Rs. one crore for the Tilak Swaraj Fund enrolling one crore Congress members and installing 20 lakh charkhas by 30th June.

The third phase covered the period from July to November 1921. In the face of mounting pressures from the masses, the Bombay AICC meeting of July adopted a somewhat more militant stance, concentrating on boycott of foreign cloth (including public bonfires) and boycott of the expected visit of the Prince of Wales in November, though full scale civil disobedience through non-payment of taxes was again postponed. At this juncture, Gandhi gave a call for flooding the prisons with volunteers, and organization of volunteer bands was given top priority. Viceroy Reading quickly grasped the significance of the new mass orientation involved in the picketing and courting of arrest by tens of thousands. He realized that the change from Gandhi's appeal to intellectuals to appeal to ignorant masses had altered the situation but it had the advantage of bringing intellectuals and persons of property closer to the British. The Prince of Wales was treated with an extremely successful country-wide hartal on 17th November and there were violent clashes in Bombay which made Gandhi denounce the violence and postpone once again plans for civil disobedience in the selected single taluka of Bardoli.

The developments in the fourth phase (between November 1921 and February 1922) nearly brought the government to its knees. Some Khilafat leaders like Hasrat Mohani, angered by the jailing of the Ali brothers in November (for speeches at the Karachi Khilafat), were demanding complete independence and giving up of the non-violence dogma. The new government policy of large-scale arrests and ban on meetings and volunteer groups threatened to alienate the liberals while much of the country seemed to be on the brink of formidable revolt. Gandhi finally decided on the issue of infringed liberties of speech, press and association to begin from the second week of February 1922. As is well known, this campaign, together with the entire movement, was abruptly called off on 11th February, at Gandhi's insistence, following news of the immolation of 22 policemen by angry peasants at Chauri-Charua in Gorakhpur district of Uttar Pradesh on 5th February, 1922.

Participation in Non-cooperation

The response of different social groups and classes to the movement was quite varied. To begin with students and teachers actively participated in the movement. Hence, the programme of educational

THE SWARAJIST PARTY

- When C. R. Das and the other Bengal leaders were in Alipore Central Jail, they evolved a new programme of non-cooperation with the Government through legislatures.
- Their idea was to enter the legislatures in large numbers and "carry on a policy of uniform, continuous and consistent opposition to the Government." Motilal Nehru also shared the views of C.R. Das. In July 1922, C.R. Das came out of jail and began to carry on propaganda in favour of Council-entry.
- When a meeting of the All-India Congress Committee was held at Calcutta in November 1922, there were differences of opinion among the Congress leaders on the question of Council-entry. While C. R. Das, Motilal Nehru and Hakim Ajmal Khan were in favour of it, C. Rajagopalachari, Dr. Ansari, etc., were opposed to it.
- In spite of lengthy debates, no decision was arrived at. At the annual session of the Congress held at Gaya in December 1922, the "No-changers" won a victory and the programme of Council-entry was rejected. C.R. Das who presided over the session resigned from the Congress and announced his decision to form the Swarajist Party.
- The Object of the new party was to wreck the Government of India Act, 1919 from within the Councils. In March 1923, the first Conference of the Swarajist Party was held at the residence of Motilal Nehru at Allahabad and the future programme of the Party was decided. The keynote of the programme of the Party was obstructionism.
- Its members were to contest elections on the issue of the redress of the wrongs done by the British bureaucracy, to oppose every measure of the Government and to throw-out all legislative enactments proposed by the British Government. The view of the Swarajists was that the seats in the legislatures must be captured so that they did not fall into the hands of undesirable persons who were tools in the hands of the bureaucracy in India.
- Leaders of the Swarajist Party declared that outside the Councils, they would co-operate with the constructive programme of the Congress under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi and in case their methods failed, they would, without any hesitation, join Mahatma Gandhi's Civil Disobedience Movement, if and when launched by him.
- The Swarajist Party fought the elections in 1923 and refused to come to any understanding with the Liberal Federation. The Swarajist Party won a majority in the Legislative Council of the Central Provinces.
- It was the dominant Party in Bengal. It also won good support in U.P. and Bombay. However, the Swarajist party was at its best in the Central Assembly under the leadership of Motilal Nehru. By winning over the support of the Nationalist Party and a few other members, the Swarajist Party was able to command a working majority and was thus able to accomplish a lot.
- On 18th February, 1924, the Swarajist Party was able to get a resolution passed by which the Government was requested to establish full responsible Government in India. A demand was also made that a Round Table Conference consisting of the representatives of India should be called at an early date to frame a Constitution for India.
- The appointment of the Muddiman Committee was the result of a resolution of the Swarajist Party. Motilal Nehru was requested to become a member of this Committee but he refused. Some of the demands in the budget of 1924-25 were rejected by the Central Assembly as a result of the efforts of the Swarajist Party.
- The Assembly also refused to allow the Government to introduce the entire Finance Bill. In February 1925, V.J.Patel introduced a Bill asking for the repeal of certain laws and with the exception of one, the Bill was passed. A resolution was passed with the help of the Swarajist Party demanding the release of certain political prisoners.
- The Swarajists resorted to walkouts as a mark of protest against the policy of the Government. They boycotted all receptions, parties or functions organized by the Government. What was done in the Central Assembly was also done in those provincial legislatures where the Swarajists had some influence.
- For the first time, the Legislative Assembly wore the appearance of a truly National Assembly where national grievances were fully voiced, national aims and aspirations expressed without any reservation and real character of the British rule exposed. The British autocracy and Indian bureaucracy stood exposed to the whole world.

boycott was quite effective, particularly in Bengal. All-India figures collected by the Intelligence Department revealed the impact to have been considerable in colleges, but non-existent at the primary level. A considerable number of national schools and colleges were also founded (like the Jamia Millia Islamia in Aligarh, later shifted to Delhi, the Kashi Vidyapeeth at Banaras and the Gujarat Vidyapeeth) along with 442 institutions started in Bihar and Orissa, 190 in Bengal, 189 in Bombay, and 137 in Uttar Pradesh. Many of these proved short-lived, as the pull of conventional degrees and jobs naturally reasserted itself when Swaraj failed to come in a year but quite a few survived to serve as valuable seminars of nationalism.

For the peasants, the Gandhian programmes envisaged economic revival through self-help. Panchayats proved very popular in Bihar and Orissa while in Bengal 866 arbitration courts were set up between February 1921 and April 1922 and at their height they considerably outnumbered the government courts. The anti-liquor campaign became formidable partly because lower castes found in it an opportunity for sanskritizing and social upliftment. No definite statistics are available about the impact of the charkha drive but handloom cloth production did go up sharply between 1920 and 1923. The Khilafat agitation made Hindu-Muslim unity a powerful, though temporary fact. Progress regarding untouchability was much less marked, though Gandhi deserves all credit for bringing the issue to the forefront of national politics for the first time.

Labourers seemed to be running amuck throughout 1921 by the middle of 1920. The post war boom had succeeded by a recession particularly in the Calcutta industry, with the mill-owners trying to cut back production with a four-day week. The workers fought back, and there were a number of strikes in Bengali jute mills in 1921. Swami Vishwanand and Swami Dersananand tried to organize the coal miners of the Raniganj-Jharia belt, initially with some help from Indian mine owners fighting European hegemony. Though Gandhi himself did not include strikes, particularly political strikes, in the various programmes of the Non-cooperation movement, some regional Congress leaders did take active part in some strikes, most notably in Bengal and Madras.

The initial appeal for self-sacrifice to the upper and middle classes was hardly successful. Only 24 titles were surrendered out of 5,000 odd, and the number of lawyers giving up practice stood at 180 in March 1921. Polling was low in many places in the November 20 elections, falling to only 8% in Bombay city and 5% in Lahore, but candidates offered themselves in all but 6 out of 637 seats, and council functions could not be disrupted as planned.

A good number of merchants participated in the movement by refusing to indent foreign cloth. The value of imports of foreign cloth fell from Rs. 102 crores in 1920-21 to Rs. 57 crores in 1921-22. For importers of Lancashire cloth, nationalism in 1921 nearly coincided with short term business interests, as with the fall in the rupee sterling exchange ratio, Indian merchants were being asked to pay much more for British goods than previously contracted for. Their support was decisive in bringing about a qualitative change in the Congress funds. The Congress had only Rs. 43,000 in its coffers in 1920 but was able to collect more than Rs. 130 lakhs between 1921 and 1923.

The big industrialists and capitalists, however, still remained hostile, and an Anti-Non-Cooperation Association was started in 1920 by Purshottamdas Thakurdas, Jamunadas Dwarkadas, Setalvad etc. While the textile was certainly helped by the national Swadeshi upsurge, fear of labour unrest was probably crucial in keeping industrialists ambivalent.

What the Non-cooperation achieved?

The Non-Cooperation movement, despite its failure to achieve any of its three major objectives, had great significance in the Indian national movement. The Indian nationalist movement, for the first time in its history, acquired a real mass base with the participation of different sections of Indian society and more notably of peasants and workers. The nationalist sentiments reached the remotest corners of the country during this movement. Besides, it transformed the Indian National Congress from a deliberative assembly to an organization for action. The movement, above all, demonstrated the willingness and ability of the people in general to endure hardships and punishments caused by the government to a remarkable degree. The movement also inspired the people for further sacrifices in the cause of national independence. ■■■

MILITANT REVOLUTIONARY TERRORISM

The rise and growth of revolutionary terrorism in India from the beginning of the 20th century was due to several factors. The youth, particularly those of Bengal, Punjab and Maharashtra, were increasingly getting frustrated with the moderate methods and techniques of political struggle such as petitions, meetings, resolutions, speeches, etc. The youth were also gradually losing faith in the extremists' methods of passive resistance (i.e. to refuse to cooperate with the government and to boycott government service, court, government schools and colleges) to achieve nationalist aims. This feeling was further strengthened by the failure of the Swadeshi and Anti-partition Movement. Besides, there was growing hatred among the Indian youth for foreign rule due to the racial superiority and arrogant behaviour of the British. This hatred was also due to cruel measures adopted by the British to suppress the national movement.

Secret Societies

Several secret societies were set up especially in Bengal and Maharashtra. In Bengal, the first revolutionary secret societies started around 1902 - the Anushilan Samiti of Calcutta founded by Barindra Kumar Ghosh and Jatindranath Banerji (Aurobindo's emissaries) and Promotha Mitter, and the Anushilan Samiti of Dacca founded by Pulin Das. In Maharashtra, the first secret society, viz., Mitra Mela, was founded by the Savarkar brothers in 1889. Later, when V.D. Savarkar went abroad, his elder brother Ganesh Savarkar started it in 1907 the 'Abhinava Bharat' which soon had many branches all over western India. Secret societies were also established in Bihar, Orissa, Punjab and other regions of India as well. A few of them succeeded in keeping mutual contact among them but most of them worked as isolated groups of leaders.

It was only in the 1920's that revolutionary militant groups came at forefront. The 'Hindustan Socialist Republican Association' even established centres of revolutionary activity abroad. In London, the lead was taken by Shyamji Krishnavarma and V.D. Savarkar, in Europe by Madam Cama and Ajit Singh, while in the U.S.A and Canada Sohan Singh Bhakna and Har Dayal were the prominent leaders, While the Indian

revolutionaries in Britain and Europe were no more than fairly isolated emigre groups, those in the U.S.A and Canada acquired mass base. These people, under the leadership of Sohan Singh Bhakna and Har Dayal, had established the 'Ghadar' (revolution) party in 1913. While most of its members were Sikh peasants, workers, petty traders, soldiers, etc., their leaders were mostly educated Hindus or Muslims. The party had active members in other countries such as Mexico, Japan, China, Philippines, Malaya, Singapore, Thailand, Indo-China and East and South Africa.

How did they spread their ideas?

The revolutionary terrorists, both in India and abroad, published a number of newspapers, journals and pamphlets in order to propagate revolutionary ideas. Newspapers like 'Sandhya' and 'Yugantar' in Bengal and 'Kal' in Maharashtra began to advocate revolutionary terrorism. A good number of Journals were also brought out by Indian revolutionaries abroad. Some of these journals were - 'Indian Sociologist' by Shyamji Krishna Varma from London, 'Bande Mataram' by Madam Bhikaji Cama from Paris, 'Talvar' by Virendranath Chattopadhyay from San Francisco, etc. The most important pamphlets brought out by revolutionaries were the 'Bhawani Mandir' (by Aurobindo Ghosh in 1905) and 'Oh! Martyrs' by the London group in 1907.

Assassination of unpopular officials

A beginning in the direction of assassination of oppressive and unpopular officials had been made in 1897 when the Chapekar brothers, Damodar and Balakrishna, assassinated two unpopular British officials at Poona. Again in 1907, an unsuccessful attempt was made on the life of the unpopular Lt. Governor of East Bengal, Mr. Fuller, by some members of the Anushilan Samiti of Calcutta. In 1908 Khudiram Bose and Prafulla Chaki threw a bomb at a carriage which was believed to be occupied by Kingsford, the unpopular Judge of Muzzaffarpur. The revolutionary terrorists became so bold that two of them, Rash Behari Bose and Sachindranath Sanyal,

threw a bomb at the Viceroy Lord Hardinge while he was riding on an elephant in a state procession in Delhi in 1912. The Viceroy was wounded but not killed. Another dramatic manifestation of revolutionary terrorist activity was the assassination of the British police officer, Saunders, by Bhagat Singh, Azad and Rajguru in 1928. The police officer had earlier ordered lathi-charge on a demonstration (against the appointment of the Simon Commission) led by Lala Lajpat Rai, and this 'Sher-e-Punjab' incurred a fatal injury to which he succumbed later.

Conspiracies hatched

The revolutionary terrorists also tried to organize military conspiracies with the help of Indian soldiers in the British army and also that of the foreign countries hostile to Britain. For revolutionaries striving for immediate complete independence, the First World War seemed a heaven-sent opportunity, draining India of troops (the number of white soldiers was reduced to just 15,000) and bringing the possibility of financial and military help from the enemies of Britain, mainly Germany and Turkey. Britain's war with Turkey brought about close cooperation between Hindu nationalists and militant Muslim pan-Islamists. As a result of this cooperation, important Muslim revolutionary leaders emerged like - Barkatullah in the Ghadar Party and; Muhammad Hussain and Obaidulla Sindhi in Deobandh.

On Indian Soil: In Bengal, most of the revolutionary groups united under Jatin Mukherji popularly known as 'Bagha Jatin'. These groups planned the disruption of rail communications, seizure of Fort William in Calcutta (contacts had been made with the 16th Rajput Rifles stationed there) and landing of German arms (for arranging this, Naren Bhattacharji, later known as M.N. Roy, was sent to Java). The grandiose plans were, however, ruined by poor coordination and Jatin died a hero's death near Balasore on the Orissa coast where he had been tracked down by the police through the help of local villagers. The Bengal plans were part of a far-flung conspiracy organized by Rash Behari Bose and Sachindranth Sanyal in cooperation with the returned Ghadarites in Punjab. But many of the Punjabis who returned after 1914 were quickly rounded up by the British and the plan for a coordinated revolt on 21st February, 1915, based on mutinies by Ferozpur, Lahore and Rawalpindi garrisons was foiled at the last moment by treachery. Rash Behari Bose had to

flee to Japan and Sanyal was transported for having tried to subvert the garrisons of Banaras and Danapore. Though the plan for an all India revolt misfired badly, its organizers, and particularly the Ghadarites, were still pioneers in taking revolutionary ideas to the army and the peasants. There were some scattered mutinies, most notable of them are - at Singapore, by the Indian sepoy of the British army on 15th February 1915, of the Punjab Muslim 5th Light Infantry and the 36th Sikh Battalion.

On Foreign Land: Efforts to send help to revolutionaries from abroad were centered during the war years in Berlin where the Indian Independence Committee was set up in 1915 under Virendranath Chattopadyay, Bhupen Dutta, Hardayal and some others in collaboration with the German foreign office under the so-called Zimmerman Plan. An Indo-German-Turkish mission tried to stir up anti-British feelings among tribes near the Indo-Iranian border and in December 1915, Mahendra Pratap, Barkatullah and Abaidulla Sindhi set up a 'Provisional Government of Free India' at Kabul with some backing from crown prince Amanullah but not from the Amir, Habibulla. Funds were channeled through German embassies in the far East and from Japan. Rash Behari Bose and Abani Mukherji made several efforts to send arms after 1915.

Dacoities and Robberies

Revolutionaries organized a number of raids on government armouries, banks and police stations to raise funds, arms and ammunition. According to official record, between 1907 and 1917, the number of dacoities that were conducted in different parts of India was 1121. The Chittagong groups of revolutionaries headed by Surya Sen brought off the most spectacular coup in the entire history of militant nationalism in April 1930 by seizing the local armoury and issuing an independence proclamation in the name of the 'Indian Republic Army'. The Chittagong raid proved to be the curtain raiser for an extremely intense wave of terrorism in Bengal with no less than 56 incidents reported in 1930 (as against just 47 for the entire decade 1919-29). Among them, the most spectacular raid was the one on the Government headquarters in Writer's Building in Calcutta in December 1930. In Punjab also, where the Hindustan Socialist Republic Association had become very active, 26 incidents of robberies were reported in 1930. ■■■

- The Indian Statutory Commission was a group of seven British Members of Parliament that had been dispatched to India in 1927 to study constitutional reforms there. It was commonly referred to as the Simon Commission after its Chairman.

Background

- The Government of India Act 1919 had introduced the system of dyarchy to govern the provinces of British India. However, the Indian public clamoured for revision of the difficult dyarchy form of government, and the Government of India Act 1919 itself stated that a commission would be appointed after 10 years to investigate the progress of the governance scheme and suggest new steps for reform.
- In the late 1920s, the Conservative government, then in power in Britain, feared imminent electoral defeat at the hands of the Labour Party, and also feared the effects of the consequent transference of control of India to such an "inexperienced" body.
- Hence, in November of 1927, Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin appointed seven MPs (including Chairman Simon) to constitute the commission that had been promised in 1919 that would look into the state of Indian constitutional affairs.
- The people of the Indian subcontinent were outraged and insulted, as the Simon Commission, which was to determine the future of India, did not include a single Indian member.
- The Indian National Congress, at its December 1927 meeting in Chennai, resolved to boycott the Commission and accepted the challenge of Lord Birkenhead, the Secretary of State for India, to draft a constitution that would be acceptable to the Indian populace. A faction of the Muslim League, led by Muhammad Ali Jinnah, also decided to boycott the Commission.
- In Burma (Myanmar), which was included in the terms of reference of the Simon Commission, there was strong suspicion either that Burma's unpopular union with India would continue, or that the constitution recommended for Burma by the Simon Commission would be less generous than that chosen for India; these suspicions resulted in tension and violence in Burma leading to the rebellion of Saya San.

Death of Lajpat Rai

- Almost immediately with its arrival in Mumbai on February 3, 1928, the Simon Commission was confronted by throngs of protestors. The entire country observed a hartal (strike), and many people turned out to greet the Commission with black flags. Similar protests occurred in every major Indian city that the seven British MPs visited. However, one protest against the Simon Commission would gain infamy above all the others.
- On October 30, 1928, the Simon Commission arrived in Lahore where, as with the rest of the country, its arrival was met with massive amounts of protestors. The Lahore protest was led by Indian nationalist Lala Lajpat Rai, who had moved a resolution against the Commission in the Central Legislative Assembly of Punjab in February 1928.
- In order to make way for the Commission, the local police force began beating protestors with their lathis (sticks). The police were particularly brutal towards Lala Lajpat Rai, who later that day declared, "The blows which fell on me today are the last nails in the coffin of British imperialism." On November 17, Lajpat Rai died of his injuries.

Report of the Commission

- The Commission published its 17-volume report in 1930. It proposed the abolition of dyarchy and the establishment of representative government in the provinces. It also recommended that separate communal electorates be retained, but only until tensions between Hindus and Muslims had died down.

- Noting that educated Indians opposed the Commission and also that communal tensions had increased instead of decreasing, the British government opted for another method of dealing with the constitutional issues of India.
- Before the publication of the report, the British government stated that Indian opinion would henceforth be taken into account, and that the natural outcome of the constitutional process would be dominion status for India. The outcome of the Simon Commission was the Government of India Act 1935, which established representative government at the provincial level in India and is the basis of many parts of the Indian Constitution.

NEHRU REPORT

- The "Nehru Report" (1928) was a memorandum outlining a proposed new Dominion constitution for India. It was prepared by a committee of the All Parties Conference chaired by Motilal Nehru with his son Jawaharlal acting as secretary. There were nine other members in this committee, including two Muslims.
- The Constitution outlined by the Nehru report was for India enjoying dominion status within the British Commonwealth. Some of the important elements of the report were:
 - (i) Unlike the eventual Government of India Act 1935, it contained a Bill of Rights;
 - (ii) All power of government and all authority - legislative, executive and judicial - were to be derived from the people and the same would be exercised through organizations established by, or under, and in accordance with, the Constitution;
 - (iii) There would be no state religion; men and women would have equal rights as citizens;
 - (iv) There was to be federal form of government with residuary powers vested in the centre. (Some scholars, such as Moore in "The Making of India's Paper Federation, 1927-35" in 1988, considered the Nehru Report proposal as essentially unitary rather than federal);
 - (v) It included a description of the machinery of government, including a proposal for the creation

of a Supreme Court and a suggestion that the provinces should be linguistically determined;

- (vi) It did not provide for separate electorates for any community or for weightage for minorities. Both of these were liberally provided in the eventual Government of India Act, 1935. However, it did allow for the reservation of Muslim seats in provinces having a Muslim minority of at least ten per cent, but this was to be in strict proportion to the size of the community;
- (vii) The language of the British Commonwealth would be Hindustani, which might be written either in Devnagri or in Urdu character. The use of the English language would be permitted.
- The Nehru Report, alongwith that of the Simon Commission was available to participants in the three Indian Round Table Conferences 1931-1933. However, the Government of India Act 1935 owes much to the Simon Commission report and little, if anything, to the Nehru Report. Historical significance of the Jinnah Report.

JINNAH'S FOURTEEN POINTS

- With few exceptions, Muslim leaders rejected the Nehru proposals. In reaction, Mohammad Ali Jinnah drafted his Fourteen Points in 1929 which became the core demands of the Muslim community put forward as the price of their participating in an independent united India. Their main objections were:
 - Separate Electorates and Weightage - the 1916 Congress-Muslim League agreement - the Lucknow Pact, provided these to the Muslim community whereas they were rejected by the Nehru Report.
 - Residuary Powers - the Muslims realized that while they would be a majority in the provinces of the North-East and North-West of India, and hence would control their provincial legislatures, they would always be a minority at the Centre. Thus they demanded, contrary to the Nehru Report, that residuary powers go to the provinces.
 - The inability of Congress to concede these points must be considered a major factor in the eventual partition of India. ■■■■

CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENT (1930-34)

The Lahore Session of the Congress, symbolizing the new militant spirit of the whole nation, passed a resolution declaring 'Poorna Swaraj' (Full Independence) as the objective of the Congress. The newly adopted tri-colour flag of freedom was hoisted on 31st December 1929. January 26th, 1930 was fixed as the first Independence Day. This session also launched the Civil Disobedience movement, but it did not draw up a programme of struggle. That was left to Gandhi, the Congress organization being placed at his disposal. Once again the nationalist movement led by Gandhi faced the government. The country was again filled with hope and exhilaration and the determination to be free.

The Lahore Session was followed by a two-month lull, while the country and the government waited of Gandhi to decide on the precise methods of Non-violent struggle for 'Poorna Swaraj'. Independence pledges were taken at innumerable meetings throughout the country on 26th January denouncing the British for having ruined India economically, politically, culturally, and spiritually. In the pledges, it was asserted that it was a crime against man and God to submit any longer to such a rule. The Congress legislators were ordered to resign on 6th January 1930.

Gandhi issued an eleven-point ultimatum to Lord Irwin on 31st January, 1930. Further serious appeals were made for Civil disobedience, including non-payment of taxes. The choice of salt as the main issues also appeared somewhat eccentric at first, and Nehru later recalled his initial sense of bewilderment. Though the eleven points seemed a kind of retreat, they at least concretized the national demand and related it to specific grievances.

Demands

The eleven points included redressal of two peasants grievances, three specific bourgeois demands and six issues of general interest. The peasants' demands were:

- 50 per cent reduction in land revenue and;
- abolition of the salt tax and government salt

monopoly.

The three specific bourgeois demands were:

- lowering of the Rupee-Sterling exchange ratio,
 - textile protection and,
 - reservation of coastal shipping for Indians.
- The six issues of general interest were:**
- 50 per cent cut in military expenditure,
 - 50 per cent reduction in expenditure on civil administration (civil service salaries),
 - total prohibition of Intoxicants,
 - release of all political prisoners,
 - reforms in the Central intelligence Department (C.I.D.) and;
 - changes in the Arms Act enabling citizens to bear arms for self-defence.

What is Dandi March?

The Civil Disobedience Movement was started by Gandhi with his Dandi March (12th March to 6th April 1930). The Dandi March, from the Sabarmati Ashram to Dandi (a village on the Gujarat sea-coast) with 71 Ashram members drawn from all parts of India, attracted enormous publicity and attention from the entire country and even abroad. Gandhi declared on 11th March 1930 that wholesale illegal manufacture and auctioning of salt should begin after he had himself violated the law at Dandi; it could be accompanied by boycott of foreign cloth and liquor after his own arrest and everyone would have a free hand, subject to the pledge of non-violence and truth, though local leaders should be obeyed.

Stages of Civil Disobedience

The three different stages of the civil Disobedience movement witnessed varying role of different social groups and classes.

First stage (March to September 1930): It saw the high point of bourgeois participation in towns and controlled peasant mobilization in the villages

on issues selected by Gandhi such as salt, non-payment of revenue, picketing of liquor shops, and non-payments of Chaukidari tax. Among industrialists, G.D. Birla donated approximately 5 lakh rupees to the movement according to British Intelligence estimates. His letters reveal him as actively trying to persuade the Calcutta Marwari foreign piece-goods importers to establish trade contacts instead with Ahmedabad and Bombay cotton mills. While Jamnalal Bajaj was unique among capitalists in being a full time Congress activist (he served as AICC treasurer for many years and went to jail in 1930), Walchand Hirachand urged fellow-businessmen in a letter to the FICCI in April 1930 to give up the policy of sitting on the fence and throw in their lot with those that were fighting for Swaraj. In May 1930, FICCI also decided to boycott the Round Table Conference as long as Gandhi stayed away from it and till the Viceroy made a definite promise regarding dominion status.

During the period 1921-22, the merchants and petty traders were, on the whole, much more enthusiastic supporters of the national movement than industrialists and capitalists. Collective pledges by merchants not to indent foreign goods became very common in Bombay, Amritsar, Delhi and Calcutta and represented a more effective form of boycott than the spectacular picketing by (often women) volunteers. The overall impact was a remarkable fall in British cloth imports. Other British imports also suffered and, from May to August 1930, the British Trade Commissioner's office was flooded with panic-stricken reports and complaints from 'white' firms.

In the countryside, the initial Gandhian Civil Disobedience movement took place in areas which had already witnessed some amount of Gandhian rural constructive work through local ashrams. Salt provided the initial vital catalyst, but illegal manufacture became difficult with the onset of the monsoon. Naturally, salt became the basis for a sustained campaign only in the coastal parts of Bombay presidency, Balasore in Orissa and Midnapur in Bengal. Picketing of liquor shops and of excise license auctions became an important element of Civil Disobedience movement both in small towns and villages. On the other hand, the peasants in many areas firmly refused to pay the chaukidari tax despite enormous physical correction and sale of property. Rural taluka of Khera district and Bardoli of Surat became centres of very successful no-revenue campaign with peasants taking refuge in the neighbouring Baroda state in a 'Hijrat' (voluntary migration) which, at its height on October 1930,

involved over 15,000 peasants in Khera. In the Central Provinces, Maharashtra and Karnataka, the Congress leadership tried to utilize in a controlled manner the potentially explosive issue of poor peasants and tribal grievances regarding forest laws. Setting up training camps for 'forest satyagrahis' and carefully selecting satyagraha centres.

Second stage (October 1930 to March 1931): From the beginning of this stage, there was an evident decline in enthusiasm and support from urban merchants with dealers breaking Congress-imposed seals on foreign cloth at a number of places. The gains from Swadeshi demand were counter-balanced by frequent hartals which dislocated trade and industry. The alarm-signals from business groups calling for compromise, as well as the ultimate nationalist response to them, were more probably connected with developments in the countryside.

In the rural areas, the more purely Gandhian forms based on the relatively propertied peasants were losing some of their earlier potency in the face of ruthless British suppression. At the same time, there were signs of a 'second wave', taking less manageable and socially dangerous forms, like no-rent or tribal rebellion. (No-rent campaigns were different from No revenue campaigns, since the former were aimed at the local zamindars and landlords, whereas the latter were aimed at the Government). In scattered incidents throughout the country, the peasants were resisting the arrests of their leaders and the seizure of their property, mobilizing neighbouring villages through the blowing of conch-shells and surrounding and attacking police parties.

In August 1930 itself, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Mr. Jayakar attempted to bring about compromise between the Congress and the government but failed because the government insisted on the withdrawal of the movement first. Meanwhile, the report of the Simon Commission had been submitted. The British government decided to call the first Round Table Conference to deliberate and discuss future constitutional reforms with the Indian leaders. The Conference started its deliberations on 12th November 1930. But the Congress did not participate in it. Realizing the futility of talks in the absence of the representatives of the Congress, the Conference was adjourned 'sine die' on 19th January 1931.

The government now realized the necessity of coming to terms with the Congress. He released the members of the Working Committee of the Congress, including Gandhi on 26th January 1931. Efforts for a compromise between the Congress and the

government were revived by Tej Bahadur Sapru, Dr. Jayakar, etc. The efforts proved successful this time and the Gandhi-Irwin Pact was signed in March 1931. By it, the government agreed to:

- (a) Withdraw all ordinances and end prosecutions.
- (b) Release all political prisoners, except those guilty of violence.
- (c) Restore the confiscated property of the Satyagraha.
- (d) Permit peaceful picketing of liquor, opium and foreign cloth shops and;
- (e) Permit the collection or manufacture of salt, free of duty, to persons residing within a specific distance of the seashore.

The Congress, on its part agreed to:

- (a) suspend the Civil Disobedience movement,
- (b) participate in the second Round Table Conference, and
- (c) not to press for investigation into police excesses.

The Congress ratified it in its session held at Karachi in March 1931 due to the persuasion of Gandhi. Gandhi was deputed to attend the second Round Table Conference as the sole representative of the Congress. The spirit of the pact was already marred by the execution of Bhagat Singh and his comrades on the eve of the Karachi Session of the Congress. Certain other changes also took place between the signing of the Pact and the holding of second Round Table Conference. Lord Irwin was replaced by Lord Wellington as the Viceroy of India. Lord Wellington was staunch conservative and revived the repressive policy of the government soon after his arrival in India. In England, while the Conference was still in session, general elections took place and the Conservative government was in no mood to grant any concession to India. Gandhi returned to India in December 1931 as a dejected person and found that the government had already revived its policy of repression. He therefore, decided to revive the Civil Disobedience movement and the Congress Working Committee approved it.

Third stage (January 1932 to April 1934): The third phase of the movement was officially withdrawn by the Congress in April 1934 though, unofficially, the Congress admitted defeat in the 1933 itself. Outmaneuvered and facing repressive measures on an unprecedented scale, the national movement under the Congress still fought on valiantly for about a year and a half. The movement, during this phase

comprised a wide range of activities almost totally suppressed. The forms of defiance included picketing the cloth and liquor shops, closing of markets and boycott of 'white' or loyalist business concerns, symbolic hoisting of Congress flags, holding in public of 'illegal' Congress sessions, salt satyagrahas, non-payment of chaukidari taxes, no-rent as well as no-revenue, forest law violations, etc.

But by the second half of 1932 itself, the Civil Disobedience movement was evidently losing ground. It is true that the decline in peasants' participation, evident for instance in Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh and U.P., was clearly a submission to overwhelmingly superior force rather than any loss of faith in the Congress. The halo of sacrifice and martyrdom, won by the latter during 1930-34, helped decisively in the winning elections from 1934 onwards. But we should not forget that voting was not the same as agitating. The days of the classic satyagrahas had passed and, though the propertied peasants would go on voting Congress, they were no longer ready to sacrifice their land, now that Gandhi had failed to get it restored for them in 1931. In some areas, most notably Gujarat, they would also become more prosperous after Depression was succeeded by a war boon and correspondingly less militant.

How Civil Disobedience collapsed?

As the mass movement declined, political 'realism' and certain sectional economic calculations pushed some business groups towards collaboration much as signing agreements, giving preferential treatment and lower import duty rates to British textile imports and other British commodities. Yet strong objective compulsions, both economic and political, existed to prevent anything like total sell-out or unqualified collaboration by Indian business groups. British insistence on retaining the existing exchange ratio remained a permanent grievance. Above all, collaboration was made difficult by the fact that the years 1932-34 were marked by a full-scale counter-offensive by British business interests. With Lancashire in particular closely aligning itself with the ultra-Tory opposition led by Churchill to any constitutional concession going beyond the Simon Commission's framework.

The ultimate result of the opposite pressures towards collaboration and conflict was an important re-alignment of business attitudes in support of a change in Congress policy away from mass agitation and towards Assembly and eventually ministerial participation. This realignment enabled Indian

capitalists to overcome the fairly sharp split between near loyalists and nationalists within their own ranks which had become quite marked during the early 1930's. It also fitted in with developments in the Congress leaderships as it came to terms gradually with the evident decline of Civil Disobedience in the face of overwhelming repression.

Significance of Civil Disobedience

The Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930-34 was an advance over the Non-cooperation Movement of 1921-22 in quite a few respects.

- First of all, the stated objective of the movement of 1930-34 was the achievement of complete independence and not just the remedying of two specific 'wrongs' plus a very vague Swaraj.
- Secondly, in sharp contrast to what had happened after Chauri Chaura incident, Gandhi, during 1930-34, pushed ahead with the non-violent main stream despite sporadic incidents which were realistically recognized now as more or less inevitable.
- Thirdly, the methods adopted during the 1930-34 movement, from the beginning, involved deliberate violation of law and not mere Non-cooperation with foreign rule.
- Fourthly, participation in this movement involved much greater risk than in 1921-22, for, a frightened government from May 1930 onwards adopted a policy of senseless brutality even towards absolutely peaceful Satyagrahis, Apart from life and limb, the meagre property of the poor was very much at stake, for non-payment of land revenue or chaukidari tax was met by wholesale confiscation of household goods, implements and even land.
- Fifthly, large scale participation of women and teenagers was another significant feature of the civil disobedience movement. The Civil Disobedience movement, in fact, marked a major step forward in the emancipation of Indian women.
- Sixthly, the movement of 1930-34 obtained a better response from business groups and large sections of the peasantry than the movement of 1921-22.
- And finally, organizationally the Congress was now much stronger in most parts of the country than in 1921-22 when it had just taken the first step on the road towards becoming a mass party.

Yet it would be a considerable over simplification to present the Civil Disobedience Movement as an unqualified advance in every respect over the Non-

cooperation Movement. To begin with, the stirring Hindu-Muslim unity of 1919-22 was obviously a thing of the past in 1930s. For, between the two movements stood not only the breakdown of the Nehru Report negotiations but a decade of intense communal organization and fratricidal strife. Outside the North West Frontier Province and a few isolated pockets like Delhi, Muslim participation remained low throughout the civil disobedience years. Further, unlike the Non-cooperation Movement, the Civil Disobedience Movement did not coincide with any major labour upsurge. Another difference between the two movements was that under the influence of the Civil Disobedience Movement, there was an evident decline in the older and more purely intelligentsia forms of protest like lawyers giving up their practice and students and teachers leaving official institutions to start national schools and colleges.

COMMUNAL AWARD

- After the failure of the Second Round Table conference, Ramsay McDonald announced the 'Communal Award' on August 16, 1932. According to the Award, the right of separate electorate was not only given to the Muslims of India but also to all the minority communities in the country.
- The Award also declared untouchables as a minority and thus the Hindu depressed classes were given a number of special seats, to be filled from special depressed class electorates in the area where their voters were concentrated.
- Under the Communal Award, the principle of weightage was also maintained with some modifications in the Muslim minority provinces. Principle of weightage was also applied for Europeans in Bengal and Assam, Sikhs in the Punjab and North West Frontier Province, and Hindus in Sindh and North West Frontier Province.
- Though the Muslims constituted almost 56 per cent of the total population of Punjab, they were given 86 out of 175 seats in the Punjab Assembly. The Muslim majority of 54.8 per cent in Punjab was thus reduced to a minority. The formula favoured the Sikhs of Punjab and the Europeans of Bengal the most.
- The Award was not popular with any Indian party. Muslims were not happy with the Communal Award, as it has reduced their majority in Punjab and Bengal to a minority. Yet

they were prepared to accept it.

- On the other hand, the Hindus refused to accept the awards and decided to launch a campaign against it. For them it was not possible to accept the 'untouchables' as a minority. They organized the Allahabad Unity Conference in which they demanded for the replacement of separate electorates by joint electorates. Many nationalist Muslims and Sikhs also participated in the conference.
- The Congress also rejected the Award in toto. Gandhi protested against the declaration of untouchables as a minority and undertook a fast unto death. He also held meetings with the untouchable leadership for the first time and try to convince them that they were very much part of the mainstream Hindu society.
- He managed to sign the Poona Pact with Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, the leader of untouchables, in which the Congress met many of the untouchables' demands.

POONA PACT

- Poona Pact (1932) is the popular name of an agreement between the Untouchables (called Depressed Classes) of India led by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and the Hindus of India, that took place on 24 September 1932 at Yerawada Jail in Pune.
- The text uses the term "Depressed Classes" to denote Untouchables who were later called Scheduled Castes under the Government of India Act 1935, and the later Indian Constitution of 1950. The Untouchables are now popularly known as Dalits.
- Major highlights of the Pact are as follows:
 1. There shall be seats reserved for the Depressed Classes out of general electorate seats in the provincial legislatures as follows: - Madras 30; Bombay with Sindh 25; Punjab 8; Bihar and Orissa 18; Central Provinces 20; Assam 7; Bengal 30; United Provinces 20. Total 148. These figures are based on the Prime Minister's (British) decision;
 2. Election to these seats shall be by joint electorates subject;
 3. The representation of the Depressed Classes in the Central Legislature shall likewise be on the principle of joint electorates and reserved seats by the method of primary election in the manner provided for in clause above for their representation in the provincial legislatures;

4. In the Central Legislature, 18 per cent of the seats allotted to the general electorate for British India in the said legislature shall be reserved for the Depressed Classes; and
5. In every province, out of the educational grant, an adequate sum shall be ear-marked for providing educational facilities to the members of Depressed Classes.

GANDHIJI'S EPIC FAST

- In September 1932, Gandhiji declared a fast unto death, to undo the provisions of the Communal Award of Ramsay McDonald, the then British Prime Minister, providing for the scheme of separate representation for the depressed classes, since that would cut across Hinduism.
- In May, 1933 Gandhiji undertook another fast not against the Government but "for purification of myself and my associates and for greater vigilance and watchfulness in connection with the Harijan cause."
- The President of the Congress, in consultation with Gandhiji, announced the suspension of the Civil Disobedience movement for 6 weeks. The Government continued its course of repression. Gandhiji, who was later released, decided to devote his time to Harijan work.
- The struggle was finally suspended by the All India Congress Committee who were allowed to meet at Patna and decided to call off the Civil Disobedience unconditionally, except for the provision that Gandhiji alone, when he thought it necessary, could offer Civil Disobedience.
- Gandhiji decided to start an individual Civil Disobedience movement, as from 1 August 1933, but he was arrested the previous night. He was released after a couple of days but was ordered to reside at Poona.
- Gandhi disobeyed this order, was re-arrested and sentenced to one year's imprisonment. There upon hundreds of Congressmen followed Gandhiji to prison. This movement continued till the early part of April, 1934.
- Throughout this period, the government continued to pursue a policy of severe repression which included imprisonment, police firing, beating in lock-up, shooting of detainees, atrocity on women, blockading of villages, and even looting and pillage.
- During the Civil Disobedience movement of 1930-31, more than 60,000 persons were imprisoned

and during the Second Civil Disobedience movement of 1932-34 the number of persons who courted arrest were, about 66,000.

- The programme or the boycott of British goods which was part of the movements led to a substantial fall in the import of British goods into India. Further, the Civil Disobedience Movement roused the Indian people in general, including villagers and women folk. Women rarely came out of the seclusion of their homes in order to take part in the struggle for freedom.
- This not only gave an impetus to the freedom movement, but also helped in bringing out another social revolution: the emancipation of women.
- When the Civil Disobedience movement came to an end in April, 1934, Gandhiji appealed to Congressmen to devote themselves to nation-building activities: promotion of Hindu-Muslim unity, removal of untouchability, and spread of hand-spinning.

GANDHI-IRWIN PACT AND FIRST ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE (Nov. 1930-Jan. 1931)

- While the Civil Disobedience Movement continued vigorously in spite of untold repression, efforts were made for a compromise and after several attempts of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Mr. M.R. Jayakar, an agreement was reached after 15 days' strenuous discussions between the Viceroy and Mahatma Gandhi.
- This agreement, better known as the Gandhi-Irwin Pact, was signed on 5 March, 1931. Under the agreement, the Government was to make concessions and take steps for the participation of the representatives of Congress in the Second Round Table Conference, and the Congress on its part, had to withdraw the Civil Disobedience Movement.
- Meanwhile, a Round Table Conference had met in London early 1931. The intention seemed to have been, to set off the stage, before the world of "representative gathering" of Indians trying for an agreed plan for the future government of their country.
- It was not Indians, but the Viceroy and his officials who chose these representatives. What they actually did was to carefully assemble all the diverse elements, every creed, every party, every racial minority, every interest in this subcontinent.
- The spirit in which the Gandhi-Irwin Pact was signed did not last long. In spite of protests from all quarters, the Government carried out the

execution of Sardar Bhagat Singh, Sukh Dev and Raj Guru on 23rd March 1931. On 18 April 1931, Lord Irwin was succeeded by Lord Willington. The new Viceroy had no intention to abide by the terms of the Pact.

SECOND ROUND-TABLE CONFERENCE (September-December 1931)

- In the meantime, however, the Congress Working Committee passed a resolution that Mahatma Gandhi should represent the Congress at the Second Round Table Conference to be convened later in 1931 in London. Mahatma Gandhi did attend the Conference as the sole representative of the Congress.
- As was expected, the communal question and the differences among the Indian people loomed large in this conference and all efforts to solve it by consent proved unsuccessful. Gandhiji put up a valiant fight and some of the speeches he delivered were most striking.
- Apparently the Government's scheme at the Round Table Conference was only a scheme for Indians sharing power with the bureaucracy and not one designed to achieve responsible Government.
- Gandhiji returned empty-handed from the Round Table Conference. The condition on which the Congress had agreed to participate, abandonment of stark repression, was also being broken. Jawaharlal Nehru and T.A.K. Sherwani had been arrested and put in jail again.
- In the North West Frontier Province Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and Dr. Khan Saheb were also arrested. Special ordinances had been enforced in the United Provinces, the North West Frontier Province and in Bengal.

THIRD ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE (November-December 1932)

- From September 1931 until March 1933, under the supervision of Samuel Hoare, the proposed reforms took the form reflected in the Government of India Act, 1935.
- Most of the main political figures of India were not present for this conference. In this conference, Chaudhary Rahmat Ali, a college student, coined the name PAKISTAN. He took the P from Punjab, the A from Afghanistan, the KI from Kashmir, the S from Sindh and the TAN from Balochistan. In this Conference M.A. Jinnah was not present.

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The failure of the Cripps Mission left no meeting ground between the Congress and the government. The government was not prepared to part with its power, while the congress insisted on the immediate transfer of power to the Indians because it believed that an effective resistance against the Japanese aggression could be organized only by a popular government. Gandhi, who was not prepared to oppose the government by a mass movement so far, was now convinced of the necessity of starting a mass movement again and, hence, changed his mind. Some Congressmen were not convinced of his argument to start a mass movement with a view to force the British to hand over power to India during the course of war, but all submitted before him and those who did not, like C. Rajagopalachari and Bhulabhai Desai, resigned from the Congress (July 1942). The Congress Working Committee met at Wartha in July and demanded the immediate withdrawal of the British from India. The All India Congress Committee ratified this 'Quit India' resolution at its meeting at Bombay on 8th August, 1942.

Major Causes

The roots of the Revolt of 1942 can be found in certain national as well as international developments. The first and the foremost cause was the new popular mood of August 1942 caused by the rout of the British by an Asian power, viz., Japan. The victory of Japan and subsequent events shattered the white prestige on the one hand and on the other, revealed the gross racism of the rulers of India once again. While the defeat of the British made the Indians believe that British rule was ending, the way the British cared about the safety of their own people in South East Asia leaving the Indian immigrants there to their own fate caused great amount of anti-white fury among all the Indians. The British in Malaya, Singapore and Burma commanded all forms of transport in their ignominious flight and left the Indian immigrants there to find their own way. The result was a compound of anti-white fury and an expectation that British rule was ending. It is probably not accidental that east U.P., and west and north Bihar, the region

where the 'August Rebellion' (Revolt of 1942) attained its maximum popular intensity, was also traditional one of the principle catchment areas for Indian migrant labour going to South East Asia and other parts of the world.

Gandhi: In Militant Mood

This new popular mood of August 1942 was certainly sensed by Gandhi and his own statements before launching the Quit India movement are proof of this fact. That is why, the summer of 1942 found Gandhi in a strange and uniquely militant mood. 'Leave India to God or to anarchy', he repeatedly urged the British. 'This orderly disciplined anarchy should go and, if as a result there is complete lawlessness, I would risk it'. Though the need for non-violence was always reiterated, the famous "Quit India" resolution followed up its call for mass struggle on non-violent lines under Gandhi's leadership with the significant rider that if the Congress leadership was removed by arrest, every Indian, who desired freedom and strives for it, must be his own guide. Gandhi also declared in his passionate 'Do or Die' speech that every Indian should consider himself to be a free man, and also that mere jail-going would not do. 'If a general strike becomes a dire necessity, I shall not flinch', was yet another most uncharacteristic remark made by Gandhi in an interview on 6th August, 1942. It may be noted that Gandhi was, for once, prepared to countenance political strikes precisely at a time when the communists were bound to keep aloof from them in very sharp contrast to his attitude in previous of left-led labour militancy in 1928-29 or the late 1930's and early 1940's.

How was Quit India Movement Organized?

Three broad phases can be distinguished in the Quit India Movement or the Revolt of 1942. The first phase (from 9th to 15th August 1942) was massive and violent but quickly suppressed. It was predominantly urban and included hartals, strikes and clashes with police and army in most cities. Bombay, as so often before, was the main storm centre during

this phase. Calcutta also witnessed many hartals. There were violent dashes with heavy casualties in Delhi and, in Patna, control over the city was virtually lost for two days after a famous confrontation in front of the Secretariat on 11th August. The violence of Delhi was largely due to 'mill hands on strike', and strikes by mill-workers were also reported in Lucknow, Kanpur, Bombay, Nagpur and Ahmedabad. The Tata Steel Plant was totally closed down for 13 days in a strike in which the sole labour slogan was that they would not resume work until a national government had been formed. At Ahmedabad, the textile strike which began during this period lasted for 3 months, and a nationalist chronicle later described the city as the "Stalingrad of India". The urban middle class was extremely prominent in this first phase spearheaded by students.

From the beginning of the second phase (from 15th August to 30th September 1942), the focus shifted to the countryside, with militant students fanning out from centers like Banaras, Patna and Cuttack, destroying communications on a massive scale and leading a veritable peasants' rebellion against white authority strongly reminiscent in some ways of the Revolt of 1857. Northern and western Bihar and eastern U.P., Midnapur in Bengal, and pockets in Maharashtra, Karnataka and Orissa were the major centers of this second phase which saw the installation of a number of local-national governments, which, however, were usually short-lived.

Weakened by the brutal repression (no less than 57 army battalions were used), the movement, from about the beginning of October 1942, entered its longest but also the least formidable phase, i.e., the third and final phase. This phase was characterized by terrorist activity by educated youth directed against communications, police and army installations occasionally rising to the level of guerrilla war, such as the one along the north Bihar-Nepal border led by Jayaprakash Narayana. Part-time peasant squads engaged in farming by day and sabotage activities by night and, in some pockets, secret parallel 'National Government' functioned most notably at Tamluk in Midnapur, Satara in Maharashtra and Talcher in Orissa. Extremely impressive and heroic by any standards, such activities, however, were no longer a threat either to the British rule or to the war plans of the Allies.

Response of Different Classes

An examination of the social composition of the movement reveals the role of different social groups and classes in it. Unlike in the Civil Disobedience days, students, belonging to the middle class, were

very much in the forefront in 1942, whether in urban clashes as organizers of sabotage, or inspirers of the peasant rebellions. What made the August movements formidable however, was a massive upsurge of the peasantry in certain areas. But as the one available attempt at statistical analysis of the "crowd" in the east U.P. and west Bihar regions indicates, the Revolt of 1942 was essentially an upsurge of peasant, small holders, and hence far from being a movement of habitual 'criminals' or rootless 'hooligans'.

The role of the labourers was somewhat short lived. The mill element (participation by mill workers) in general was dropping out by August 14-15. The industrial belts of Calcutta and Bombay were largely quiet, probably because of the communist opposition to the movement. Labour participation in the movement was, however, considerable in some centers like Jamshedpur, Ahmedabad, Ahmadnagar and Poona, where there had been little communist activity and where Gandhian influences had contributed to cordial relations between labour and capital.

No detailed study has been made so far of the extent of business participation but it seems to have been considerable at least in the city of Bombay. Stories are, in fact, current about considerable covert upper-class and even Indian high official support to secret nationalist activities in to set up a fairly effective illegal apparatus, including even a secret radio station under Usha Mehta for three months in Bombay.

Impact of the Movement

The British realized that it would be wiser to try for negotiated settlement rather than risk another confrontation as massive and violent as the Revolt of 1942. It is true that by the end of 1942 the British had come out victorious in their immediate total confrontation with Indian nationalism and the remaining two years of the war in the country. Yet, the victory was ambiguous and with several limitations and was possible only because war conditions had allowed really ruthless use of force.

Negotiations Became Necessity: The British were not prepared to risk such a confrontation again and that the decision in 1945 to try for a negotiated settlement was not just a gift of the new labour government is indicated by the attitude of Lord Wavell. In a letter to Churchill dated 24th October 1944, Wavell pointed out that it would be impossible to hold India by force after the war, given the likely state of world opinion and British popular or even army attitudes, as well as the economic exhaustion of Britain. Hence, he felt, that it would be wise to start negotiations. Churchill's pig-headedness delayed the

process somewhat, but this was precisely what the British were able to persuade the Congress leadership to do after 1945. Thus, it is amply clear that the decision of negotiated transfer of power taken in 1945 was not just a gift of the new labour government; rather, it was primarily the result of the above realization.

Benefits to Rightists: Imprisonment and defeat paradoxically brought certain benefits to the Congress leaders. Isolation in jail helped them to avoid taking a clear public stand on the anti-Japanese war issue, something which, otherwise, would have become very ticklish indeed for a few months in 1944 when Subhas Chandra Bose's Indian National Army appeared on the borders of Assam at a time when, on a world scale, the Allies were clearly winning the war. Much more important was the fact that the glamour of jail served to wipe out the unimpressive record of the Congress ministries in office, thereby restoring the popularity of the organization among the masses. Rightist Congress leaders, who throughout the 1930's had urged more and more cooperation with the British and pursued increasingly conservative policies as minister, could not sit back in the halo of patriotic self-sacrifice, as much as the Socialists who had done most of the actual fighting in 1942, while the

Communists were rated in the eyes of a big section of nationalist public opinion as collaborators and traitors. Thus, if the British ultimately came to realize the wisdom of a negotiated transfer of power from the Quit India experience, the 1942 Revolt and its aftermath also strengthened forces preferring a compromise on the nationalist side by giving a new prestige to the rightist Congressmen.

Weakening of the Left: The Revolt of 1942 weakened the left alternative in two ways. Brutal repression exhausted, at least temporarily, many peasant bases built up through years of Gandhian constructive work or radical Kisan Sabha activity. It is significant that the countryside of Bihar, U. P., Maharashtra, Karnataka and Orissa played little or no part in the anti-imperialist upsurge of 1945-46, while most of the rural Gandhians of Midnapur and Hooghly found themselves largely pushed aside in the Bengal Congress politics of the post-war and post independence years. In the second place, the left was now divided as never before. The searing memory of 1942, with its charges and counter-charges of 'treachery' and its 'fifth-columnist' activity, erected a wall between the socialists and followers of Bose on one side and the Communists on the other, which had not been entirely overcome even after a generation.

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INDIAN NATIONAL ARMY

While the Second World War dragged on, the Indian national movement had come to a stand still within the country. However, it found a new expression outside country's frontiers in the form of Indian National Army, founded by Captain Mohan Singh, and the Indian Independence League, organized by Rash Behari Bose in June 1942, both of which were taken over by Subhash Chandra Bose in 1943.

Formation of INA

The formation of the Indian National Army was partly due to the disillusionment of some of the nationalists with Gandhian principles and methods of working. Particularly after the failure of the Civil Disobedience and the Quit India movements, the radical elements headed by Subhas Chandra Bose came to believe that armed resistance was the legitimate mean of achieving freedom. The old revolutionary terrorists, who believed that violence can only be met with violence, but were lying low due to domination of the Indian political scene by Gandhi, now began to feel that India could win freedom only by armed struggle and, if need be, with some foreign help. Besides, the outbreak of Second World War was seen by these people as a great opportunity for India to win freedom. Subhas Chandra Bose drew three conclusions from the war:

- Britain would lose the war and the British Empire would break down.
- In spite of being in a precarious position, the British would not hand over power to the Indian people and the latter would have to fight for their freedom.
- India would win her Independence if she play her part in the war against Britain and collaborate with those powers that were fighting the British.

On the basis of these conclusions, he asked the Indian people not to be hampered by any philosophical notions, like Gandhian 'Non-violence' or any sentimentalism like Nehru's 'Anti-Axis' foreign policy. Moreover, the grand success of the Japanese against the British in South East Asia caused great

excitement among the people of Indian origin living in that region. And the Japanese initiative in organizing an Indian army with the help of the prisoners-of-war and the non-resident Indians gave a concrete shape to their excitement.

The Japanese in the meantime had attacked Malaya and defeated the British army. Captain Mohan Singh, an officer in the British army who had surrendered to the Japanese, was persuaded to organize an army, named the Indian National Army (INA or Azad Hind Fauj), from the prisoners-of-war. This Japanese initiative in organizing the INA had its own selfish motive, i.e., to have local collaborators in order to carry out their plan of Greater Asia with Japan at the top.

Leadership of S. C. Bose

The success of Japan in South-East Asia raised great hopes which led to the formation of Indian Independence League by Rash Behari Bose an old revolutionary who was then residing in Japan. He convened a conference in Tokyo in March, 1942, which decided to form the League and raise an army of Indian Liberation, which was already done by Mohan Singh with the active support of the Japanese. A second conference was held at Bangkok in June, 1942, for confirming these resolutions. It was finally decided to establish the Indian Independence League and to invite Subhas Chandra Bose to accept its president-ship. Captain Mohan Singh also attended both the Tokyo and Bangkok conferences and was chosen as a member of the Council of Action (the executive organ of the League) and also as the Commander-in-Chief of the INA, which was now brought under the direct control of the League.

A number of resolutions were passed by the Bangkok Conference. Some of them required the acceptance of the Japanese. Obviously, the League could exercise its authority only if the Japanese approved of it. Unfortunately, the Japanese army commanders did not express their acceptance of either the resolutions or of the Council of Action, which led to trouble. So the League, Council of Action and the

INA remained in a state of suspense for the time being. The main reason for this Japanese attitude was - at that stage, Japan was not very serious about recognizing the independence of India. It encouraged Mohan Singh to organize the INA and Rash Behari Bose to form the League only with the motive of securing local collaborators in their plan to implement the concept of Greater Asia. But these people went beyond this limited role, and passed some resolution and created the Council of Action, the acceptance of which by the Japanese would have amounted to the virtual recognition of Indian Independence.

German support

When the war broke out in Europe, Subhas C. Bose undertook a tour of the country and addressed

hundreds of meetings, openly denouncing British imperialism and advising Indians not to help the British war efforts. This led to his imprisonment without trial in July, 1940, though the government released him in November, 1940, he was still kept under house-arrest, however, in January, 1941, he managed to escape from the house arrest and, after an adventurous journey, arrived in Kabul and then proceeded to Berlin via Moscow in March 1941. The German foreign office welcomed him and gave him facilities to broadcast from Berlin to India his anti-British views. When the Germans attacked Russia in June, 1941, believing in their victory, he proposed to organize an Indian army which could follow the German Army to Central Asia and thence operate against the British forces on the North-Western frontier. ■■■

One of the most heroic and largely forgotten episodes in Indian freedom struggle was the Naval Mutiny in Bombay from 18-25 February, 1946. This mutiny in the Royal Indian Navy (RIN) was the outcome of various factors. There was a great amount of discontent among the Indians serving in the Royal Indian Navy due to the continued racial discrimination in every aspect of their service such as recruitment, promotion, payment, food and other benefits. Besides, the Indians in the RIN were not immune to the influence of the INA trials and the post war popular upsurge in India. After the war, the men who served in the INA (Indian National Army) were put on trial. They were charged with treason against the British Crown. As a result, there was a wave of nationalist protest and massive demonstration was held all over the country. Not only the Congress but also almost the entire political leadership of the country was opposed to the trials and expressed themselves emphatically in favour of releasing the INA prisoners alongwith other political prisoners. This aspect of the Mutiny undoubtedly proves its nationalist character. One more nationalist aspect of the mutiny was the demand of the mutineers for the withdrawal of Indian troops from Indonesia which was also fighting for Independence at that time.

Further, the wartime expansion of the RIN had brought in men from all parts of the country, weakening the old military traditions of recruitment from politically undeveloped 'martial races'. As a result, certain nationalist elements could infiltrate into the armed forces, including the navy. Finally, the Indian men in the RIN came into contact with world developments during their services abroad. The weakened position on Great Britain after World War II made them realize that Indians too could achieve freedom if the Indians put more pressure on the British.

Course of Mutiny

On 18th February 1946, ratings in the Signals Training Establishment, Talwar (a ship), went on a

hunger strike against bad food and racist insults. Next day, the strike spread to Castle and Fort Barracks on shore and 22 ships in Bombay harbour. And the tricolor was raised on the mastheads of the rebel fleet. A Naval Central Committee headed by M.S. Khan was elected and demands were formulated for combined issues of better food and equal pay for both white and Indian sailors. They raised nationalist political slogans and demanded release of INA officers and other political prisoners and withdrawal of Indian troops from Indonesia. The men, however, hesitated fatally on the border line of peaceful strike and determined mutiny, finally obeying orders to return to their respective ships and barracks on the afternoon of 20th February, only to find themselves surrounded by army guards. Next day, actual fighting started at Castle Barracks when ratings tried to breakout of their encirclement, with the ships providing artillery support, while Admiral Godfrey flew in bombers and threatened to destroy the Navy. The same afternoon was a remarkable scene of fraternization, with crowds bringing food for ratings in Gateway of India and shopkeepers inviting them to take whatever they needed. By 22nd February, the strikes had spread to naval bases all over the country as well as to some ships on sea. At Karachi, the 'Hindustan', a ship, surrendered and Muslim students and workers demonstrated their support through violent clashes with the police and the army. However, the mutineers finally surrendered on 23rd February 1946 due to their hopeless position and also due to the assurance given by the nationalist leaders like Patel and Jinnah that the national parties would prevent any victimization, a promise which was soon forgotten.

Attitude of leadership

Congress leadership like Gandhi and Patel were strongly against the Mutiny. Gandhi condemned it as a bad and unbecoming example for India, and advised the mutineers to peacefully resign their jobs if they had grievances. Patel, though gave an assurance to the ratings that the national parties would prevent any victimization, quietly went back on the assurance

saying that discipline in the army could not be tampered with. Even Nehru, who supported the Mutiny initially, felt the necessity of curbing the wild outburst of violence. The leaders of the Muslim League too adopted an attitude similar to that of the Congressmen. In fact, it was one of the very few occasions when the League headed by Jinnah cooperated with Patel and other Congress leaders in persuading the ratings to surrender unconditionally.

But the leaders of the CPI and the Congress Socialist Party gave full support to the Mutiny and even called for a general strike by the workers in Bombay in support of the Mutiny. Despite Congress and League opposition, 3 lakh workers downed their tools in Bombay on 22nd February. Aruna Asaf Ali, a Congress leader said: 'It simply does not lie in the mouth of Congressmen who were themselves

going to the legislatures, to ask to give up their Jobs.

Significance

It broke down the 'Iron wall' between the army and the people for a common cause, a fact which was conceded later on by Nehru. It also demonstrated the patriotism of the Indian soldiers for the second time, the first time being the INA. In the process, it made the British realize their precarious position in India. Finally, it set a second example of communal harmony between Hindus and Muslims; the first example was set by the INA. But unfortunately the RIN ratings of February 1946, in sharp contrast to the men of the INA, have never been given the status of national heroes, even though their action involved much greater risk in some ways than those of the INA.

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BRITISH POLICY OF DIVIDE AND RULE

Alongwith the rise of nationalism, communalism too made its appearance around the end of the 19th century and posed the biggest threat to the unity of the Indian people and the national movement.

- Communalism is the belief that because a group of people follow a particular religion they have, as a result, common, that is, social, political and economic interests. In case of India, it means that Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Christians form different and distinct communities; that all the followers of a religion share not only a commonality of religious interests but also common secular interests.
- The British adopted different policies to counter and contain the rapidly growing nationalist movement. They encouraged pro-English individuals like Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and Raja Siva Prasad to start an anti-Congress movement.
- Later, they fanned the Hindu-Muslim communal rivalry, first among the educated Indians and then among the common people through the introduction of communal electorates. They even exploited the controversy of Hindi and Urdu and the cow-protection movement.
- Relentless efforts were made to create a split in the nationalist ranks by adopting a more friendly approach towards the more conservative or moderate sections.
- In the 1890's, efforts were made to separate the radicals of yesterday like Justice Ranade and others from leaders such as Dadabhai Naoroji who were considered as 'moderates'. Similarly, in the first two decades of the 20th century moderates were sought to be played against extremists.
- The British also succeeded in turning the traditional feudal classes like princes and zamindars against the new intelligentsia and the common people. Princes were won over by the creation of the Chamber of Princes in 1921. Zamindars were already won over by the introduction of the Permanent Settlement.
- Attempts were also made to turn one caste against another even among the Hindus. For example, the Communal Award of 1932 attempted to treat Harijans as a separate political entity.
- The British also followed the policy of apparent concession or conciliation, on the one hand and ruthless repression on the other against the growth of nationalism. The policy was relentlessly pursued throughout the freedom struggle and knew no bounds particularly during the Anti-partition, Non-Cooperation, Civil Disobedience and Quit India Movement.
- The British authorities felt that the spread of modern education had been a major cause of the growth of nationalism. So, they deliberately followed a policy of joining hands with the socially and intellectually reactionary forces in order to prevent the spread of modern ideas.
- Plans were now set afoot to impose greater government control over education and to change its modern liberal character into a conservative and reactionary one. Modern secular education was sought to be replaced by a system based on religious and moral training.
- **Partonage in Government Services used to Foster Communalism.** In the absence of any avenues of gainful employment in trade and industry, the British Indian Government remained the biggest employer to which the educated youth hopefully looked for their means of livelihood. This enormous patronage—in higher and subordinate services—was cleverly used by the rulers to promote rivalry and discord among different sections of society. Our nationalist leaders were fully aware of the mischievous character of this bait, but the hunger—rather compulsion—for loaves and fishes blinded them to its dangerous potentialities. Jawaharlal Nehru explained then, "This enormous partongae was exercised to strengthen the British hold on the country, to crush discordant and disagreeable elements, and to promote rivalry and discord amongst various groups anxiously looking forward to employment in government service. It led to demoralization and conflict and the government could play one group against the other." ■ ■ ■

The origin of the idea of a separate state for Muslims can be traced back to Muhammad Iqbal's reference to the need for a 'North West Indian Muslim State' in his presidential address to the Muslim League in 1930, but the context of the speech makes it clear that the great Urdu poet and patriot was really visualizing not partition but reorganization of Muslim-majority areas in N.W. India into an autonomous unit within a single Indian Federation.

Germination of Pakistan

Choudhary Rahmat Ali's group of Punjabi Muslim students in Cambridge have a much better claim to be regarded as the original proponents of the idea. In a pamphlet, written in 1933, Rahmat Ali demanded a separate national status for a new entity for which he coined the name 'PAKISTAN'- 'P' for Punjab, 'A' for Afghan Province or the North-West Frontier Province, 'K' for Kashmir, 'S' for Sindh, and 'TAN' for Baluchistan. No one took this demand for separate state for Muslims very seriously at that time. But from 1937 there was a marked change in the attitude of the League towards the idea of a separate state for Muslims. This was mainly due to two reasons. Firstly, the federal clauses of the Act of 1935 showed signs of a strong and Hindu dominated central government. Secondly, Jinnah and the Muslim League as a whole greatly resented the refusal of the Congress in 1937 to form coalition ministries with the League in the provinces. The Aligarh scheme of Zafrul Hassan Hussain Qadri suggested four independent states of Pakistan, Bengal, Hyderabad and Hindustan. The Punjab Unionist Sikandar Hayat Khan suggested a kind of 3-tier structure with autonomous provinces legislatures, together constituting a loose confederation with the center having charge only over matters like defense, external affairs, customs and currency as if in anticipation of the cabinet mission plan of 1946. There was considerable British encouragement behind this sudden search of alternatives. As per Khali-alkuzaman, the Secretary of states, Zetland, had given

a sympathetic hearing on 20th march, 1939 to redefinition of Rahmat Ali's scheme, suggesting two Muslim Federations, one in the North-West and the other in the East (covering Bengal and Assam).

League-Congress Relations

The League celebrated the resignation of the Congress Ministries in 1939 as 'Deliverance Day', because the Congress Ministries, according to the League, carried out a number of acts detrimental to Muslim interests during their rule between 1937 and 1939. The famous resolution of 23rd March, 1940, passed by the Lahore session of the Muslim League demanded that geographically contiguous units are demarcated into regions which should be constituted, with such territorial re-adjustments as may be necessary, that the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority as in the north-western and eastern zones of India should be grouped to constitute independent states, in which constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign. The remarkably clumsy wording left ample (and probably deliberate) scope for vagueness, ambiguity and equivocation. Neither 'Pakistan' nor 'Partition' were explicitly mentioned. Though some Indian and British Newspapers began to use the name 'Pakistan' for the proposed new states in 1940, the League officially adopted this name only in 1943. The stress on the sovereignty of the units became very important after partition for they provided the theoretical basis for the Awami League agitation (started under Fazlul Haq) against a Punjab-dominated unitary conception of Pakistan which eventually led to the breakaway of Bangladesh.

What was the CR Formula?

The British made a settlement between the Muslim League and the Congress a precondition for the grant of Independence to India. A few congressmen also felt it necessary. C. Rajagopalachari was one of those who realized it in 1944 and, therefore, evolved a

formula, called the 'C.R. Formula' to bring about a settlement between the League and the Congress. The main proposals of the formula were the following:

- The Muslim League should cooperate with the Congress in the formation of provisional Interim Government for the transitional period.
- After the close of the war, a commission shall be appointed to demarcate the boundaries of the Muslim dominated districts in the North-West and East of India. The people of these districts shall decide by plebiscite, the issue of separation from India.
- In the event of separation, mutual agreements shall be entered into between the two governments for jointly safeguarding defense, commerce, and communications and for other essential purposes.

This formula became the basis for the Gandhi-Jinnah Talks held in 1944 to reach a settlement on the constitutional problem. Though Jinnah rejected the whole formula saying that the kind of Pakistan it was offering was a maimed, mutilated and moth-eaten one, the main reason behind his refusals was that he was vehemently opposed to the idea of conducting a plebiscite.

Essence of the Wavell Plan

After the failure of the Gandhi-Jinnah Talks based as the C.R. Formula, Lord Wavell, the Viceroy went to England in March 1945 to consult Churchill regarding the political deadlock in India. The general elections were due in Britain and the Conservative party desired to justify that it was, like the Labour party, interested in resolving the deadlock in India. Hence, a new plan was offered to the Indians. This plan, called 'Wavell Plan' was announced on 14th June 1945. It was offered as an interim agreement. The main features of the Plan were:

- To form an interim government at the center with equal representation to Hindus and Muslims.
- All portfolios except that of defense were to be transferred to the Indians.
- Only the Governor-General and the commander-in-chief were to remain free from the control of the Indian ministers.
- The Interim government consisting of all Indian ministers would work under the framework of the Act of 1935 till a new constitution was framed.

- The Governor-General would however retain the right to veto the advice of his newly constitute executive council.

A conference was called at Simla to discuss the plan. All Indian leaders representing the Congress, the Muslim League, the Sikhs, Scheduled Castes, European's and the Unionist Party of Punjab were called to attend the conference, but the talks broke down primarily because of the unreasonable attitude of the League. Jinnah wanted that the League alone should choose the Muslim members of the executive council. But the Congress naturally did not accept this stand of Jinnah, so the only result of this Conference was the strengthening of Jinnah as Lord Wavell practically gave him the power of Veto.

Cabinet Mission Plan

The British government headed by the Labour party was eager to solve the Indian problem and sent, in March 1946, a Cabinet Mission to India to negotiate with the Indian leaders the terms for the transfer of power to Indians. It proposed a two-tiered federal plan which was expected to maintain national unity while conceding the largest measure of regional autonomy. There was to be a federation of the provinces and the states, with the center controlling defense, foreign affairs, and communications. At the same time, individual provinces could form regional unions to which they could surrender by mutual agreement some of their powers. Both the National Congress and the Muslim League accepted this plan. But the two could not agree on the plan for an interim government which would convene a constituent assembly to frame a constitution for a free, federal India. The two put differing interpretations on the Cabinet Mission plan to which they had agreed earlier. Finally, in September 1946, an interim cabinet headed by Jawaharlal Nehru was formed by the Congress. The Muslim League decided to boycott the Constituent Assembly. The League launched the 'Direct Action Day' on 16th August 1946 to protest against the formation of interim government by the Congress, and even after joining the interim Government, it pursued a policy of disrupting the functioning of the government.

Mountbatten Plan

The British government finally tried to put an end to the Constitutional deadlock by announcing that

the power be transferred to India before the end of June, 1948, irrespective of whether the Indian political parties agreed among themselves or not. Lord Mountbatten was appointed as the Viceroy in March, 1947. He resolved to execute the transfer of power at the earliest possible moment and worked out a compromise plan after long discussions with the leaders of the Congress and the League. According to this 'Mountbatten Plan', India was to be free but not united. The main contents of the plan were:

- (1) Muslim majority provinces would be permitted to form a separate state and set up a separate Constituent Assembly for framing a constitution for their state.
- (2) Provinces of the Punjab and Bengal would be partitioned.

(3) Question of North-West Frontier Province and the Sylhet district of Assam was to be decided by a plebiscite.

(4) A bill to be introduced in the British Parliament at once to give effect to these proposals.

Thus, the country was to be partitioned. The nationalist leaders agreed to the partition of India not because they accepted Jinnah's two-nation theory, but because they wanted to stop the widespread communal riots. The country was still ruled by foreigners who did little to check the riots but instead encouraged these riots by their policies, perhaps hoping to play the two newly independent states against each other. ■■■

IMPORTANT LEGISLATIONS

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA ACT, 1858

- After the revolt of 1857, the administration of the British East India Company was over, the British India territories were taken over by the British Crown, and an Act called, "The Act for the better Government of India, 1858" was passed.
- With the enactment of the Government of India Act, 1958, India was to be governed by the Secretary of the State for India assisted by a council of 15 members. The Secretary of State would directly be responsible to the British Parliament.
- The Governor-General received the title of Viceroy. Lord Canning was the first Viceroy of India.
- The Government of India Act, 1858, made the provision for the appointment to the covenanted civil services through the open competitive examination.
- Popularly known as the Minto-Morley Reforms, they took their name after their official sponsors, Minto the Governor-General and John Morley, Secretary of State for India.
- In 1908, the British Parliament appointed a Royal Commission on Decentralisation to inquire into relations between the Government of India and the provinces and suggest ways and means to simplify and improve them.
- More specifically, it was asked to suggest 'how the system of government could be better adapted both to meet the requirements and promote the welfare of the different provinces'.
- Later in the year, on the basis of its recommendations a Bill was introduced in Parliament which, in May 1909 emerged as the new scheme of constitutional reform.

THE INDIAN COUNCILS ACT, 1861

- The Viceroy's legislative council was enlarged and from now onwards it was known as Imperial Legislative Council.
- A fifth member was added to the Viceroy's executive council.
- The portfolio system (based on Lord Canning's Rules of Business) was introduced, in which each member of the Viceroy's executive council was put in charge of a department.
- In Bombay, Bengal and Madras provinces, the legislative councils were established.
- The Indian Councils Act, 1861, empowered the Governor-General to issue ordinances which were not to remain in force for more than six months.

Morley - Minto Reforms

- To placate the moderate nationalists, British government announced constitutional concessions through the Indian Councils Act of 1909 which are known as the Morley-Minto Reform of 1909.

INDIAN COUNCILS ACT, 1909

- Its authors claimed that the chief merit of the Act lay in its provision to further enlarge the legislative councils and at the same time, to make them more representative and effective. This was sought to be done under two main heads - Constitutional and Functional.
- Constitutionally, the councils were now bigger, their numbers doubled in some cases and more than doubled in others.
- Thus, whereas the Indian Council Act of 1892 had authorized only a maximum of 16 additional members, that figure was now raised to 60.
- In much the same manner, the number of additional members for the Presidencies of Madras, Bombay and Bengal were raised from 20 to 50.
- The proportion of official to non-official members in the Governor-General's Council was substantially reduced. The new figures were 36 to 32. Of the latter, 27 were to be elected and 5 nominated. In this way, the Council continued to have the official majority.

- This was a deliberate policy. In provinces, there was to be a non-official majority for the first time.
- In Bengal there was even an elected majority, outnumbering both the official as well as nominated non-official blocs - 28 to 20 and 4 respectively.
- The Morley-Minto Reforms increased the number of elected members in the Imperial Legislative Council and the provincial councils.
- But most of the elected members were elected indirectly by the provincial councils in the case of the Imperial council and by municipal committees and district boards in the case of provincial councils.
- Some of the elected seats were reserved for landlords and British capitalists in India. For instance, of the 68 members of the Imperial Legislative Council, 36 were officials and 5 were nominated non-officials.
- Of the 27 elected members, 6 were to represent the big landlords and 2 British capitalists.
- Moreover, the reformed councils still enjoyed no real power, being merely advisory bodies.

Critical Appraisal of the Act:

The real purpose of the Reforms of 1909 was to confuse the moderate nationalists, to divide the nationalist ranks, and to check the growth of unity among Indians.

The Reforms also introduced the system of separate electorates under which all Muslims were grouped in separate constituency from which Muslims alone could be elected. This was done in the name of protecting the Muslims minority. But in reality this was a part of the policy of dividing Hindus and Muslims and thus maintaining British supremacy in India.

This nation was unscientific because religions cannot be the basis of political and economic interests or of political groupings.

What is even more important, this system proved extremely harmful in practice. It checked the progress of India's unification which had been a continuous historical process. It became a potent factor in the growth of communalism - both Muslim and Hindu - in the country.

The separate electorates thus introduced for Muslims were later viewed by the Simon Commission as a cardinal problem and ground of controversy at every revision of the Indian electoral system.

Instead of removing the educational and economic

backwardness of the middle class Muslims and thus integrating them into the mainstream of Indian nationalism, the system of separated electorates tended to perpetuate their isolation from the developing nationalist movement. It encouraged separatist tendencies.

It prevented people from concentrating on economic and political problems which were common to all Indians, Hindu or Muslim.

Apart from their constitution, the functions of the councils also underwent a change. They could now, for instance, discuss the budget before it was finally settled, propose resolutions on it and divide upon those resolutions. The budget apart, members could discuss matters of public importance through resolutions and divisions. Additionally, the right to ask questions was enlarged and supplementaries allowed.

It may be noted that the resolutions were in the nature of recommendations and were not binding on the government.

A much trumpeted change was the appointment of an Indian to the Executive Council of the Governor-General; Indians were also appointed to the councils in Madras and Bombay. Satyendra Prasanna Sinha, later Lord Sinha, was the first Law Member. Two Indians were appointed to the Council of the Secretary of State in London.

In Madras and Bombay, the Executive Councils were enlarged from 2 to 4. Such Councils were also to be formed in provinces ruled by Lieutenant Governors. An executive council was thus constituted in Bengal (1909), Bihar, Orissa (1912) and the United Provinces (1915).

The moderate nationalists did not fully support the Morley-Minto Reforms. They soon realized that the Reforms had not really granted much. But they decided to cooperate with the government in working the reforms. This cooperation with the government and their opposition to the programme of the militant nationalism proved very costly to them. They gradually lost the respect and support of the public and were reduced to a small political group.

In 1911, the Government also announced the annulment of the Partition of Bengal. Western and Eastern Bengals were to be reunited while a new province consisting of Bihar and Orissa was to be created. At the same time the seat of the Central Government was shifted from Calcutta to Delhi.

MONTAGUE'S DECLARATION

- In August 1917, the new Liberal Secretary of State

for India, Edwin Montagu, announced the British aim of "increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration, and the gradual development of self-governing institutions, with a view to the progressive realization of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire".

- Although the plan envisioned limited self-government at first only in the provinces - with India emphatically within the British Empire - it represented the first British proposal for any form of representative government in a non-white colony.
- Earlier, at the onset of World War I, the reassignment of most of the British army in India to Europe and Mesopotamia, had led the previous Viceroy, Lord Harding, to worry about the "risks involved in denuding India of troops." Revolutionary violence had already been a concern in British India; consequently, in 1915, to strengthen its powers during what it saw was a time of increased vulnerability, the Government of India passed the Defence of India Act.
- This Act allowed British Govt. to intern politically dangerous dissidents without due process, and added to the power it already had - under the 1910 Press Act - both to imprison journalists without trial and to censor the press.
- Now, as constitutional reform began to be discussed in earnest, the British began to consider how new moderate Indians could be brought into the fold of constitutional politics and, simultaneously, how the hand of established constitutionalists could be strengthened.
- However, since the Government of India wanted to ensure against any sabotage of the reform process by extremists, and since its reform plan was devised during a time when extremist violence had ebbed as a result of increased governmental control, it also began to consider how some of its war-time powers could be extended into peace time.

MONTAGUE-CHELMSFORD REFORMS

- The Montague-Chelmsford Reforms were reforms introduced by the British Government in India to introduce self-governing institutions gradually to India. The reforms take their name from Edwin Samuel Montague, the Secretary of State for India during the latter parts of World War I and Lord Chelmsford, Viceroy of India between 1916 and 1921.

- The reforms were outlined in the Montagu-Chelmsford Report prepared in 1918 and formed the basis of the Government of India Act 1919. Indian nationalists considered that the reforms did not go far enough while British conservatives were critical of them.

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA ACT, 1919

- The Government of India Act 1919 was passed by the Parliament of the United Kingdom to expand participation of the natives in the government of India. The Act embodied the reforms recommended in the report of the Secretary of State for India, Sir Edwin Montague, and the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford. The Act covered ten years, from 1919 to 1929.
- The Act provided a dual form of government (a "dyarchy") for the major provinces. In each such province, control of some areas of government (the 'transferred list') were given to a Government of ministers answerable to the Provincial Council. The 'transferred list' included Health and Education. The Provincial Councils were enlarged.
- At the same time, all other areas of government (the 'reserved list') remained under the control of the Viceroy. The 'reserved list' included Defence (the military), Foreign Affairs, and Communications.
- The Imperial Council was enlarged and reformed. It became a bicameral legislature for all India. The lower house was the Legislative Assembly of 144 members, of which 93 were elected and 41 were nominated. The upper house was the Council of States consisting of 34 elected and 26 nominated members.
- This structure allowed Britain to use the Princely States (who were directly represented in the Council of States) to offset the growing power of the native political parties.
- The Act also provided for a High Commissioner who resided in London, representing India in Great Britain.
- The Indian National Congress was unhappy at these reforms and termed them as 'disappointing.' A special session was held in Mumbai under Hasan Imam and the reforms were condemned. However, leaders such as Surendranath Banerjee were inclined to accept the reforms, so they left the Congress and formed the Indian Liberal Federation, which played a minor role in subsequent affairs.

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA ACT 1935

- The Government of India Act 1935 was the last pre-independence constitutional legislation of the British Raj. The significant aspects of the Act were:
 - (i) It granted Indian provinces autonomy and ended the dyarchy introduced by the Government of India Act 1919.
 - (ii) It provided for establishment of an All India Federation.
 - (iii) Direct elections are introduced for the first time. The right to vote was increased from seven million to thirty-five million.
 - (iv) Sind was separated from Bombay, Orissa was separated from Bihar and Burma was separated from India.
 - (v) Provincial assemblies were to include more elected Indian representatives, who in turn could lead majorities and form governments. But Governors retained discretionary powers regarding summoning of legislatures, giving assents to bills and administering certain special regions (mostly tribal).
 - (vi) The federal part of the Act was never introduced due to strong opposition from the princely state rulers. In 1937 the first set of elections under this Act were held.

Indian Independence Act 1947

- The 3rd June plan was given effect by the Indian Independence Act 1947. This bill was introduced in the British Parliament on 4 July, 1947, and on 18th July, got the royal assent. India had won her freedom but the price was partition.
- The dominion of Pakistan was inaugurated in Karachi on 14th August, 1947. India became free on 15th August, 1947. Lord Mountbatten was sworn in as Governor General. He swore in Jawaharlal Nehru as the first Prime Minister of free India. Jinnah became the Governor General of Pakistan.
- The June 3rd plan said nothing about princely states.
- Atlee had announced in his speech of 20th February 1947 that Britain would not hand over power and obligations under paramountcy to any successor government. In theory, this meant that the states would become sovereign entities when the British left India.
- The India Independence Act 1947 said that British paramountcy over the Indian states was to lapse on 15th August 1947, they were allowed to join either India or Pakistan.

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REGENERATION, REFORM AND RENAISSANCE IN INDIA

General Survey

The 19th century saw India make a late entry into the modern age from medieval times. The activities of missionaries and the policies of British government resulted in the growth of socio-religious reform movements to safeguard Hindu religion from the Christian onslaught and to put an end to the social evils eating into the vitals of Indian culture and civilization. These movements were generally linked with religious beliefs and practices. The ideas and activities of Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidya Sagar, Vivekananda, Swami Dayananda Saraswati, Veeresaligam Panthulu and many other were directed at the regeneration of Indian society.

Caste intolerance was a common malady raging all over the country. Illiteracy was prevalent everywhere. Amongst the educated also, the majority were conservative in outlook. Women's status was at the lowest ebb; female infanticide and polygamy were common practices. To liberate the masses from ignorance, few liberal men undertook the mammoth task of reforming the Indian society. They were mainly western educated intellectuals belonging to upper and middle classes in the initial stages of reform movement. On the religious front, however, few leaders, like Dayananda, opposed tooth and nail the influence of western culture.

Almost all the leaders gave importance to education in their efforts to reform the society. Abolition of sati, widow remarriage, property rights for women and similar reforms were taken up with zeal. There were a few organizations like Arya Samaj and Theosophical Society which gave prime importance to revivalism than to reformation. This had a negative impact on the society and the reform movement as well. Vivekananda's contribution lies mainly in the sphere of elevating Hinduism to unprecedented levels in the West. His voice did a great deal to swell feelings of national pride. Sayyid Ahmed Khan was the pioneer of reform movement in the Muslim community. He helped the Muslims to get modern education and turn British sympathies

towards his community.

It is to be noted that the reformers, with the sole exception of Tilak, depended on the colonial power to introduce social and religious reforms. Moreover, all the important reform movements of the 19th century were religious than secular in nature. Their political and economic ideas were never radical and fell within the natural economic principles of the day. There were several differences among the reformers regarding the approach and methods of the movement. The spirit of nationalism which emerged from the Cultural Revolution highlighted the necessity of fight for reforms.

Ram Mohan Roy's Brahmo Samaj

Raja Ram Mohan Roy was one of the greatest social and religious reformers of the 19th century. He was a brilliant product of the impact of western education. He was the first modern man in India. The range of his inquiries even as a child could not be satisfied within a narrow sphere. Hinduism, as he encountered it, seemed resistant to change, decadent in its idolatrous and superstitious practices. He was initially exposed to wider influences through a study of Persian. This education deepened his maturing convictions about the need for religious reform. He argued that the Hindu idolatry destroyed the texture of society more than any other pagan worship.

In areas of social concern, however, Roy held a common cause with Evangelicals and Utilitarians. Chief among these were the promotion of English education and the abolition of 'Sati'. Roy's researches on this subject provided a valuable premise for Beatnik's Minute of December 4, 1829, abolishing sati. He organized the Atmiya Sabha to discuss social and religious issues of significance. He bitterly opposed worship of idols, rigidity of caste, and prevalence of meaningless religious rituals. He started the Brahmo Samaj in 1828 to take up reforms connected with child-marriage, widow remarriage, polygamy and other issues. He sought to create a model of simple, theistic worship. Although Roy supported discriminating

study of the ancient sources of Indian tradition, he definitely stood with the Anglicists against the Orientalists on education generally. He assisted David Hare in the establishment of the Hindu College. He opposed the opening of a Sanskrit College in Calcutta as a retrogressive move. Roy's support for Duff and others, who had little regard for the culture and traditions of India, was because of the tools of modernity which they could offer to India. He wished India to become a scientifically advanced country. He published a number of articles on scientific subjects and general knowledge for young students. He was an ardent supporter of independent press. Being a champion of human liberty, Roy regarded freedom of the press as an essential privilege of a civilized society. He was a forerunner of Tagore in believing in free cooperation between nations. He was the first landlord to feel that the Permanent Settlement had made the peasants poorer. The alternatives he suggested for rectifying the mistake were thoroughly logical according to some modern economists. He demanded the protection of civil and political rights. He condemned the free trade policies of the colonial power. He believed that the introduction of modern capitalism and industry in the country would end the suffering of Indian masses. His activeness like opposing caste system, demanding Indianisation of the superior services and judicial quality between Indian and Europeans represented the symbol of national consciousness, though in embryonic stage. He touched every aspect of human life. He was a pioneer in making a sincere effort to inspire the intelligentsia to organize a reform movement for social progress which meant an allround regeneration.

Who All Contributed to Brahmoism?

Roy's close associate Dwarkanath Tagore supported all these progressive reforms. Dwarkanath Tagore's conviction as a humanist was reinforced by his experience as a pioneering progressive business entrepreneur who perceived the benefits of the economic revolution ushered in by the advent of the British. He recognized the need for emulating the skill, techniques and the organization of British business and the application of steam, if his country was to compete successfully with foreign enterprise. He knew that this would be hardly possible without modernizing reforms of a society inhibited by caste and other disabilities and superstitions. Thus, although Dwarkanath was pioneer entrepreneur sponsoring industry, he realized the relevance of social reforms and educational progress. Without his generous contributions, Roy might not have been able to take up a number of reform issues simultaneously.

Roy's legacy in the Brahmo Samaj languished till Debendranath Tagore assumed its leadership in 1840s, but he was more immediately succeeded in reform measures by followers of Young Bengal Movement. Despite their feeling that Roy was too timid, this group continued some of its reform measures, such as freedom of the press, to a more successful conclusion. This group was led and inspired by H.V. Derozio, who worked as teacher in the Hindu College from 1826 to 1831. They advocated better treatment of Indian labours in British colonies, trial by jury, protection of the peasants from zamindars, and indianization of higher services. However, they failed to reach and mobilize the masses. Their radical postures were untimely and, in fact, brought negative reaction among the public. But it can be said that the young band of reformers were the first to catch and reflect the dawn of Renaissance.

Social reform interests did not, however, thrive under the leadership of Debendranath Tagore. The chief mantle passed in this sphere to Pandit Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, the Bengali educationist and champion of women's rights. More than any other Indian reformer, Vidyasagar relied on the utilitarian principle of reason. His career as a reformer was coexistent with his role as an educationist, taking prominent shape when he became General Secretary of a women's school founded by Bethune. Education was clearly a primary vehicle for women's achievement of their full measure of human dignity in India. As champion of that cause, Vidyasagar and other saw that the earlier abolition of 'sati' had saved married women from a compulsive death, but that more must be done to grant them the possibility of a fruitful entrance into life. Besides education, Vidyasagar worked tirelessly in other areas of women's rights such as widow's right to inherit, etc. He explained that widow remarriage was permitted by Hindu Shastras. His efforts bore fruit in 1856 when the Legislative Council passed the Hindu Widow Remarriage Act. There was a striking difference between Vidyasagar and other reformers. Most reformers of his time had positive learning to take up religious reforms simultaneously with social reforms. But Vidyasagar had no religious fervor.

Reform interests in the Brahmo Samaj were again revived when Keshab Chandra Sen joined it in 1857. He encouraged inter-caste marriages and was successful in this sphere. His differences with Debendranath Tagore regarding this aspect led to the splitting of Brahmo Samaj. Keshab's group came to be known as the Adi Brahmo Samaj. Politically Keshab was not anti-British in temper. Instead, he proclaimed loyalty to the British as an article and creed of his

Church. In addition, Keshab felt free to cooperate with British rulers in initiating reform measures. At his urging, the British passed the Native Marriage Act in 1872, authorizing unorthodox marriages between persons declaring themselves neither Hindu nor Muslim nor Christian. A new schism in the Brahmo Samaj developed again in 1878 which weakened the reformist zeal of the Samaj.

Keshab's contemporary, Bankimchandra Chatterji, attempted to reach the masses with the publication of a moral biography of Krishna. He provided a strong defense against missionary attacks on Krishna's character. Religious renewal was also linked with nationalism for him, so that worshiping Indian became the underlying theme of devotion to the various goddesses. His writings such as the Ananad Math, voiced this as did his stirring poem, Bande Mataram, which was to become the national song of India. He also criticized harshly the caste system, especially the kulin Brahmins.

Reform Movement in Western India

The Prarthana Samaj in the west grew as a result of Keshab's missionary activities. But from its inception it seemed to exhibit less of a spirit of adolescent rebellion than the parent organization, with perhaps less of the characteristic Bengali emotional volatility. It voiced more judicious and moderate tone generally in the Bombay Presidency. Reformist zeal took a back seat, with greater concern to preserve historic ties to the ancestral faith dominating the scene. A greater feeling for national, as against regional, issues was also to emerge through the activities of men such as Ranade, Tilak and Gokhale. Ranade and Tilak, the early leaders differed markedly in their strategies to social reform. Besides, Tilak's political objectives were more radical than those of Ranade and were linked closely to his religious ideas. Ranade founded both the Indian National Congress and the Social Conference, which he hoped might further political and reform interest together. Tilak opposed the social reformers on two counts, both of which had some credibility. First, he felt that the reformers did not consistently practice the new life style which they sought to impose on the larger society. He opposed governmental interference in initiating reforms. His second objection was his feeling that activities in social reform were an admission of weakness. Rigorously anti-western, Tilak felt that this amounted to hand-in-glove collaboration. He was more concerned with religious rejuvenation than social reform. He used religious sentiments to drive out the British.

Social Reformer of South India

The reform efforts in south India are best represented by the movement initiated by Kandukuri Veeresalingam. He was influenced by the prevailing social conditions and also by the Brahmo Samaj movement in Bengal. He evinced, like other reformer of the 19th century, a keen interest in the spread of scientific knowledge and the growth of rational thinking. Being a great literary figure, he made use of literature to spread reform ideas among his people. Literature to him was the means to an end. He pleaded for the spread of mass education in vernaculars in order to free the minds of people from the shackles of tradition and bring about regeneration society. Being moderate in politics, he extolled the virtues of British rule and believed in the instrumentality of British rule of the transformation of Indian society.

What was the Contribution of Theosophists?

The Theosophical Society owes much of its popularity to Mrs. Annie Besant who was its moving spirit for nearly forty years since her arrival in India in 1893. She was wholly identified with the revival of Hinduism and not at all with reform. But her early career as a revivalist was by no means solely negative in character. Through her efforts, for instance, the Sanskrit tradition received a vital transfusion, and her most noted contribution to the Indian scene at large lay in the field of education. She was responsible for the foundation of Banaras Hindu University. The society can claim other educational initiatives from the late 19th century. Among them, the schools which Olcott began for the 'untouchable' boys in 1894 are noteworthy. Thus, while the movement's activities were largely in the direction of defense of the traditional societal structures, it was not blind to India's problems. Besant strived for communal harmony and she was mainly responsible for the Lucknow Pact signed between the Congress and Muslim league. She aspired to get India a dominion status within the British Empire.

Arya Samaj

Dyananda Saraswati pinned his faith on the infallibility of the Vedas. His motto 'back to the Vedas' infused a new confidence in Hindus about their past glory. He condemned the caste system, child marriages and various other maladies which were eating into the vitals of Hindu society. In his opinion, the destiny of India lay in the revival of the Vedic religion. He carried on a ceaseless propaganda against superstitions, idol-worship and the caste system. He founded a vigorous organization, known as the Arya

Samaj in 1875 at Bombay. It believed in the 'Unity of God' and regarded the Vedas as divine revelations to mankind. His ideas and philosophy are contained in his work - 'Sathyarth Prakash'. He started the "Shuddhi" movement to bring back to Hinduism those Hindus who had been converted to Christianity or Islam. He taught and preached his ideas in vernaculars. He and his followers fought vigorously against untouchability and the rigidities of hereditary caste system. He also opposed idolatry, ritualism, priesthood and the evils accompanied by it. The Arya Samajists worked for women's upliftment and contributed to the spread of education among them. It is said that while its reformist work brought people together, its religious work resulted in dividing the growing national unity among Hindus, Muslims, Parsis, Sikhs and Christians.

Contribution of Ramakrishna & Vivekananda

Ramakrishna, a simple priest at the temple of Kali at Dakshineswar near Calcutta, emerged as a great religious reformer in the 19th century. He believed that all the religions of the world were alike and their ultimate mission was the realization of God. He adopted different modes of worship usually practiced by various religions. He wished to bring about a synthesis between divergent faiths. Vivekananda was the greatest disciple of Ramakrishna, who carried the message of his mentor farther and tried to put it in a form that would suit the needs of contemporary Indian society. He advocated the oneness of all religions and appealed to the people to shed all narrowness in religious matters. He lashed out at the caste system and decried Hindu rituals, ceremonies and superstitions, and asked the people to imbibe the spirit of liberty, equality, and free-thinking. He proceeded to the West to spread his ideas and to secure material help for his people. His participation in the Parliament of World Religions, held at Chicago in 1894, launched him into fame. In his extensive tours abroad, he declared the supremacy of Hindu religion and culture which was based on spiritualism over western culture which was basically materialistic. His preaching on the larger issues of universal religion attracted many followers, and caused his founding of the West Vedanta Society in New York City in 1895. He received wide support in India and the impact he made on Indian psyche was of tremendous magnitude. India's collective national ego obviously received a heavy infusion to counter the increasing weight of negative assessment growing out of her subject status and comparative material backwardness. Now she had some thing to communicate, a cultural product which the western

nations were eager to receive. Under his guidance and inspiration, the Ramakrishna Mission adopted a comprehensive programme of social service. It started schools, colleges, hospitals and has always been in the forefront in rendering humanitarian services to the people afflicted by flood and famine. He opined that India would be immortal if she persists in her search for God. But if she goes in for politics and social conflict, she would die. His contribution to India was invaluable for it had ignited a spirit of religious nationalism which was to influence many other persons and movements. His voice did a great deal to swell feelings of national pride.

What was the Role of Muslim Reformers?

British rule posed serious problems for the Islamic Community in India, which it dealt with in a variety of ways. Cooperation was inhibited on theological grounds and Muslims began to lose ground in public service, education, etc. Under these circumstances, Sayyid Ahmed Khan became the spokesman of reform movement among Muslims. He realized that the only way for Muslims to survive was to follow the road of modernity and it lay in cooperation with the British. He demonstrated so convincingly that Islam was not inherently antagonistic to reform in consonance with the modern scientific spirit. His opponents in the 'Ulema' were no less formidable than those Roy faced among the leaders of Hindu orthodoxy. For Sayyid, the only way that Muslims could resume their rightful place and advance culturally and economically was through English education and this was pivotal platform in his reform movements. Aligarh College, which he founded in 1875, became a primary expression of this interest and the acknowledged centre, subsequently, of Muslim modernism. His energies were primarily channeled into providing for women's education and the giving up of 'purdah' (veil). Politically, he was opposed to the Congress Nationalist movement, he felt, would ultimately result in the departure of the British; majority rule which would follow would be Hindu rule and this would be much more destructive than the British Raj for Muslims. Thus, although he did not give credence to the possibility of the separate nations, his policies were to contribute to the partition of India. While Muslims had suffered greatly in the immediate aftermath of the Revolt of 1857, with Sayyid's leadership there began to be fostered, before the century's end, what had been termed as the powerful myth of the loyal Muslim.

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DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION IN BRITISH INDIA

The Government of East India Company and later on the British crown government showed little interest in the education of its subjects. Whatever efforts were made by the British in the education were basically to action of their own objectives of getting English educated clerks in India at lower salaries. Here is a chronicle of British efforts towards the development of education in British India:

- Warren Hastings set up the Calcutta Madrasa in 1781.
- In 1791, Jonathan Duncan opened a Sanskrit College at Benaras.
- In 1800, Lord Wellesley founded Fort Williams College at Calcutta with the objective of teaching Indian languages and culture to the British East India Company's factors.
- The Charter Act of 1813, recognized for the first time the British East India governments responsibility of educating the people, hence, it provided for an annual expenditures of one lakh of rupees.
- David Hare founded Calcutta Hindu College in 1817.
- In 1835, it was declared that the medium of instruction at higher level would only be English.
- Lord Macaulay propounded his famous Infiltration Theory.
- Lord Macaulay did not accept the worthiness of Eastern Literature and said that "a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia".
- The aim of government's educational policy was the teaching of masters education.
- For higher education of instruction, English was adopted and for primary education, Vernacular languages were accepted as medium.
- Vernacular Primary Schools, Anglo-Vernacular High Schools and affiliated colleges were set up.
- Grants-in-aid system encouraged the private enterprise in education.
- The importance of women education was recognized and it was given priority.
- Training to the teachers was emphasized, thus Teachers Training Programmes were set up.
- The importance of technical education was recognized.
- The Roorkee University was set up.
- In 1857, universities at Calcutta, Bombay and Madras were set up.

Hunter Commission 1882-83

- It was one member commission appointed by Viceroy Lord Ripon to review Education Policy of the Government. The Hunter Commission stressed that the Government should pay special attention for the extension and improvement of primary education.
- It also stressed on secondary, commercial and technical education.
- The Hunter Commission also made recommendation for special efforts for women education.
- It emphasized to encourage private enterprise in education.
- Punjab University was set up in 1882
- Allahabad University was set up in 1887.

Wood's Dispatch on Education, 1854

- Charles Woods Dispatch is called that Magna Carta of education in British East India.
- Charles Woods formulated a comprehensive document on education in British India from primary level to the higher level. Woods Dispatch also decided that what would be the medium of instruction at primary level, secondary level and at college level.

Indian Universities Act, 1904

- The Indian Universities Act 1904, was passed and enacted in the viceroyalty of Lord Curzon.

- This Act was passed on the recommendation of Sir Thomas Raleigh Commission on Education appointed by Lord Curzon in 1901, at the conclusion of Shimla Education Conference.
- Gurudas Banerjee was the only Indian member in the Raleigh Commission.
- The provisions of Indian University Act, 1904 provided that the fellows of the universities were to be nominated by the government.
- The Act provided veto power to the government in the matter of universities.
- The Act increased universities' control over private colleges.
- The number of Fellows were fixed.
- The Act empowered Governor General-in-council to define the territorial limits of a university or divide the affiliation of colleges to universities.

Resolution on Education Policy, 21st February, 1913

- In 1906, the progressive state of Baroda introduced compulsory primary education throughout its territories.
- During 1910-13, Gopal Krishna Gokhale refused to recognize the Principle of Compulsory Education but accepted the policy of the removal of illiteracy.

The Sadler University Commission, 1917-19

- The Sadler Commission was set up basically to look into the functions of Calcutta University.
- Sir Ashutosh Mukherjee and Ziauddin Ahmad were two India members in the Commission.
- Sadler Commission gave recommendation for the

improvement in higher education.

- Sadler Commission recommended that after intermediate level there should be 3 years degree course.
- The Commission emphasized on women education.
- Sadler Commission recommended that facilities for teachers' training are to be increased.
- Sadler Commission recommended that the universities should have the campus which has to provide residential and boarding facilities to the students.

The Hartog Committee 1929

- The Hartog Committee emphasized the national importance of primary education.
- It recommended the Policy of Consolidation and improvement.
- Improvement of university management was stressed.

Wardha Scheme of Basic Education, 1937

- In 1937, Mahatma Gandhi published a series of articles in his paper 'The Harijan' in which he proposed a scheme of education called Basic Education Scheme, better known as the Wardha Scheme.
- The main principle of Basic Education is - learning through activity.
- The Zakir Hussain Committee worked out the details of the scheme and prepared detailed syllabi for a number of courses and made suggestions conforming training of teachers, supervision, examination and administration.

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TRADE UNION MOVEMENT IN INDIA

WHAT LED TO TRADE UNIONISM IN INDIA?

Under the British rule, the rise of modern industries in India created a working class. The Indian working class or the proletariat was primarily constituted of impoverished peasants and ruined artisans who were left with the other means of livelihood. The insufficient and lopsided development of industries in India was, on the other hand, responsible for the relatively late beginning and stunted growth of trade union movement. Since there was not much demand for labour, being hired in large numbers, there did not exist any question of concentration of labour, being hired in large numbers, there did not exist any question of concentration of labour in specific areas as at present. This rendered the labour incapable of any collective action to further their common interests. Besides, the Indian working class was illiterate and culturally backward. Therefore, it developed national and class consciousness much later than the intelligentsia and the bourgeoisie. However, from 1918 onwards we find a steady growth in the trade union movement in India.

WHY WERE TRADE UNIONS FORMED?

Trade unions have been defined as 'all organizations of employees including those of salaried and professional workers, as well as those of manual earners which are known to include among their functions that of negotiating with employers with the objective of regulating conditions of labour. So the objectives of trade union movement in modern times may be stated as follows:

- (a) Defending or improving the wages and conditions of labour.
- (b) Raising the status of the worker as a citizen of industry and of society.
- (c) Extending the area of social control of the nation's economic life and participating in that control.

We can distinguish three principal methods of regulation that the trade unions usually adopt. Firstly, the doctrine of the vested interests relies on the power of trade unions to impose restrictions on the number

of prospective entrants to those fields where the conditions of labour are especially favourable. They want a stringently restricted supply of labour in order to enjoy the benefits of monopolistic condition. Secondly, the doctrine of supply and demand which relies on the method of collective bargaining implies that collective action on the part of labour will lead to the attainment of the objectives of the trade unions. When this method is employed, strikes may ultimately be resorted to enforce the trade union demand. Thirdly, the doctrine of living wage means that the state lays down a national minimum below which any industry will not be permitted to operate.

To begin with, the Indian workers had to work under intolerable working conditions in the industries, factories, mines and plantations. They were paid very low wages, and the working conditions were unhygienic and hazardous. They were practically treated as serfs.

The industrialists, both Indian and foreign, as well as the colonial government were unwilling to improve the condition of the workers. The industrialists were not prepared to look after the welfare of the workers and were only interested in making maximum profit for themselves. The colonial government too was not well disposed to do anything substantial for the welfare of the workers and whatever laws it passed were directed against the Indian industrialists so that they would not pose a serious threat to British industrialists in India as well as those at home.

The outbreak of World War I had resulted in shortage of shipping facilities and, consequently, the imports of India were restricted while there was a huge demand from the allies as well as the neutral countries of Indian products. There was an unprecedented boom in Indian trade and industry. While the prices of essential commodities and services were increasing at a fast rate, the wages could not catch up with the rising cost of living. This made the workers to agitate. But the employers failed to understand the changing circumstances.

At this juncture, proper guidance and leadership was provided by some of the nationalist leaders who

wanted to enlist the support of the workers for the struggle of independence by fighting for the cause of the workers.

The Russian Revolution, 1917 and establishment of the USSR held out the prospect of a new social order to the workers. The influence of these international events and the rise of communist parties in India itself which started taking active interest in the grievances of the workers were thus responsible for the rise and growth of trade union movement.

Finally, the establishment of the International Labour Organization (ILO) after World War I for the protection and preservation of the interests of the workers and its tripartite constitution also helped the growth of labour associations in India.

WHAT WAS THE FIRST STAGE?

The First Stage (1875-1918) itself can be divided into two periods. During the first period, from 1875-1891, the main objective was the regulation of women and child labour in the Indian factories. The second period stretching from 1891-1918 concentrated on the amelioration of conditions of the Indian emigrants to various foreign countries and British colonies. But during the whole of the first stage (1875-1918), no trade unions were organized and no concrete steps were taken except that some enlightened leaders convened meetings to submit memorandum and representations before the government -appointment commissions and committees.

But, the industrialization, which started in India from the second half of the 19th Century, resulted in some attendant evils, for instance, the employment of women and children, long and excessive hours of work, undermining of morality, lack of education, poor housing and excessively high death rate. Due to the growing menace of all these evils of the factory system, the First Factory Commission was appointed in Bombay in 1875 and the First Factories Act was passed in 1881. But this act proved to be an inadequate measure. Its provisions for women labourers caused great disappointment among the workers in general.

So, another Factory Commission was appointed in 1884. Mr. Lokhande organized a conference of workers in Bombay and drew up a memorandum to be presented to the Factory Commission. This was the beginning of trade unionism in India. The memorandum included demands for a weekly rest, half an hour recess, compensation for disablement, payment of wages not later than 15th of every month and limitation of hours of work from 6 A.M. to 6 P.M. But the Second Factory Act (1891) which was passed on the recommendations of the second Factory

Commission was another great disappointment because it provided only a few improvements like a weekly holiday, fixation of working hours for only women and children, but the hours of work for men were still left unregulated.

WHAT WAS THE SECOND STAGE?

During the Second stage (1918 to 1924), however, a good number of trade unions were organized. The Madras Labour Union (1918) was the first trade union to be formed. Its President Mr. B.P. Wadia, an active member of the Home Rule Movement, took pains to develop it. Many unions were organized in other places. In 1920, the All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) was organized and 64 trade unions with a total membership of about 1,40,000 were affiliated to it. While the interests of workers of different industries were looked after by the concerned unions, the AITUC looked after the interests of labour in general. It represented the labour before the government on matters such as labour policy and legislation. Thus, the AITUC, though primarily meant to send representatives to the International Labour Organization, Conferences and Sessions, gave some status to the labour movement and provided a forum for discussion and debates on labour problems.

The rise of trade unions was accompanied by a large number of strikes. The demands of the workers were increase in wages, grant of bonus, rise allowance, reduction on working hours and that were set up during this period had become stable and permanent labour organizations. Most of these organizations were, in fact, more or less ad hoc bodies formed when demands were to be formulated or where strikes were to be organised. They ceased to function as soon as the strikes ended. This, however, did not retard the development of trade unionism in India. Though all the trade unions did not survive, trade unionism did.

Another important feature of trade unionism in India during this period was its inability to make much headway in the established manufacturing industries like mining, textile, jute, etc. But it was strong and stable among "white collared employees." In India trade unionism developed among these people simultaneously if not earlier than among workers. In other countries the clerical and government employees organized trade unions much later than the workers.

HOW WAS THE THIRD STAGE?

During the Third Stage (1924-34), the influence of communist ideology was clearly seen at work. Communists had begun to infiltrate into the trade

unions as early as 1920. Their infiltration had brought about a change in the pattern of strikes. Harsh and impolite language and brutal methods were quite commonly used. The non-strikers were occasionally coerced and intimidated and the outbreak of violence was never completely ruled out. However, most of the strikes failed to yield results. Hence there was discontentment among the workers. The number of trade unions and their membership declined gradually.

Trade unionism during this stage received a setback due to the ideological conflicts among the trade unionists. Radical elements with an intention to use the trade union movement to further their political motives toed the line of the fraternal political body of Moscow. On the contrary, the moderates in trade unions desired to keep the movement away from the Communists. Consequently the struggle to capture and strengthen their respective positions in the AITUC began widening the gulf between the Congress and the Communist followers. This ultimately weakened the power of collective bargaining. The AITUC turned out to be a house divided and this was reflected in the failure of major strikes at Kanpur, Bombay and other places. This chaos enabled the employers to exploit the situation

The ideological differences led to the division of the AITUC in 1929 when the moderate faction left it and formed a new organization, viz. Indian Trade Union Federation (ITUF). A further split occurred in the AITUC and a section formed the 'Red Tuc'. All these developments occurred when the country was under the impact of economic depression and the civil disobedience movement.

HOW WAS THE FOURTH STAGE?

In the Fourth Stage (1935-39), union activities were revived and there was also an increase in strikes. There were some reasons for the revival of the union activities during this period. The provincial Congress ministries, which had come into existence with the Government of India Act of 1935, had adopted a policy of keeping industrial peace not by suppressing the labour organizations and denying their demands, but by prescribing minimum standards of living and general rights of citizenship. Besides, the Act of 1935 provided for the election of labour representatives through labour or trade union constituencies. Moreover, a change in attitude of the employer also encouraged the growth of trade unionism. It had been suggested by the ILO that the employers should not be hostile but friendly towards the trade unions.

Unity moves were also initiated which resulted

in the merger of Indian Trade Union Federation (ITUF) with the National Trades Union Federation (NTUF), the merger of the red TUC with AITUC, and finally the affiliation of NTU with AITUC in 1938.

HOW WAS THE FIFTH STAGE?

The fifth stage (1939-45) corresponds with the war period. World War II indirectly offered unprecedented protection to Indian industries. The supply of foreign goods was denied to the Indian market partly because there was shortage of shipping facilities and partly because peace-time industries in India and abroad switched over to the war production. As a result Indian industries stepped up their activity. Industrial production in India increased and established new records.

However, prices rose sharply and inflation prevailed on account of the continuous purchase by Great Britain in India against sterling securities. There was rapid increase in profits but not in the wages. In consequence trade union activity mounted up and there was a rise in the number of trade unions as well as their membership.

Strikes were, however, very few and, wherever they were, they brought concessions to workers. The decline in the number of strikes was due to certain factor:

- (a) The Communist leaders who supported war did not favour strikes;
- (b) The government of India, under the Defence of India Rules, assumed powers to prevent strikes and refer any dispute for adjudication and enforce the rules.
- (c) The attitude of the employers was hostile;
- (d) Other sections of trade unions did not have the right type of leaders to guide the movement and to formulate the grievances of the workers.

On the whole, the importance given to trade unions was enhanced. A permanent tripartite collaboration machinery was formed consisting of government representatives, labour union leaders and employers. And under the National Service Ordinance of 1940, the rights of the workers were protected while it was made clear that it was their duty to work when called upon to do so. Likewise, the Essential Services Maintenance Ordinance of 1941 prohibited the employers from dismissing the workers without valid reasons.

HOW WAS THE SIXTH STAGE?

The Sixth Stage (1945-47), which was the post-

war period, was also marked by a further growth in trade unionism, since the end of the War brought material benefits to the workers. The rise in prices and the cost of living showed no signs of abatement in the post-war period. Inflation, speculation and black marketing caused great suffering to the workers who raised their voice. The political developments in the country during this period also promoted the growth of trade unionism. Every political party wanted to secure a foot-hold in the labour movement. Moreover, the attitude of the government was also helpful in this regard. Both the Central and State governments, far from suppressing the labour movement, realised that labour has to play a valuable role in the changed circumstances. So the trade Union Act was amended in 1947 to secure compulsory recognition of trade unions by the employers provided they fulfilled certain requirements. Above all, after the war the number of workers employed in permanent industries had increased greatly which increased the strength of the workers.

Another important feature of the trade union movement during this period was the increase in the number of women members of the trade unions. Due to this, their position in trade unions as well as society rose considerably.

A large number of smaller unions came to be organized. But these small and local unions could not carry out effective implementations of awards and agreements, while the employers organizations became powerful and centrally organized this necessitated the formation of new inter-state and regional organizations among the workers.

As a result, the strikes increased in number. Bombay and West Bengal, followed by Madras and Uttar Pradesh, were the leading states so far as the industrial disputes were concerned. The government of Independent India was greatly worried because the rising unrest caused a decline in the industrial production. The need of the hour was increased and uninterrupted production. Therefore, in December, 1946, an Industries Truce Conference was held and attended by the representative of both central and state governments, workers and employees. This conciliated the workers who accepted the principle of compulsory conciliation and arbitration by the government, and the industrial Disputes Act of 1947 which provided for appointment of the conciliation machinery was passed.

WHAT WAS ITS IMPACT?

The impact of the rise and growth of trade union movement in India can be easily assessed from the above discussion. The working conditions of the workers, which were highly intolerable before the birth of trade union movement, were considerably improved by the enactment of a number of laws in different phases. Additionally, due to the rise of trade union, the working class as such became quite conscious of their rights as well as duties. Above all, the workers under their leaders gave full support to nationalist leaders in their struggle for freedom. Thus, the trade union movement, besides improving the condition of the workers, made considerable contribution to the freedom struggle.

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PEASANT MOVEMENTS IN MODERN INDIA

WHY WERE PEASANT MOVEMENTS STARTED?

The rise of peasant movements was essentially due to the exploitative nature of the colonial rule of the British in India. The agrarian policy of the British had adverse effects on the position of the peasants. To begin with, the Permanent Settlement, first introduced in Bengal and Bihar and later in some other parts of India, converted Zamindars and revenue collectors into landlords, thereby reducing the status of the peasants to that of mere tenants and depriving them of many of their rights.

The Ryotwari Settlement, introduced in Bombay and Madras presidencies, too suffered from a number of defects such as the exorbitant rate of land revenue fixed by the government, the right of the government to enhance land revenue at will, the forceful collection of land revenue by the government even in unfavorable seasons, etc. Thus, what the Ryotwari Settlement did was to replace a large number of Zamindars by one giant Zamindar in the state.

The above defects in the revenue administration led to the impoverishment of the peasants who were henceforth forced to borrow money at high rates of interest from the moneylenders for various purposes. And this further worsened his economic positions and, finally, he was deprived of his land by the moneylenders. Thus on the one hand, the lands of the unprotected proprietors began to be concentrated in the hands of the few money-lenders, and on the other hand, the large masses of the peasantry began to roll down the social ladder first as tenants at-will and then as agricultural labourers. In this process, the political influence and the power of the British Government played a major role as the protagonists of the money lenders.

Further, the British government was also responsible for the stagnation and deterioration of agriculture since it completely neglected the peasant and agriculture and gave step-motherly treatment to public works and agricultural improvement.

WHAT WERE THEIR PHASES?

Historically, the peasant movements in pre-independence India can broadly be grouped in the following three distinct phases: The first phase was characterized by the absence of proper leadership, the second phase witnessed the rise of well-organised peasant movements in which the Congress Party, under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, took active part and the third phase was marked by the emergence of the class conscious peasant organizations. Its distinct feature was that, during this period, peasant movements were led by people who gave priority of Kisan problems in the struggle for national liberation.

FIRST PHASE (1858-1917)

WHAT WAS THE ROLE OF PEASANTS IN THE FIRST PHASE?

The tyranny of zamindars alongwith the exorbitant rates of British land revenue led to a series of spontaneous peasant uprising in different parts of the country during this period. The periodic recurrence of famines coupled with economic depression during the last decade of the 19th century further aggravated the situation in rural areas and consequently led to numerous peasant revolts.

One of the powerful peasant movements of this period was the Indigo Agitation of Bengal (1859-1860). The foreign indigo planters compelled the peasants to cultivate indigo and subjected them to untold oppression. The anger against the oppression burst out in 1859. A large number of peasants refused to cultivate indigo and stoutly resisted physical brutality and violence of the planters. The new intelligentsia of Bengal rose to the occasion and organized a powerful campaign in support of the rebellious peasants. The government was forced to appoint a commission and some of the worst abuses of the system were removed.

HOW WERE THE ISSUES RESOLVED?

In the 1870's, again agricultural unrest broke out, this time in East Bengal. The zamindars of Bengal, notorious for their oppression, freely took recourse to ejection, harassment, illegal seizure of property, arbitrary increase of rent and use of force. The Bengal peasants organized themselves in unions and attacked zamindars and their agents. The peasant resistance was suppressed only after the government intervened and took energetic steps to put it down. However, this agitation served as a warning to the British government and an enquiry committee was appointed and the first statute, the Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885, was passed, conferring permanency of tenure upon some classes of tenants.

The next agitation took place between 1875-76 in Maharashtra, particularly in Poona and Ahmedabad districts, and was popularly known as the Deccan Riots. In these areas, the Ryotwari Settlement was in vogue, but the government revenue demand was so high that the peasants found it impossible to meet it without borrowing from the moneylender at exorbitant interest. As a result, more and more land began passing into the hands of the moneylenders. The peasants lost their patience by the end of 1874. At first, they organized a social boycott of the moneylenders which soon transformed itself into agrarian riots. Everywhere the peasants took possession of the debt bonds and other documents and set them on fire. The police failed to meet the fury of the peasant resistance, which was finally suppressed with the help of the army. However, the British government took its cue from this try of the masses and hurriedly passed the Deccan Agriculturists Relief Act where by no peasant of Maharashtra could be sent to the Civil Debtors Jail for failure to repay debts.

A similar uprising took place in Punjab between 1890-1900 against the growing alienation of peasant's lands to the money lenders of towns. The Sikh, Muslim and Hindu peasants who had till the recent past enjoyed an independent Sikh state could not break superiority of the moneylenders conferred upon them by the British Civil laws. No wonder the murders or assaults on money lenders began to increase rather alarmingly. The British government therefore was forced to pass the Punjab Land Alienation Act in 1902-1903 prohibiting the transferring of land from the peasants and prohibiting the transferring of mortgages of more than 20 years.

WHAT WAS THEIR NATURE?

All the above peasant uprisings were the spontaneous and instinctive response of the peasants

to the large scale dispossession and intolerable oppression. Their anger was often directed against the immediate source of their miserly Indigo planter the zamindar or the moneylender. Later, when the government suppressed them in the name of law and order, they resisted the government too. The four major fights put up by the peasants after 1858, however, resulted in some concessions from the government. The British government granted these concessions; least the masses should become politically conscious as a result of their struggles or fall into the hands of politicians. There were neither political organizations nor class organizations at that time either to stimulate, engineer and develop peasant's risings, or to exploit the spontaneous uprising of peasants with a view to strengthen any political movement for freedom.

WHAT WAS THE ATTITUDE OF CONGRESS TOWARDS THEM?

The Indian National Congress, though it came into existence in the late 19th century, took cognizance of the peasant problems only during its extremist phase (1905-1919). And even during the extremist phase, it did not lay as much stress on the needs of the peasants as it did on the needs of the industrialists. The Congress leaders continued to press for the establishment of permanent settlement of land revenue, the abolition of sales tax and excise revenue. However, as the congress were pre-occupied with their fight for protection of the Indian industries and in securing state assistance to the Indian industrialists, they could not do anything more than formally reiterate these demands on behalf to the agriculturists. Even in this regard, for some reason not easily explicable, they kept themselves scrupulously silent about the fate of the crores of zamindari tenants in U.P., Orissa, Bihar, Assam and Madras. Lord Curzon's declaration that it was the British government which had done a lot to protect tenants from the oppression of Zamindars remained unchallenged and unanswered probably because of the then leadership of the Congress was so overwhelmingly zamindari and capitalistic in its class context.

SECOND PHASE (1917-1923)

WHAT WAS THE SECOND PHASE OF THE PEASANT MOVEMENT?

The awakening of the peasantry during this phase owed its development and success to the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. The Indian National Congress in fact, experienced a metamorphosis with the appearance of Mahatma Gandhi on the Indian political

scene. The sphere of influence of the Congress, which was restricted to the middle-class intelligentsia, was now extended, and it came to assume a mass character.

HOW WERE THE ENDS ACHIEVED?

The peasants of Bihar staged the famous Champaran struggle (1917-1918) against the indigo planters, many of whom were Europeans and who were persecuting the local peasants to grow indigo against their will under the threat of paying higher taxes and collecting several illegal exactions. Gandhi initiated the moral and original method of conducting a systematic and authoritative enquiry into the real nature and degree of the sufferings of the peasants at the hands of the planters.

Thousands of suffering peasants flocked around Gandhi and Rajendra Prasad and detailed their woes. But the British government prohibited them from pushing their enquires. On their refusal to obey the prohibitory order, there arose a crisis, in which the arrest of Gandhi and subsequent release were followed by the appointment of an enquiry committee with Gandhi as one of its members. Eventually the government accepted the recommendation of the committee. An enactment based on use report relieved peasants from the special impost laid on them by the Indigo planters. But just as the earlier Congress agitation led by R.C. Dutta against temporary settlement did not embrace the exploitation of the peasants by Zamindars, this agitation led by the Gandhi in Champaran did not lead up to any fight against the main causes for the terrible poverty and suffering of Chamaparan peasants namely the excessive rents and exorbitant incidence of debts. It may be because of Gandhi's habit of concentrating upon one thing at a time which latter on came to be considered as one of his political virtues. But it does strike one as rather significant that both he and Rajendra Prasad had remained scrupulously silent regarding the ravages of the zamindari system and the extreme need for liberating peasants from its clutches. Anyhow, the Champaran Satyagraha had the excellent result of awakening not only the Bihar peasantry but also the general public of India to the tremendous revolutionary potentialities latent in the bosom of our peasantry.

Soon the Khaira drought and the consequent failure of crops claimed the attention of Gandhi. Miseries of the peasants were further aggravated when the government insisted upon the payment of land revenue despite the inability of the peasant

to pay. The government, therefore, suspended revenue collection for the time being. Even here Gandhi did not complicate his campaign by trying to tackle the other problems of the peasants such as their independence, alienation of lands, etc.

These two campaigns succeeded in establishing Gandhi as the pioneer of peasant satyagraha and to some extent in awakening the peasants to the use of satyagraha for achieving their purposes. It is true that the great majority of the peasantry was still unaware of politics and was therefore not politically affected by these triumphs. But they did open the eyes of a growing number of the peasants to mass action.

But the ultimate task was left to the great nation-wide Non-cooperation Movement, which succeeded in drawing, in one effort, millions of peasants into its orbit. It shook our peasants from their age-old political slumber and dragged them almost against their traditions into the whirlpool of our national political life. For the first time, they were told, to their great satisfaction and wonder that it was legitimate for them to refuse to pay land revenue, the payment of which they had come to look upon almost as a religious duty. To them, in the early days of the national movement when they became politically conscious for the first time as a result of direct action, swaraj meant freedom from all tax burdens and, especially, the abolition of land revenue.

Therefore, when Gandhi commenced his preparation for his open conspiracy of Non-payment of taxes, campaign, the peasants of India opened their eyes and began to spontaneously refuse or delay the payment of land revenue. Throughout India, millions of peasants, believing that the end of the British Raj was within sight, abstained from paying their rents and began to watch political developments with bated breath. But Gandhi suddenly withdrew the whole non-cooperation movement and thus left millions of the peasants as well as the country in mid-air.

The consequences of the withdrawal of the movement were quite tragical to the peasantry. They came to be penalized in innumerable ways by their zamindars, who not so long ago had been so terror-stricken and who were only too glad to wreak vengeance upon those peasants who had the temerity to hope for a better future. With the imprisonment of many congressmen whose association with the peasantry was very intimate, the peasants found very few people to tend for them and almost none to lead them in their struggles against the enraged British government and its more cruel allies the zamindars.

WHAT WAS ITS OUTCOME?

The introduction of national politics into the life of the peasants since 1917 by Gandhi and his followers, working through the Indian National Congress had great impact. First of all, the peasants were taken by surprise: they had to absorb the political thought of the day. They were not provided with any political machinery in the shape of a self-confident, self-conscious and local autonomous Kisan organization to stand up for them and to constantly guide them. Instead as soon as Gandhi withdrew his Non-cooperation Movement and abandoned all aggressive political action, the local Congress committees went limp and congressmen became devoid of any initiative or leadership. Indeed, Congress had fought shy of having anything more to do with Mappilas or Koyas or Punjab Kisans or others and congressmen instantly dropped all Kisan work.

In many cases, the peasants' struggle was exploited either by communalist or religious maniacs who had little respect for the concept of Non-violence. Consequently, the peasants were defenseless against their bad leadership, denied as they had been of any political training, organizational ability or knowledge of the effects and consequences of agitation work which could be gained only through their active participation in their class of political organizations. Naturally, there was too much exhibition of violence at the fag end of the Kisan struggles of these hectic days of 1920-1923 and it frightened away the Congressmen and thus denied them of any active sympathetic, day to day support and guidance of the Congress, which they then needed more than at any other time.

And in 1928, the Andhra Provincial Ryots Association was organized by the regional peasant leaders under the presidentship of B.V. Ratnam. In 1929 the Andhra Ryots Provincial Association met under the presidentship of N.G. Ranga and supported the stand taken by the Congress in regard to politics and concerned itself mostly with land revenue, agricultural indebtedness, unemployment and internal social reforms, but did not try to tackle the Zamindari- Ryot problem. That problem was taken up by the Andhra Pradesh Zamindari Ryots Conference, organized by Mr. R.M. Sharma with the cooperation of some of the peasant leaders. But even this conference demanded only a radical revision of the Estates Land Act so as to minimize the sufferings of tenants. The peasant workers were not yet prepared to demand the abolition of the zamindari system, so unprepared was the political world to grapple with such problems at that time.

It is impossible to over estimate the shocking effect the triumph of Bardoli Satyagraha of 1928-1929 had upon the peasantry, who protested against the unjust enhancement of land revenue sought to be imposed upon them by the Bombay government. This was led by Sardar Vallabhai Patel. But the chief factor which ultimately won for them was their own limitless sacrifices, discipline and determination. At last, the Bombay government had to yield to the demand of peasants to appoint an impartial Enquiry Committee. The Committee gave the award mostly in favour of peasants. This well-advertised triumph of Bardoli peasants raised their hopes of being able to successfully rise against the government.

The Civil Disobedience Movement, the steep fall in prices of the agricultural commodities due to the economic depression and the consequent pressure brought to bear upon them by moneylenders and landlords, and the heroic struggles and achievements of Bardoli peasants in 1928-1929 and again in 1901-31, had all prepared the field for the spread of bolder ideas among the peasantry.

The first Kisan Congress held at Lucknow in 1935 led to the formation of the All India Kisan Sabha. The programme of the Sabha reflected the aspirations and needs of the entire peasantry in agrarian India. The All India Kisan Sabha was composed of radical petty bourgeois individuals, within and outside the Indian National Congress. It was also supported and strengthened by the Congress Socialist Party and, later on, by the Communist Party of India. The Sabha launched some significant struggles in different parts of the country. In Andhra Pradesh, it launched an anti settlement movement against zamindari zulum. Swami Sahajanand, one of the eminent leaders and pioneers of the All India Kisan Sabha, led a heroic movement for the abolition of zamindari in Bihar. A powerful struggle was initiated against the oppressive forest laws in South India. Similarly, in Uttar Pradesh and other parts of India, agitations were launched against the tyranny of zamindars. It also carried on wide educative and propaganda work among the Indian peasants and attempted to harmonize their efforts. Thus, it provided a common platform for the Indians to express their grievances and put up joint demands.

WHAT WAS CONGRESS'S REACTION?

The growth of peasant movements exercised considerable pressure on the Indian National Congress. Despite this, the Karachi Congress Charter did not touch even the fringe of the peasant problem. But the political pressure of the Kisan Sabha succeeded in the Faizpur Congress and paved the way for the

formulation of the Congress agrarian programme. However, the Congress could not, under the pressure of the native bourgeoisies, grant any radical concessions to the peasant demands, at the cost of jeopardizing the interest of zamindars. This was amply demonstrated in the short period that they were in office before independence.

THIRD PHASE (1923-1947)

WHAT WERE THE ISSUES INVOLVED IN THE THIRD PHASE?

The Congress policy of safeguarding the interest of zamindars and landlords led to emergence of independent class organizations of Kisans in rural India. Radical sections in the peasant movements increasingly realized that the Congress was concerned of the interest of the capitalists and landlords. They felt that, to protect the interests of the Kisans, their own class organizations and leadership had to be evolved. Consequently, the Kisan organizations came into existence in different parts of the country.

It was in 1923 July-December, that N.G. Ranga, the famous peasant leader, had begun to organize 'Ryots Association' (or Kisan Sabhas as they later came to be known all over India) and Agricultural Labour Unions in Andhra. He met with instantaneous success in Guntur district with Ryots (peasants) since they were all disillusioned with the government which inflicted heavy penal rates of assessment for their having dared to support the Congress in the Non-Cooperation Movement. Between 1924- 1926, these associations succeeded in spreading themselves to West Godavari and Krishna district and also in spreading and popularizing the idea of independent class organizations of peasants.

HOW WERE THEY SORTED OUT?

In 1926-1927, some peasant leaders began to organise Kisan Sabhas in Bengal, Uttar Pradesh and Punjab on more or less idealistic lines with a revolutionary programme. As they were too often mistaken for communist organizations by the local government which were only too anxious to nip in the bud everything that savoured of revolutionary temper. They were shunned before they could take deep roots. Somehow, the Bihar and U.P., Kisan Sabhas managed to keep their existence until 1928 when they presented their memoranda to the All Parties Conference presided over by Motilal Nehru. These Kisan Sabhas favoured universal franchise, complete independence and fundamental rights.

In Bihar, the Congress-zamindar agreement prevented the Ministry from adopting any radical

measures in the interest of the peasants. Similarly, in Central provinces and Bombay, the Congress Ministries refused to entertain any such proposals. The enactment of the ambiguous land legislations by the Bengal Ministry resulted in widespread eviction of the tenants. Thus, the disappointing performance of the Congress ministries worsened the plight of the peasants and the resultant growing unrest led to a series of uprisings in different parts of the country.

WHAT WAS THE OUTCOME?

The massive agitation launched by Bihar Kisans against the failure of the Congress Ministry, anti-settlement campaign in U.P., debt relief struggle in Bengal, the Koya revolt, the Bhil disturbances in Mayurabhanj are instances of heroic peasant struggles. This, in turn, led to a chain of Kisan revolts in the Indian States against feudal brutalities during 1937-46. The Mysore and Travancore struggles for responsible government, the Orissa agitation against princely rule, the Jaipur, Udaipur and Gwalior revolts against local zamindars are some of the glorious events in the history of the Indian peasant movements.

However, it should be noted that during this phase too the all India Kisan Sabha with its roots in the upper section of the peasantry could not develop any effective struggle for the problems of the marginal farmers and agricultural labourers. Moreover, due to the absence of a clear perspective, the Kisan Sabha Movements at times took even communal turns.

In 1942, Indian peasants responded to the Congress call of civil Disobedience Movement most heroically. In U.P., Bihar, Maharashtra and Tamilnadu, they formed parallel governments. The outstanding achievement was in Midnapur in Bengal where for years the British rulers were unable to regain their control. It may not be an exaggeration to say that if the peasant movements had received proper guidance from a mature leadership such as Mao's in China, Indian history would perhaps have taken a different course.

Thus, the position of the Indian peasants did not improve much by the time India was granted independence. But, certainly they were better organized by that time, and also came to realize that unless they fought for their causes, the government (either the British or even the Indian) would not meet their demands and redress their grievances. Apart from better organization, the peasants in different parts of the country did succeed in securing some concession, however minor, from the government. Above all, the various agrarian reforms undertaken by the Indian government after independence were mainly due to the pressure exerted on it by the now awakened and better organized peasantry. ■ ■ ■

THE STATES PEOPLE'S MOVEMENTS

WHAT WERE THEY?

While the British territories in India were directly ruled by the British authorities, the rest of the country was made up of a large number of princely states, referred to by the Britishers as Native States. These states varied from very large to very small in area and population and were scattered all over the country interspersing the British Indian areas. These areas were ruled indirectly by the British through the princes themselves. The condition of the people in the princely states was much worse than that of those in the British governed territories. Though, both the peoples were exploited to the maximum extent by their rulers, the people in the British governed areas benefited indirectly from the process of modernisation particularly in the fields of education, transport, communication, industrialization etc. But the princes opposed the process of modernization, in their states, since it would threaten the very basis of their existence. The British also did not press for modernization of the princely states since they did not want to incur the displeasure of the princes, whom they, in fact, wanted to use as a bulwark against rising Nationalism.

WHY WERE THEY STARTED?

The grievances of different sections of these states was an important factor. To begin with, the condition of the peasants was pathetic due to the feudal nature of the economy and society. While the peasantry was taxed heavily and oppressed in several ways such as forced labour, there were no incentives to them from the state i.e. the prince. The bulk of the state revenues instead of being spent on public works like irrigational canals, were spent on the luxuries of the princes and their hangers-on.

The position of the artisans and handicraftsmen in these states was not enviable either. There was gradual decline of Indian handicrafts and small scale industries in the 18th and 19th centuries due to the

flooding of Indian markets by the machine-made goods of the west. This decline of Indian handicrafts was not followed by the rise of big industries in the princely states. As a result, all these people were not only deprived of their former income, but were also denied of new employment.

The middle class too had their grievances against the prevailing economic, political and social conditions in these states. The system of education in these states was quite retarded and outdated, and hence they demanded the introduction of modern education. Freedom of the press and other civil rights were completely absent. So, the grant of these civil rights was one of their demands. Since there was no representative body of the people, they demanded the introduction of some form of representative government in these states.

Further, the people of these princely states were not immune to the influence of the nationalist movements in British India. The example of the people of British India in organizing themselves into the National Congress immensely impressed them. The success of the National Congress, though limited in securing concessions to the people of British India, naturally made the people of the princely states rely on the need for organizing themselves first at local level and then at all India level if they were to get their grievances redressed. They were also greatly attracted by the call for "Poorna Swaraj" (complete independence) given by the National Congress. To them, Poorna Swaraj meant freedom not only from their immediate rulers, the princes, but also from their indirect rulers, the British, who were in fact responsible for their plight to a great extent.

The rise of the States people's movements was also due to certain policies and activities of the British. The British aggravated the conditions of the people of the princely states first through the policy of divide and rule. Throughout history, a corrupt and decadent ruler was checked to some extent by the challenge of

internal revolt or external aggression. But the British through certain provisions of their Subsidiary alliance system freed the princes from both these dangers. Hence, the princes felt free to indulge in gross misgovernment. And later, the British, in pursuance of their divide and rule policy, began to use the princes to prevent the growth of national unity and to counter the rising national movement. The princes, in turn, depended for their self-preservation from popular revolt on the protection by the British power and adopted a hostile attitude to the national movement. The British in fact carried out various measures in order to strengthen the position of the princes. When partial responsible government was established in the provinces in the form of Dyarchy in 1919, the Chamber of Princes was created to enable the native rulers to meet and discuss, under the guidance of the British, matters of common interest. Again, when the federal scheme was proposed at the centre by the Act of 1935, the native states were given undue weightage in their representation to both houses of the central legislature. It was proposed that the native states would get two-fifths of the seats in the Upper House and 1/3rd of the seats in the lower house. Above all, the representatives of the states were to be nominated by the rulers of the respective states.

HOW WERE THEY ORGANISED?

The roots of the States people's movements can be traced to the numerous spontaneous local peasant outbreaks against excessive taxation in several princely states like Mewar, Kashmir, Travancore, Mysore, Hyderabad, etc., from the beginning of the 20th century. But all these struggles met with violent repression at the hands of the princes, who were actively supported by the British. Apart from violent repression, lack of proper organization and good leadership were also responsible for the failure of these peasant outbreaks. Thus, peasant radicalism seems to have preceded urban nationalism, which began only in the 1920s in most of the princely states.

Urban nationalism, in the form of urban middle class Praja-Parishads with nationalistic ideas, had started emerging in the princely states, the first of them in Baroda in 1917, followed by the one in the Kathiawar region in 1921, the proximity to Gujrat (the stronghold of National Congress) going important in both cases. In most of the princely states, subjects

(later renamed People's) Conferences began to meet annually from 1923 onwards but were as yet a very tame affair.

Along with the appointment of the Simon Commission, the British government also appointed the Harcourt Butler Indian States Committee to recommend measures for the establishment of a better relationship between the states and the central government, nationalists among the States people, such as Balwant Rai Mehta and Manilal Kothari of Kathiawar and G.R. Abhyankar of the Deccan, convened an all-India States People's Conference in December 1927, which, though based on West Indian initiative, was attended by 700 delegates from all over India. The AISPC's aim was to influence the governments of the states to initiate the necessary reforms in the administration by the force of collective opinion of the people and the states and to emphasise popular representation and self-government by the elective principle in all states. The conference also wanted the distinction between public revenue and the private income of the ruler clearly recognized. This was necessary to end the exploitation of public money for personal expenditure. The conference also pleaded for the separation of the judiciary and the executive so that autocratic fiat would stand abolished. Finally, the AISPC urged the establishment of constitutional relations between British India and the Indian states, and an effective voice for the State's people in this relationship. This it was felt would hasten the attainment of Swaraj by the whole of India.

Almost from the time the first conference was called in 1927, the AISPC became a permanent political body. It was consistently anti-feudal, but not as clearly anti-imperialist as the National Congress. This was to a great extent explained by the fact that as far as the States people were concerned, the feudal system was the more direct exploiter. And one of the immediate results of the setting up of the AISPC was that the struggles of the peoples of the different states ceased to be isolated: local incidents had acquired an all-India identity.

As a direct consequence of their stand that the states should be treated as integral parts of the whole of India, the AISPC had requested the British government to agree to the people of the states being represented at the First Round Table Conference. The request was not acceded to. The AISPC then presented a memorandum to the Congress advocating an all-India federal constitution in which all fundamental rights and privileges which the Karachi Congress had

called for in British India would be accorded to the people of the states as well. The anti-feudal movement, thus, came to be democratized and aligned to the national movement.

In many of the states, particularly in Rajkot, Jaipur, Kashmir, Hyderabad and Travancore, significant movements were launched demanding that the democratic principle should be recognized and the government and administration reorganized. The princes replied with ruthless repression. Some of them tried to stem the tide of popular revolt by inflaming communal passions. The Nizam of Hyderabad, for example, tried to brand the popular movement as anti-Muslim. Similarly, the Maharaja of Kashmir tried to make out that the popular movement was anti-Hindu. In Travancore, it was suggested that the Christians and the Church were behind the agitation and that it was intended to overthrow the Hindu Maharaja.

The AISPC had, remained till 1939, a very moderate and elitist body, confined to drawing petitions and issuing pamphlets. Though it had become more active under its Secretary, Balwantrai Mehta, it continued essentially to be an occasional gathering of middle-class politicians, concerned only with questions of civil rights and responsible governments, and seldom raising specific peasant or tribal issues. But 1936 marked the beginning of a clear change. The fifth session of the AISPC realized the need for mass contacts in place of mere petitions, and the session for first time drew up a programme of agrarian demands such as a 1/3rd cut in land revenue, scaling down of debts, and an enquiry into other peasant grievances.

WHAT WAS THE ATTITUDE OF CONGRESS?

Though the Congress Party in its Nagpur Session in 1920 called on the princes to grant at once full responsible government in their states, the Congress resolutions at the same time made it clear that, while people in the states could become individual members of the Congress, they could not use the membership to interfere in the internal affairs of individual states. If they wished to do so, it would have to be in their own individual capacity and not in the name of the Indian National Congress. The Congress felt that political activities in each state should be organized and controlled by the local Praja Mandal or States People's Conference.

And as late as 1934, Gandhiji reiterated the 1920 non-intervention stand. He argued that any movement started externally could not be successful, and that the people of the states should learn self-reliance. However, he too supported the Congress resolution of 1920 that the princes should accord fundamental rights to their subjects.

It was only in 1938 at its Haripur Session that the Congress included the independence of the princely states as well in its goal of Poorna Swaraj or complete independence. But, at the same time, it insisted that for the present the Congress could only give its normal support and sympathy to the state people's movements, which should not be conducted in the name of Congress. However, the Congress at its Tripura Session (1939) decided that the organization should involve itself closely with the movements in the princely states. As if to emphasise the common national aims of the political struggles in India and in the States, Jawaharlal Nehru became the President of the All India States People's Conference in 1939.

WHAT WAS THEIR ROLE IN THE INTEGRATION OF INDIA?

With the impending lapse of British paramountcy, the question of the future of the princely states became a vital one. The more ambitious rulers or their diwans were dreaming of an independence which could keep them as auto cratic as before, and such hopes received considerable encouragement from the British Indian Government till Mountbatten enforced a more realistic policy. Meanwhile a new upsurge of the states people's movement had begun in 1946-47 demanding everywhere political rights and elective representation in the constituent assembly. The congress criticized the Cabinet Mission plan for not providing for elected members from the states. Nehru presided over the Udaipur and Gwalior Sessions of the All India States People's Conference, 1945 and 47 respectively, and declared at Gwalior that states refusing to join the Constituent Assembly would be treated as hostile. But verbal threats and speeches apart, the Congress leadership, or more precisely Sardar Patel, tackled the situation very clearly, using popular movements as a lever to extract concessions from princes had been brought to heel as in Hyderabad.

Thus the Eastern States Union formed by recalcitrant princes crumbled in December 1947 in the face of powerful Praja Mandal agitations in Orissa

states like Nilgiri, Dhenkanal and Talcher. Junagadh in Kathiawar whose Muslim ruler tried to join Pakistan was brought to heel by a combination of popular agitation with Indian police action. The Congress, exceptionally strong in Mysore since the late 1930's launched a fairly uninhibited Mysore Chalo agitation on its own in September 1947, which forced substantial changes in democratic direction by October. V.P.Menon, who became the Secretary to the

new state department persuaded the Travancore Dewan to give up his dream of continued personal power by pointing to the communist menace, while the Telengana armed struggle weakened the Nizam and also provided one important reason for police action i.e. the military intervention. Thus it can be said that the unification of India was made possible not only by the efforts of Sardar Patel but also by the potential presence of mass pressures. ■ ■ ■

RISE AND GROWTH OF LEFT WING WITHIN THE CONGRESS

WHAT LED TO THE RISE OF THE LEFT WING?

The post Non-cooperation movement period witnessed another development of great significance in the history of the Nationalist Movement in India. Various left-wing groups began to rise and grow both within the Indian National Congress and outside it which ultimately led to the rise of independent economic and political organizations of the working class in India. Infact, several factors were responsible.

Firstly, the radical sections among the Indian nationalists, including some Congressmen such as Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhash Chandra Bose, were not satisfied with the ideals and attitudes of Mahatma Gandhi regarding political affairs in India. The sudden recall and failure of the Non-cooperation Movement further convinced them of the futility of the efforts of Gandhi for the attainment of freedom. Though only a few Congressmen openly criticized Gandhi for the sudden withdrawal, many of them resented the decision in the heart of their hearts. However, almost all the radical nationalists outside the fold of the Congress did not feel inhibited to criticize Gandhi for the sudden withdrawal of the movement which was rapidly picking up. These radical nationalists were also not impressed by the objectives and means of the Swarajist (members of the newly formed Swaraj Party) who wanted to enter the legislative Councils, obstruct their work according to official plans, expose their weaknesses, and thus use them to rouse public enthusiasm. The agrarian and labour policies of the Congress, which at that time was being dominated by the right wing consisting of zamindars and capitalists, also caused disappointment among the radicals both within and without the Congress. The rise and growth of independent peasants and workers organizations was, in fact, partly due to the

very moderate stand taken by the Congress towards the genuine grievances of the peasants and the workers.

In addition, a growing number of youngmen began to be gradually attracted towards the philosophy and ideology of Marxism and Socialism which preached economic equality, emancipation of the downtrodden and class war. Though not all of them were convinced of the violent struggle or class war between the haves and have nots, many of them seriously thought that national independence should be pursued with the ultimate object of establishing a socialist society or at least socialistic pattern of society in India. Added to this, the steady progress of the Soviet Union also raised many hopes in them. The Socialists formed parties of workers and peasants in different parts of India. These parties, of course, supported the cause of national movement, but at the same time, emphasized the political and economic demands of the workers and the peasants and organized them on class lines for their class demands.

Finally, the adverse effects of the world Depression of 1929-32 gave a further boost to the growth of the left both within and outside the Congress party. The workers and peasants, whose conditions were worsened by the Depression, asked for better working conditions, while the government and the employers were in no mood, and, infact, in no position to do so. While the economy of the capitalist countries was in bad shape due to the Depression, the successful completion of the first two Five Year Plans by the Soviet Union naturally attracted further converts to Socialism not only in India but in the whole world. Thus, the Socialist movement, along with the left movement, gained momentum in the 1930's and after.

LEFT-WING IN THE CONGRESS

HOW DID THE LEFTISTS COME TO THE FOREFRONT IN THE CONGRESS?

The Socialist movement in India, however, did not pursue a common ideology. A section of the Indian Socialists remained within the Indian National Congress and formed its left wing. This left-wing within the Congress consisted of a small minority and was led by Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhash Chandra Bose. In May 1933, when Gandhi suspended the Civil Disobedience Movement, Subhash Chandra Bose and Vithalbhai Patel issued a statement from Europe repudiating his leadership. More significant, as representing an ideological alternative was Jawaharlal's intellectual radicalisation in prison. His letters to his daughter, later published as *Glimpses of World History* (1934), and the autobiography written in jail in 1934-35, mark the height of Nehru's interest in and partial commitment to Marxian Socialist ideas. Out of jail for a brief period between July, 1933 and February 1934, Nehru made clear his theoretical differences with Gandhi in letters and articles published as 'Whither India' repeatedly emphasizing the need to combine nationalist objectives with radical social and economic programmes. The election of Nehru as president of the Congress in 1929 and 1937 and that of Bose in 1938 and 1939 reflected the left-wing attitude of the Congress.

WHAT WAS ITS OUTCOME?

The aim of the left wing within the Congress was to remove the sufferings of the poor and the downtrodden sections of the Indian society, though not through violent means, but through gradual legislative process. But they could not succeed fully in achieving their objective mainly due to the domination of the Congress by the right-wing. Nehru drew back from any total breach with Gandhi and the Congress since he saw no reason why he should walk out of the Congress, leaving the field clear to the social reactionaries'. And opposition of Gandhi and his supporters compelled Bose to resign from the presidentship of the Congress in 1939. So he and many of his left - wing within the Congress towards the socialist movement in India remained negligible. However, it was due to the efforts of this left-wing that Congress agreed to declare the achievement of a socialist pattern of society as its goal after independence.

CONGRESS SOCIALISM

WHAT LED TO ITS RISE?

Outside the Congress, the Socialist tendency led to the foundation of the Congress Socialist Party (1934) under the leadership of Acharya Nerendra Dev and Jai Prakash Narayan, and the growth of the Communist party from 1920's itself. The founders and the supporters of the Congress Socialist Party (CSP) consisted of mainly those congressmen who broke away from the National Congress in order to establish a socialist order by non-violent means. The ideology of its founders ranged from vague and mixed up radical nationalism to fairly firm advocacy of Marxian Scientific Socialism which Nerendra Dev distinguished sharply from mere 'social reformism'.

WHAT WAS THE OUTCOME?

The Congress socialist Party's quick advance in provinces like Uttar Pradesh was purely illusionary. Much of the support was purely opportunistic, coming from groups with factional quarrels with the established Congress leadership at various levels, and most of the party's founding-fathers were to have extremely chequered and by no means consistently leftist political careers in the future.

Yet the Congress Socialist party propaganda did help considerably in stimulating thinking in Congress ranks and leadership on questions like radical agrarian reform, problems of industrial labour, the future of princely states, etc.

COMMUNIST MOVEMENT

WHAT WAS ITS ORIGIN?

Despite repeated allegations of British officials and some scholars that the whole Communist movement in India was no more than a foreign conspiracy organized from Moscow, it really sprang from roots within the national movement itself, as disillusioned revolutionaries, Non-cooperators, Khilafatists, and labour and peasant activists sought new roads to political and social emancipation. Its founder was the famous Yugantar revolutionary, Naren Bhattacharya (later known as M.N. Roy), who came into contact with Bolshevik Mikhail Borodin in Mexico in 1919, and went to Russia in the summer of 1920 to attend the second Congress of the Communist International (Comintern). Here he embarked upon a celebrated

and significant controversy with Lenin in deciding the strategy of Communists in the colonial world. Lenin urged the necessity of a broad support to the predominantly bourgeois-led national movements in the colonies and semi-colonies. Roy with the enthusiasm and sectarianism of a new convert argued that the Indian masses were already disillusioned with bourgeois-nationalist leaders like Gandhi and were moving towards revolution independently of the bourgeois-nationalist movement. The attitude towards the 'national bourgeoisie' and the nationalist mainstream in general would remain the basic issue in Communist controversies in India and elsewhere till independence and even after it.

HOW WAS IT ORGANISED IN THE FIRST STAGE?

The rise and growth of the Communists in India can be seen in five stages, the first stage covering 1920 to 1928. In October 1920, M.N. Roy, Abani Mukherji (another ex-terrorist convert) and some Mujahirs (Khilafat enthusiasts who had joined the Hijrat in 1920 and crossed over through Afghanistan into Soviet territory) like Mohammad Ali and Mohammed Shafiq founded a Communist party of India in Tashkent, together with a political cum-military school. When hopes of penetrating India through Afghanistan faded away in early 1921, some of the new Indian recruits joined the Communist University of Toilers of the East at Moscow. Roy himself shifted his headquarters to Berlin in 1922. By the end of 1922, through emissaries like Nalini Gupta and Shaukat Usmani, Roy had been able to establish some tenuous and often-intercepted secret links with embryonic communist groups which had emerged. The Non-cooperation and Khilafat experience in Bombay (S.A. Dange), and Lahore (Gulam Hussain), Left nationalist journals like 'Atmasakti' and 'Dhumketu' in Calcutta and 'Navayuga' in Guntur had started publishing eulogistic articles on Lenin and Russia, while from 1922 Dange was bringing out the weekly 'Socialist' from Bombay, first definitely communist journal to be published in India.

The veritable British panic in the face of emergence of a few tiny communist groups in India far exceeded the real immediate significance of such activities and be explained only by the world-wide ruling class fear inspired by 1917 Russian revolutions. Mujahirs trying to re-enter India were tried in a series of five Peshawar Conspiracy cases between 1922 and 1927 and in May 1924 Muzaffar Ahmad, S.A. Dange,

Shaukat Usmania and Nalini Gupta were jailed in the Kanpur Conspiracy Case. The setback caused by such repress measures, however, proved only temporary. An open Indian Communist Conference was held in Kanpur in December, 1925. Though floated by rather diverse groups, the skeleton organization set up by this conference was soon taken over by the determined Communists, and the united CPI in 1959 acknowledged the 1925 meeting to have marked the formal foundation of the party. Of much greater practical significance, however, was the embodiment, in a number of organizations set up between 1925 and 1927 of the idea of a broad front workers and peasants party to serve as a legal cover. As a result, four workers and peasants parties were set up in Bombay, Bengal, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh. But these associations could achieve nothing till some communists arrived in India from Britain. One of them, Philip Spratt arrived in India in December, 1925, and infused new life in the Communist party of India. He, with the financial assistance from Moscow increased the number of unions, conducted strikes and used all other possible methods of propaganda. His efforts resulted in success and number of Communist members reached a high figure.

During this period, that is till 1928, the Indian Communists on the whole tried to work within the nationalist mainstream even while sharply criticizing Congress leadership for its many compromises with imperialism. They felt that the Congress should be opposed only on well defined, specific issues, for, otherwise, they might enable their opponents to the end of 1928, they had followed a unity-cum-struggle policy with regard to the Congress, criticizing its limitations but striving nevertheless to build an anti-imperialist united front.

WHAT WERE ITS ACTIVITIES IN THE SECOND STAGE?

The Second stage (1929-34) began with the adoption of a new ultra-leftist policy by Indian Communists according to the directions provided by the Sixth Comintern Congress held in December 1928. They began to keep aloof from the nationalist mainstream in a highly sectarian manner, and severed all relations with the bourgeois elements. They launched an all-out attack on the Congress and its leaders, including Nehru, leading to its isolation in the Indian political scene. Thus, the communists were weakened during this period not just by repression

(which was important enough, since they were still no more than a handful) but by this major change in their strategy.

The only success of the CPI during this period was the capture of the leadership of the All India Trade Union Congress. The party however, brought the wrath of the Government on it when it gave a call for a general strike by all textile workers on April 3, 1934. The strike succeeded but the government took its revenge. The party along with a dozen trade unions under its control was declared illegal. The party had no other alternative except to go underground.

WHAT HAPPENED IN THE THIRD STAGE?

The Third stage (1934-1940) began with the adoption by the Communists of the policy of infiltration into the Indian National Congress, Congress Socialist Party, the Forward Bloc and different students organizations. They gained large success. The Congress Socialist Party under the leadership of Jayaprakash Narayan and the left Consolidation Committee under the leadership of Subhash Chandra Bose welcomed them. The Communists took full advantage of this, placed their members in influential positions in these organizations and even succeeded in getting into the Congress Working Committee. But their game could not continue for very long, and they were thrown out of both the Forward Block and the Congress Socialist Party in 1940, while the left-wing within the Congress was forced to submit to the majority opinion of the right-wing by the end of 1939.

WHAT HAPPENED IN THE FOURTH STAGE?

During the fourth stage (1941-1947) the World War II created another problem for the CPI. When Germany invaded Russia and Russia joined the camp of the Allies, it asked the Indian Communists to support the British Indian Government. Since they agreed for it in December 1941, the party was declared legal by the Government. The Government, in turn,

secured its loyalty so much so that when the Congress started the Quit India Movement on 1942, the Communists acted as spies and stooges of the Government. That again brought down the image of the party among the Indians. The party, therefore, failed to win a single seat at the general elections to the Central Legislative Assembly in 1945. That was the reason which compelled the party to seek the goodwill of Jawaharlal Nehru and the Congress party after Independence. Yet, it was the only party which popularized genuine socialism and communism in India prior to Indian Independence.

WHY DID COMMUNISM FAIL THEN?

To begin with, the Communists lacked good and mature leadership which could make a proper assessment of the Indian conditions and rally the masses. Due to this, they blindly followed the dictates of the Comintern and in the process lost the sympathy of the Indian masses. This was quite evident in 1930 (Civil Disobedience Movement) and in 1942 (Quit India Movement).

Further, the Communists were also weakened by the internal rivalries, which led to the establishment of splinter groups. The ultra-leftism of 1929-34 led to a multiplicity of totally hostile groups and general isolation from the nationalist mainstream. Things were further complicated by the efforts of the Comintern dissidents, M.N. Roy and Soumendranath Tagore, to start the groups of their own.

Finally, the failure of the Communists was also due to the repression by the British Government which was terribly scared of the 'Red Menace' right from the Russian Revolution of 1917. The arrest of many communist leaders in several conspiracy cases such as the Peshawar Case (1922-27), Kanpur Case (1924) and Meerut Case (1929) definitely created many setbacks for the Communist movement. And the final ban on the CPI between 1934-41 also created problems for the communists.

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