

# **COLONIALISM AND NATIONALISM IN MODERN INDIA**

Colonialism is a practice of domination, which involves the subjugation of one people to another. One of the difficulties in defining colonialism is that it is hard to distinguish it from imperialism. Like colonialism, imperialism also involves political and economic control over a dependent territory. May 9, 2006

## **THE ENGLISH EXPANSION**

### **OCCUPATION OF BENGAL**

The establishment of the British power in India is the story of conquest, consolidation and colonization. The British victory in the Carnatic Wars emboldened the English to embark on the path of territorial acquisition and expansion in India. The *Battle of Plassey* (1757) made the British the *de jure* masters of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, the richest kingdom in India. The battle was "the true beginning of British domination in India". The *Battle of Buxar* (1764) conferred *de facto* status on the British over Bengal. The post-Buxar political developments "created fresh tensions and prepared the grounds for the annexation of Awadh itself". The governorship of Robert Clive and his Dual Government of Bengal played havoc on the kingdom. Clive founded the British rule in India on the ruins and rubbles of Bengal.

### **TAKE OVER OF MYSORE**

The British Indian colonial empire expanded as never before under Governors-General of Warren Hastings (1772-85); Lord Cornwallis (1786-93); Lord Wellesly (1798-1805); and Lord Hastings (1813-23). The Four *Anglo Mysore Wars* (1766-69; 1780-84; 1790-92; 1799) decimated and destroyed the kingdom of Mysore. Though the Hindu rule under Krishnaraja II was restored in Mysore, the entire administration of the kingdom was taken over by a British Commissioner in 1831. Wellesly was rewarded by the Royal title of Marques by the British Government. The takeover of Mysore was considered to be the most brilliant success of the British power since Clive!

## **FALL OF THE MARATHAS**

The three *Maratha Wars* (1775-82; 1803-05; 1817-18) led to the fall of martial Marathas. The *Treaty of Salbai* (1782) was the turning point in the history of English supremacy in India. The *Treaty of Bassein* (1802) gave the company complete control over Deccan. The *Treaty of Gwalior* (1817) put an end to the Maratha power for ever. "The English East India Company had now complete mastery over all the territories south of the Vindhya". It may be said that the English captured India not from the Mughals but from the Marathas!

## **EXPANSION OF THE EMPIRE**

Lord Dalhousie (1848-56) was an arch annexationist. He became the Governor- General in 1848 and remained in office for 8 years. He adopted many means to annex, extend and consolidate the British empire in India particularly, his Doctrine of Lapse changed the traditional Hindu Law of adoption and regarded the dependent principalities as lapsed to the paramount power by its refusal to sanction the succession of adopted sons. Native principalities like Satara (1848), Jaitpur (1849), Sambhalpur (1849), Jhansi (1853) Nagpur (1854) etc were annexed by him on the basis of the pernicious principle of lapse, "a disturbing innovation". Dalhousie's policy of expediency and expansion was viewed by the victimized rulers of the annexed states as invidious injustice and they were supported by their subjects. As a result, the rulers and the ruled rose in rebellion in 1857.

## **ESTIMATE**

Of the innumerable invasions of India, the British conquest was the last and most enduring. The English came to India as traders and transformed themselves into lords of the land. The company administration - good, bad and harmful - though effective was not in the interests of the people. It was imperialistic, expansionist and exploitative. The English revenue system adversely affected the owners of the land. Their commercial policy was pursued with a vengeance at the cost of native trade, business and agriculture. The judicial reforms favoured the rich and powerful and failed to establish the rule of law. The education system was intended to promote the interests of the English manufacturers and Indian administrators. The civil servants were the evil "brown masters". The police was used as an instrument of oppression. The Indian

soldiers were more loyal to their British masters than to the sons of the soil.. All the reform measures intended to modernize India proved to be popular discontent and princely frustration. South dian Rebellion (1800-01), Vellore Rebellion (1806) and the Great Rebellion (1857) were the inevitable manifestations of accumulated anger against the alien British

### **SOUTH INDIAN REBELLION, 1800-1801**

*The best organized, the most extensive and the most violent of the freedom wars fought in the sub-continent by the common people against the British Raj The South Indian Rebellion of 1800-1801, represents a unique endeavour in the country's march towards independence.*

**- K.Rajayyan**

### **FIRST MAJOR RESISTANCE**

The English East India Company commenced its commercial career as a trading corporation on 31<sup>st</sup> December 1600 and developed into a paramount political power in India in 1858. Throughout the 17<sup>th</sup> century the company was engaged in establishing its footholds firmly on the Indian soil. During the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century the English settlement at Madras grew slowly but steadily and prospered. As a result of the three Carnatic wars (1746-1763) and four Mysore wars (1767-1799) the English became the dominant power in South India. But when the company started streamlining the administration of the newly acquired areas and exercising control over them, the traditional territorial chiefs resisted such attempts. The most famous of the early rebels in Tamilnadu were Puli Thevar of Nelkatanseval, Varaguna of Sivagiri, Veera Pandya Kattabomman of Panchalankurichi and the kallar tribes of Madurai. 19<sup>th</sup> century India witnessed a series of violent revolts against the alien rule and the one that broke out at the very beginning of the century was, what K.Rajayyan chooses to christen, The South Indian Rebellion: The First War of Independence, (1800-1801). It was the first major resistance to British expansionism in India.

## **CAUSES OF THE REBELLION**

### **Political Causes**

The collapse of the Mughal Empire appeared to have left South India in a state of confusion and chaos. But in reality it had only affected the crest of the South Indian polity. The grass-root organization, however, remained intact. The socio-political set-up survived because of a system of checks and balances provided by the princely order, poligary system and village administration. But when a determined attempt was made to disrupt and destroy the balance of this self-operating system there was rebellion against the British rule.

### **Estrangement of the Public**

The people of South India considered the traditional rights and customs as sacred. When such rights and customs were violated, all sections of people resented and rebelled. The traditional public officials were estranged consequent on the obliteration of the princely, poligary and popular establishments. The merchants and manufacturers were embittered because the Company exploited them for its own commercial advancement. The peasants turned hostile as a result of obnoxious extortion. The patriots condemned the usurpation of political authority by the Company from the princes, poligars and people as betrayal of faith and violation of custom. The cumulative impact of these estranged feelings of the major sections of people was one of unqualified antagonism towards the British rule.

### **Role of French Revolutionaries**

The French made their own contribution towards the South Indian Rebellion. The emissaries of the French Directory were despatched to the Southern provinces for disseminating revolutionary principles and inciting nationalist risings as part of its global struggle against the English East India Company. They came in batches to the Mysore Coast, visited many villages and established contacts with disaffected chiefs. They also visited Karur, Aruvakurichi and Ramagiri in Tamil Nadu. The French also established their influence in the camp of Dhoondaji Waug. The company was apprehensive of the movements of the French emissaries and asserted that "the French promoted dissemination of revolutionary ideas and sought to kindle nationalist uprisings against the British". Thus the French revolutionaries were partly responsible for the outbreak of the South Indian Rebellion.

## **VELLORE REBELLION, 1806**

Just as in a theatre, before the actual performance, several rehearsals have to be gone through, before the actual and final attainment of freedom, in order to harmonise the whole performance, several rehearsals in the shape of risings are necessary... The Rising in Vellore in 1806 was such a rehearsal on a small scale.

*Vinayak Damodar Savarkar*

## **OUTBURST AT VELLORE**

Five years after the collapse of the South Indian Rebellion, Vellore became the centre of yet another outburst against the British rule. The well fortified capital of the Arcot district served as the bastion for the vanquished rebels of the earlier insurrection. Vellore was the centre of 'deep and dark intrigues" Futtah Hyder, the eldest son of Tipu Sultan, incarcerated in the Vellore Fort, was waiting on his wings to foment a rebellion against the British. Disaffected Mysore and Hyderabad were willing to lend their support in case there was a rising in Vellore. On the lines of the South Indian Rebellion an attempt was made for simultaneous insurrection at Mysore and Hyderabad following the outbreak at Vellore. But a premature outburst upset the premeditated plan and the Rebellion was quickly suppressed.

## **CAUSES OF THE REBELLION**

The real causes of the Vellore Rebellion are not clear, they are conflicting and contradictory. However, the following causes may be attributed to the outbreak of the Vellore Rebellion.

### **Overthrow of British Rule**

The apparent object of the Vellore Rebellion was the overthrow of the British authority. When the South Indian Rebellion was suppressed, the remnants of the insurgents of Tamilnadu found their way into the Company army! This was possible because the companies of the Second Battalion of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Regiment was raised in Tirunelveli. By admitting them into the army "the English by sheer ignorance introduced a Trojan horse into the citadel". It is no wonder, therefore, the Tamil sepoys at the Company's service at Vellore raised their banner of revolt against the British authority.

### **Restoration of Mysore Monarchy**

After the defeat and death of Tipu Sultan his sons and relatives were brought to Vellore and incarcerated in the Fort. Futtah Hyder, the eldest son of Tipu continued his secret moves to incite a rebellion with the intention of ring monarchy in his home state. Thanks to his efforts, about 3.000 to Kannadanadu settled in and around Vellore. In fact, J.E.Cradock, the Company's Commander-in-chief, considered the Vellore Mutiny as an attempt to restore Muslim rule with the aid of Tipu's sons at Vellore.

### **Re-establishment of Nizam Rule**

The Nizam of Hyderabad was smarting at the loss of his independence and was anxious to restore his *status quot ante*. Disaffection among the people had been manifested at Hyderabad and Chicacole. It was also possible that the sepoy from the South could have contacted their kith and kin and friends in the Subsidiary Force stationed at those places. The Nizam was waiting for an opportunity to restore and re establish his independence once again at Hyderabad.

### **Racial Prejudice**

The native sepoy who till now served their own kinsmen were not obliged to serve under the foreigners. The military discipline, weapons, methods and practices were all new to them. They found themselves as square pegs in round holes. Their dissatisfaction with the foreign rule and their desire to drive them from their country were intensified when they were treated as inferior soldiers. Thus, racial prejudice acted as psychological trigger to the Vellore Rebellion.

### **Military Regulations**

Certain reforms were attempted in the armed corps of the Madras Presidency in 1806. The new regulations were introduced by Sir John Cradock, the Commander-in-Chief of the Madras Regiments. Such innovations were introduced with the knowledge of Lord William Bentinck (1803-1807), the Governor of Madras. According to the new requirements the sepoy were asked to wear shakos, a new form of headgear resembling a European hat. Earrings and caste marks were prohibited. Every sepoy, Hindu or Muslim, was ordered "...not to mark his face to denote his caste, or wear ear-rings, when dressed in uniform; and it is further directed that at the parades and upon all duties, every soldier of the battalion shall be clean-shaved on the chin". As the head wears designed by Adjutant General Agnew they were called *Agnew's Turbans*. These unaccustomed, unexpected and unwanted were resisted by Indian element in the Vellore garrison

## **GREAT REBELLION OF 1857**

*I wish the younger generation of Englishmen would read, mark, learn and invariably digest the history of the Indian Mutiny, it abounds in lessons and warnings*

*Lord Cromer*

### **SIGNIFICANT LANDMARK**

The South Indian Rebellion (1800-1801) and the Vellore Rebellion (1806) were the major manifestations of native opposition to the British rule. A number of minor revolts that took place between 1808 and 1856 in several parts of India were indicative of the extent of discontent against the expansionist policy of the English East India Company. The aggressive actions of the Company served only to aggravate the situation and left behind a blazing trail of discontent and disaffection throughout India. The annexationist policy of Lord Dalhousie created a sense of alarm among the states directly affected by it, particularly in North India. Political domination, economic exploitation, oppressive administration, social injustice, fear of religious conversion and military causes contributed to the bloody upsurge of people's wrath against the British rule. The incidence of greased cartridges provided the spark to set ablaze the power magazine of popular fury. The result was the Rebellion of 1857. It was a significant landmark in the history of freedom struggle in India.

### **CAUSES OF THE REBELLION**

#### **Political Causes**

##### **Dalhousie's Responsibility**

Though the Rebellion of 1857 broke out during the Governor-Generalship of Lord Canning (1856-1862) his predecessor Lord Dalhousie (1848-1856) was held responsible for the tragedy. During the Rebellion there was an outcry against him. He was blamed as the author of the Rebellion. This was because of his ruthless policy of Annexation and Doctrine of Lapse. They created a lot of discontent among the victims of his policy. The worst affected victim was Dhondu Pant Nana Saheb, the adopted son of Baji Rao II. This unjust treatment had driven Nana to the desperate extent of raising his banner of revolt against the English. The annexation of Jhansi made Lakshmi Bai hy opposed to the British. Similarly. Dalhousie's annexations of Oudh circulated disaffection in the State. Thus, Dalhousie's annexations and abolition of pensions and titles had adversely affected a number of vested interests.

### **Centenary of the Battle of Plassey (1757-1857)**

Intense dissatisfaction among the people induced them to free themselves from the English rule. The people in the North were displeased the way to which the Mughal Emperor was treated. They were unhappy about the ruthless policy of the Government and overbearing attitude of the Europeans towards them. They wanted a pretext or other to give vent to their suppressed feelings. The prophecy that the British rule was destined to collapse like a house of wax exactly one hundred years after the Battle of Plassey (1757) came in handy to the disgruntled elements. The people, therefore, anxiously awaited the doomsday of the British Regime in 1857. This provided necessary emotional dimension to the political discontent of the people.

### **Foreign Rule with a Difference**

Foreign rule was nothing new to India. The country was subjected to many a foreign invasion and dominated by alien races before the advent of the Europeans. Afghans and Mughals, for instance, had ruled India for hundreds of years. But they permanently settled in India and lived and died to perpetuate themselves and to protect the welfare of the people. They never governed India from outside. But the British ruled over India with a difference. They carried on their rule in India from their headquarters in London. They came to India as traders and became its rulers with the intention of promoting their commercial interests. The essentially exploitative English Rule irritated Indians against the British.

### **RESULTS OF THE REBELLION**

The Rebellion of 1857 is a significant landmark in the history of the freedom struggle in India. Though failed, the Rebellion was responsible for the following results:

- 1). The East India Company was liquidated. The company was replaced by the Crown. India became a colony of the British Empire. The Court of Directors was replaced by the Indian Council headed by the Secretary of State. The designation of the Governor General in India was changed as the Viceroy of India.
- 2). The Queen's Proclamation of 1st November 1858 rightly reversed the policy of subordinate isolation based on Annexation and Lapse and inaugurated the era of subordinate union. The Indian rulers were rest assured of their rights of adoption and succession. The Crown promised to honour all the treaties and agreements made by the Company with rulers of Indian States.



3). The Indian administration was centralized more than ever before. The control of the Secretary of State for India over the Viceroy was greater than the control of the Board of Control over the Governor General prior to 1858.

### **RISE OF INDIAN NATIONALISM**

*Indian Nationalism as a response to western imperialism was like all such responses, shaped by what it was responding to.*

Ashie Nandy

### **NATIONALISM**

The word 'nation' is derived from the Latin word *natio* which means born. This gives the term an ethnical meaning. It refers to a population having a common heritage of history and tradition, and a common consciousness of rights and wrongs. The term 'nationality' underlines socio-cultural complex that becomes "distinctly their own as a man lends his own peculiar character to his home"! It is subjective and cannot be measured since the people are united by common sympathies. On the other hand, 'nationalism' arises out of national political unity and the right of self-determination. It is this political identity that distinguishes one country from others. In this sense, pre-Congress India had nationality, not a nation. In other words, the mansion of Indian nationalism was built on the foundation of Indian nationality.

### **INDIAN NATIONALISM**

Nationalism is not born with nor inherent in the people. It is acquired. The political, economic, ethnic and socio-religious conditions make the people national conscious. In India nationalism was concomitant with British imperialism. The rise of nationalism and the development of anti-British sentiment have been linked with the policies and actions of the British Raj. Indian nationalism constituted the mobilization of anti-colonial sentiments of the subject population. Thus it was essentially anti-colonial in the nature and manifestation. It challenged the British domination of India. Indian nationalism emerged as a rival to British rule, competed the power with it and ultimately supplanted it in 1947. It is indeed "a product of colonial modernity The ideology of nationalism was clearly recognized when the delegates from various parts of the country assembled at Bombay in December, 1885, and formed a political organization and called it Indian National Congress.

### **Rise of Intelligents**

The British policy about the new and uniform system of education helped to create a class which had the capacity and capability to challenge the legitimacy of the British rule. Within five decades of Bentinck's decision to encourage English a new class of intelligentsia had come into existence in India. They were around 55,000 in 1885. This educated elite had access to prestigious positions in administration, occupied key posts in various walks of life and wielded enormous influence in public movements. They shared common norms and values. They were susceptible to acculturation. They found congenial soil for their intellect, talents and skills in urban centres like Calcutta, Bombay, Madras and Poona. They were responsible for starting periodicals and newspapers, social associations and political bodies which imparted necessary impetus to India nationalism.

### **Rise of New Economic Class**

Nationalism as we understand today never existed in pre-British India. Consciousness of common political existence was then conspicuous by its absence. Recognition of private ownership of land, introduction of modern factory system, development of modern means of transport and communication by the British broke down the barriers of a stagnant, static and self-sufficient village economy. As wholesale and retail merchants, agents, brokers, contractors, bankers, industrialists, plantation owners and landlords the new classes formed themselves into distinct groups clearly different from the cultivating rural masses or the urban workers. The emergence of this class was an entirely new phenomenon in India. But when the British exploited them to subserve the needs of their industry and commerce, the new classes turned against them. They established their own organizations, forged national collaboration, fostered the common interests of all classes and supported anti-imperial nationalist forces. They developed a sense of identify that cut across old barriers of caste, religion and language. They were more active in the coastal regions like Bengal, Bombay and Madras. Out of this development emerged Indian nationalism to challenge British Imperialism.

## **FREEDOM STRUGGLE - FIRST PHASE**

### **INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS**

*This Congress represents the aristocracy of intellect and the new political life created by themselves which is at present deeply grateful to its creator*

*Dadabhai Naoroji.*

### **BIRTH OF THE CONGRESS, 1885**

#### **Epoch Making Event**

The Birth of the Indian National Congress was an epoch making event. The impact of Western culture and civilisation, the Indian socio-spiritual renaissance, the development of the press and the growth of native literature, the injurious influence of the centralized bureaucracy, the exploitative nature of the British imperialism and the resultant discontent of the instructed public were responsible for the growth of Indian nationalism. Nationalism expressed itself through numerous provincial and regional political associations in the Presidencies of Bengal, Bombay and Madras. All these developments culminated in the foundation of the Indian National Congress. The birth of the Congress was the natural and inevitable consequence of the earlier attempts made to seek political reforms. The Congress spearheaded the freedom struggle in India.

#### **First Session**

The Indian National Union, renamed at the suggestion of Dadabhai Naoroji as the Indian National Congress, was inaugurated at the Hall of Gokuladas Tejpal Sanskrit College, Bombay on 28th December, 1885. **Womesh Chandra Banerjee**, a leading barrister of Calcutta was unanimously elected the first President of the Congress. **Allen Octavian Hume**, a retired civil servant was elected General Secretary of the Congress which post he held until his retirement from politics in 1906. The first session of the Congress was attended by 72 "honest, loyal and earnest people", leading representatives well acquainted with the English language. It was a colourful conglomeration of barristers, solicitors, pleaders, merchants, landholders, bankers, doctors, editors and proprietors of newspapers, principals and professors, religious preachers and reformers, members of Legislative Councils and Local Boards and Government officials. There were Hindus, Muslims, Christians and Sikhs. It was indeed the first national assembly of Indian Patriots.

## **Objectives**

The Initial intention of the founding fathers of the Congress were to ensure mutual acquaintance among the most earnest people in the cause of national progress and to discuss and decide the political operations to be undertaken. Presiding over the first session of the Congress W.C.Banerjee at once the envy, the pride, the cynosure of all the eyes in the hall", defined the objectives of the Congress as:

- 1) Promotion of personal intimacy and friendship amongst Congress workers;
- 2) Consolidation of the national sentiments;
- 3) Keeping authoritative record of the nature of Indian views on important matters; and
- 4) Determining the methods by which the objects were to be promoted.

The objectives of the early Congress may be stated as follows:

- 1) To weld Indians into a nation by bringing them together;
- 2) To develop a nationalist ideology in order to prepare the people for self-awareness and self-government:
- 3) To provide a common platform and a programme around which people could be mobilized on an all-India basis, conduct their political activities and represent their political aspirations;
- 4) To organize political opposition to the British government by adopting constitutional means;
- 5) To create a common national leadership, personally known to each other, to lead the national movement; and
- 6) To keep the Congress as a popular movement, not as a political party

## **Demands**

The demands of the first Congress assumed the form of resolutions suggesting reforms and remedial measures. The Congress demanded

- 1) Enquiry into the working of the Indian administration by a Royal Commission;
- 2) The abolition of the Indian Council of the Secretary of State for India;
- 3) The expansion and reform of the Imperial and Provincial Legislative Councils established under the Indian Councils Act of 1861:

- 4) The introduction of the elected element, the right of interpellation, the creation of Councils in North West Frontier Province (NWFP), Oudh and Punjab and a Standing Committee in the House of Commons to consider formal protests from Councils;
- 5) Holding simultaneous examination for the ICS and the raising of the age of the candidates appear for such examination and
- 6) Reduction of military expenditure.

## **OBJECTIVE, STRATEGY AND SOCIAL BASE**

### **Objectives**

The Moderates were the founders, participants and promoters of the Congress. They wanted to balance the demands of the British Government and the redressal of people's grievances. They were clear in their objectives, strategies and their social base. Being the loyalists to the colonial government, they relied on the pledges made by the Queen's Proclamation of 1858, charter of promises, fights and liberties. Though not the elected representatives of the people, they represented their expectations, demands and grievances. The moderates believed an orderly progress, compromise and conciliation-evolution, not revolution. They strived to promote unity in diversity. They wanted to achieve political power, economic control and self-government with the goodwill and cooperation of the British people.

### **Strategy**

The Moderates endeavoured to achieve their objectives through constitutional agitation. In other words, they wanted to bring out changes through constitutional authorities. They eschewed violence and the path of revolt, prayers, appeals to justice and passive resistance were their strategies.

### **Social Base**

The early Congress leaders were 'educated patriots'. Since they were class leaders they had a narrow mass base. They, therefore, did not have wide appeal. Their political influence was limited to urban communities. Their intention was not to mobilize the mass and confront the government but to champion the cause of all sections of people and their moral and political upliftment.

## **ECONOMIC NATIONALISM**

Of the demands of the Moderates, the most significant was that of economic development. *Dadabhai Naoroji, M.G.Ranade and R.C.Dutt* offered economic interpretation of colonialism. Naoroji's *drain theory* linked Indian poverty to colonial exploitation. He compared the British rule to the '*knife of sugar*'. M.G.Ranade, a contemporary of Naoroji, came out with his economic analysis of the British rule and drew attention to the imperative need for industrial development in India. Dutt, a retired ICS officer examined and evaluated in clinical detail the economic record of colonial rule since 1757.

Naoroji, Ranade and Dutt were joined by a host of other thinkers in analyzing every aspect of colonial economy, subjecting economic policies and programmes to strict scrutiny and proved that colonialism was the stumbling block to India's economic development and progress. The Moderates organized well-orchestrated agitation against the exploitative economic policies of the British Government and offered an alternative model of Indian economy. The Moderates' critique of colonial economy is called '*economic nationalism*'

## **LEGISLATIVE WORK**

The early Congressmen, known as the Moderates, were believers in constitutional agitation within the four corners of law. They submitted petitions to the Government of India and also to the British Parliament. Even before the advent of Indian National Congress, the *Indian Councils Act, of 1861* had introduced for the first time the Legislative Council of the Governor General. Though its membership was strictly limited to government officials, provision was made for the inclusion of a few nominated non-officials to the Council. This was followed by the establishment of similar councils in the Presidencies of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras.

After the formation of the Congress, the Indian members in the Legislative Council, though not representatives of the people, represent national views. For instance, when the few 'magnificent non-officials' like Mohan Mukherjee and Dirshah Petit supported the increase of salt tax. The nationalist nominated members opposed the obnoxious anti-people levy.

## **WHO WERE THE EXTREMISTS?**

The Extremists were those Congressmen who were disillusioned with the repressive policy of the Government and the failure of the Moderates. The younger elements, inspired by radicalism, demanded a change in the attitude and approach of the Congress. They were up against the continuation of the British rule in India. They feared that accepting meagre mercies would undermine the momentum of the rising nationalism. Their declared goal was the attainment of Swaraj. For the extremists self government was the best government and the people fit to govern themselves. Then only the people would develop a spirit of self sacrifice, self reliance, and self determination They, therefore, demanded absolute autonomy from foreign control and their method to attain Swaraj was passive resistance. The Extremists were led by the trio Lala Lajpat Raj, Bala Gangadhar Tilak and Bipin Chandra Pal. Their programme was clean different from that of the Moderates. They laid emphasis on Swadeshi, boycott of foreign goods and national education. In short, Extremists were not content with mere reform and were keen on reforming the nation on their ideal of Swaraj methods and their failure to create enthusiasm among the people at large. The Extremists laid stress on self-respect, character building and mass action. They appealed to the people to shape their destiny through self-reliance. The Extremists focused on the character, capacities and capabilities of the masses. In short, their objective was self-government or Swaraj.

### **Strategy**

The strategy of the Extremists to attain their objective was clear different from that of the Moderates. The extremists called for agitation, Boycotting the foreign goods and government services, taking the message of Swadeshi and Swaraj to the people; and spreading national education was their overall strategy. Pro-active agitation, constructive work, love of liberty and freedom, sense of sacrifice and struggle, spreading the fire of patriotism formed part of their strategy.

### **Social Base**

The Extremists consciously cultivated their social base. Since the approach was inclusive, they prepared the ground so as to involve the middle class youth, students and women in the national struggle. However, the common people at the grass-root level, the peasants and the workers were still outside the mainstream of national agitation.

## **DECLINE OF EXTREMIST MOVEMENT**

The Extremist movement failed to strike roots in the Indian soil. The British Government suppressed the movement by a series of repressive measures. The Extremist leaders were arrested and deported. The Moderate Congress leaders were unsympathetic and intolerant towards extremist activities. The people in general, though sympathetic towards the programmes of the Extremist were unwilling to openly associate themselves with such activities. It lacks leadership. The Extremists could not establish an organization of their own. Hence the Extremist Movement declined. Though declined, its impact on the Indian freedom struggle was enduring. It promoted aggressive nationalism and India, provided a broad base by associating the mass with the movement and hastened the struggle for Indian independence.

## **SWADESHI MOVEMENT**

### **Causes**

The causes of the anti-partition agitation may be stated as follows:

- 1). The announcement that Delhi was to replace Calcutta as British India's Capital, consequent upon the Partition of Bengal;
- 2) The disadvantaged status and loss of opportunities which Bengali Hindus feared within a divided Bengal;
- 3). Negligible progress in redressing the grievances of the Bengalis;
- 4). Insensitivity with which the scheme of partition had been thrust on the unwilling throats of the people of Bengal;
- 5) The partition plan was decided without consulting the governed; and
- 6) The traditional Bengal unity and identity which cut across narrow interest groups, class, as well as regional or religious barriers.

### **The Movement: Day of National Mourning**

16th October, 1905, the day when Bengal was partitioned, was declared a day of national mourning throughout Bengal. That day witnessed fasting and mourning. There was a hartal in Calcutta. A song specially composed by Rabindranath Tagore to suit the occasion was sung by huge crowds parading the streets. The agitators took out processions reciting Bande Mataram.



The ceremony of Raksha Bandan was observed. Ananda Mohan Bose laid the foundation of a Federation Hall to vindicate the unity of Bengal. The Bengal leaders were not content with mere demonstrations, protest meetings, passing resolutions and praying for the redress of grievances. They boldly resolved to plunge into a more effective and direct political action. Swadeshi Movement was born.

### **Swadeshi**

The object of Swadeshi was to use Indian goods, self-help and self reliance. It was used as "an economic, political and spiritual weapon". In mass meetings pledges were taken to use homemade articles and abstain from the use of foreign goods. New associations like Swadeshi Samaj were set up to look after constructive work. Volunteers were organized to advance the cause of Swadeshi. Large sums were collected to promote the movement. Many textile mills, soap and match factories, national banks and insurance companies were opened in both urban and rural areas. It was a mass movement.

### **Boycott**

The object of the Boycott programme was to put an end to the economic exploitation of Indians. It comprised of abjuring of English cloth and English speech; resignation of honorary offices under the Government and Councils and social boycott of persons purchasing foreign articles. Pledge were taken in public meetings to abstain from the use of foreign goods, refused to take foreign medicines! Manchester made clothes and foreign cigarettes were burnt in public.

### **National Education**

Leaders of the Swadeshi Movement opposed not only foreign goods but also foreign ideas as well. Western learning was decried. Indian philosophy, culture, heritage and way of life were eulogized. Pride in the past was revived. Steps were taken to set up national educational institutions to re-emphasize classical values and virtues to the younger generation. Associations like the Dawn Society served as nurseries of nationalism. They fostered in the hearts of students sentiments of patriotism and spirit of self-sacrifice for the sake of the nation. Literary, technical and physical education were imparted in the newly started national education institutions. A National Council of Education was set up on 15th August, 1906.

## **Passive Resistance**

When Lord Morley, the Secretary of State for India, declared that the Partition of Bengal was a settled fact, the Extremists gave a call for passive resistance. They called upon the people to non-cooperate with the Government and boycott of Government schools, colleges, courts, councils and offices. Their object was to paralyze the administration by organized refusal to cooperate with the Government. Aurobindo Ghose resigned his job at Baroda and came to Bengal to lead the struggle. It was he who added the idea of Passive Resistance to the already existing programmes of Swadeshi, Boycott and National Education. Leaders like B.G Tilak and Lala Lajpat Rai strongly supported the Swadeshi Movement and made it a nationwide struggle.

## **FORMATION OF MUSLIM LEAGUE**

### **Objectives**

Greatly enthused and encouraged by Lord Minto's response, Nawab Salimullah, one of the members of the Simla Delegation, issued a circular on 9<sup>th</sup> November 1906. He suggested that an organization to be known as All India Muslim Conference should be established. Accordingly, a conference was convened at Dacca in the following December. It was attended by Muslim leaders and representatives from all over India. *On 30 December 1906, the All-India Muslim League was formed.* The objectives of the Muslim League were

- 1) To motivate the Muslims to be loyal to the British Government;
- 2) To protect the political and other rights of the Muslims;
- 3) To place the needs and aspirations of the Muslims before the Government; and
- 4) To promote friendly feelings between Muslims and other communities.

### **Independent Factor in Indian Politics**

The first conference of the Muslim League was held at Amritsar. It was presided by Sir Syed Imam. The League leaders demanded more weightage to the Muslims in the Legislative Councils and in civil services. They also demanded equity of representation with the majority community in the Viceroy's Executive Council. The constitution of the League was approved in 1907. Its membership was fixed at 400. As the subscription was high, only landlords aristocrats, educated professionals and Government servants joined the League.

*Aga Khan* was chosen as the permanent President of the Muslim League Provincial Leagues were set up in the Punjab, Bihar, Madras, East Bengal West Bengal and U.P. during the years 1907-1909. The Muslim League also established a London branch in May 1908, under the leadership of Amir Ali He mounted a campaign in favour of separate electorates for the Muslims. The cumulative result was that the Indian Councils Act of 1909 which accorded statutory recognition to the Muslim demand for separate electorates.

### **Nationalist Muslims**

The Muslim League, however, singularly failed to enlist the support of the entire Muslim community to its endeavour. The nationalist Muslims were variance with the defenders of the Muslims League. For instance, Jinnah, an ardent Muslim nationalist, moved a resolution in the Allahabad session of the Congress in 1910, condemning the system of communal representation. Jinnah other nationalist Muslims were for mutual understanding between the Hindus the Muslims. They decried the demand for separate electorates and made fervent appeal for Hindu-Muslim unity. Nationalist Muslim leaders like Nawab Sved Mohammed, Maulana Shibi Naumani, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Syed Wazir Hussain, Hassan Imam and Hakim Azmal Khan, besides Jinnah, were outside the League. Jamait-ul-Ulema Hind, founded by Maulana Mohammed-ul-Hassan was the political rival to the Muslim League. It sought to bring the Muslims into the Congress fold.

### **Muslim League and Congress**

The way in which the League conducted its campaigns for communal representation created acrimony between the British Government and the League. As the League was dominated by the Aligarh politicians, the Governor persuaded the League to transfer its head quarters from Aligarh to Lucknow in 1910. The British decision to annul the Partition of Bengal in 1911 came as a bolt from the blue to the League. The growing influence of the Nationalist Muslims, the formation of Jami-ul-Ulema-Hind, the unsettlement of the seemingly settled fact of Bengal Partition necessitated the League to move closer to the Congress.