LOVELY PROFESSIONAL UNIVERSITY

INDIAN FREEDOM STRUGGLE-I

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SYLLABUS

Indian Freedom Struggle - I

Objectives

1. To introduce students with different phases of freedom struggle
2. To make them understand the policies and strategies of British Government
3. To acquaint students with the sacrifices of our freedom martyrs

Sr. No.	Topics
1.	British Expansion: Carnatic wars, Anglo Mysore wars, Anglo Maratha wars
2.	Political Establishment: Battle of Plassey, Battle of Buxar, Reforms of Lord Clive
3.	Consolidation of the British Raj: Development of Central structure, Changes in Economic Policy and Educational Policy
4.	Constitutional Development: Regulating Act 1773 and Pitt's India Act 1784
5.	Implementation of Imperial Policies: Reforms of Cornwallis, Reforms of William Bentinck
6.	Age of Reforms: Reforms of Lord Dalhousie
7.	Reformist Movements: Brahmo Samaj and Singh Sabha Movement
8.	Revivalist Movements: Arya Samaj
9.	The First Major Challenge 1857: Causes of revolt, Events, Causes for the failure, Aftermath
10.	Maps: Important Centers of the Revolt of 1857 & India before independence

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Unit 1: British Expansion

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Objectives

After studying this unit students will be able to:

- Understand British expansion, Karnatic war and the Rise of Bengal.
- Explain the Battle of Plassey, Mir Jafar, Mir Qasim and conflict with British.
- Discuss Anglo-Mysore and Anglo Maratha Wars.

Introduction

In most of the European conflicts of the eighteenth century, England and France were ranged on opposite sides. India was one of the theatres of these wars. In this country, Anglo-French rivalry began with the outbreak of Austrian War of Succession and ended with the conclusion of the Seven Years' War. At the time the struggle opened in India, the headquarters of the French settlement was Pondicherry with subordinate factories at Masulipatam, Karikal, Mahe, Surat, Chandernagore and various other places; the principal settlements of the English were at Madras, Bombay and Calcutta with subordinate factories thereto.

1.1 The Karnatic Wars

The First Karnatic War (1746-48): The First Karnatic War was an extension of the Anglo-French War in Europe. The Austrian War of Succession broke out in March 1740. Despite the wishes instructions of the home authorities, hostilities broke out in India in 1746. The English navy under Barnett took the offensive when it captured some French ships. Dupleix, the French Governor-General of Pondicherry since 1741, sent an urgent appeal to La Bourdonnais, the French Governor of Mauritius (Isle of France) for help. La Bourdonnais with a squadron consisting of over 3,000 men fought his way towards the Coromandel coast, defeating an English fleet on the way. Madras was now besieged by the French, both by land and sea. On 21 September 1746, the town capitulated to the French, counting among the prisoners of war Robert Clive. La Bourdonnais decided to ransom the town to the English for cash payment, but Dupleix refused to agree to this suggestion. La Bourdonnais who had been handsomely bribed by the English restored Madras to them. Dupleix disowned this rash act of La Bourdonnais and recaptured Madras. However, Dupleix's efforts to capture Fort St. David,

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a small English factory some eighteen miles south of Pondicherry, did not succeed. An English squadron under Rear Admiral Boscawen was equally unsuccessful in the siege of Pondicherry during June-October 1748.

The First Karnatic War is memorable for the battle of St. Thome fought between the French and the Indian forces of Anwar-ud-din, the Nawab of Karnatic (1744-49). Differences arose between the French and the Nawab over the custody of Madras after its reduction in 1746. Anwar-ud-din, as the overlord of the Karnatic, had ordered the European Companies to desist from commencing hostilities within his territories and disturbing the peace of the country. Dupleix had, however, pacified him by promising to surrender Madras to him after its capture. When Dupleix showed no signs of making good his promise, the Nawab sent a force to enforce his demand. A small French army consisting of 230 Europeans and 700 Indian soldiers under Capt. Paradise met a large Indian army of 10,000 under Mahfuz Khan at St. Thome on the banks of the river Adyar and defeated it. The victory of Capt. Paradise amply demonstrated the superiority of disciplined European troops against the loose Indian levies.

The First Karnatic War came to end with the termination of hostilities in Europe. The Treaty of Aix-la Chapelle (1748) brought the Austrian War of Succession to a conclusion. Under the terms of this Treaty, Madras was handed back to the English much to the disgust of Dupleix.

The first round of the struggle was a drawn one. On land the French superiority had been clearly displayed. Dupleix had given ample proof of his extraordinary skill and diplomacy. The English had failed to defend Madras and unsuccessfully conducted the land-cum-sea operations against Pondicherry. Nevertheless, this war had adequately brought out the importance of naval power as an important factor in Anglo-French conflict in the Deccan.

The Second Karnatic War (1749-54): The First Karnatic War had whetted the political ambition of Dupleix. He had acquired a good taste for oriental warfare. He sought to increase his power and French political influence in Southern India by interfering in local dynastic disputes and thus to outmanoeuvre the English. Malleson rightly sums up the position thus: "With ambition aroused, mutual jealousy excited, the temptation of increased dominion knocking at their doors, what had they (Europeans) to do with peace". The much sought for opportunity was provided in the disputed succession to the thrones of Hyderabad and Karnatic. Nizam-ul-Mulk, Asaf Jah, who had converted his viceroyalty of the Deccan into an independent kingdom of Hyderabad died on 21 May, 1748. He was succeeded by his second son, Nasir Jang (1748-50). His claim was, however, contested by his nephew, Muzaffar Jang, a grandson of the late Nizam. In the Karnatic, the right of Nawab Anwar-ud-din was disputed by Chanda Sahib, son-in-law of the former Nawab Dost Ali. The two conflicts were soon merged into one and in the following years we witness the spectacle of many political alliances and counter-alliances being formed in quick succession.

Dupleix, who saw in this fluid political situation an opportunity to advance his political schemes, decided to support the candidature of Muzaffar Jang for the Subahdarship of the Deccan and Chanda Sahib for the Nawabship of Karnatic. The English inevitably found themselves ranged on the side of Nasir Jang and Anwar-ud-din. Astounding successes attended the plans of Dupleix. The combined armies of Muzaffar Jang, Chanda Sahib and the French defeated and killed Anwar-ud-din at the battle of Ambur near Vellore in August 1749. Nasir Jang lost his life in the encounter of December 1750. Muzaffar Jang became the Subahdar of Deccan and amply rewarded the services of his benefactors. Dupleix was appointed governor of all the Mughal territories south of the river Krishna. The Nizam surrendered some districts in the Northern Circars to the French. Further, at the request of the new Subahdar, a French army under an able officer Bussy was stationed at Hyderabad. The stationing of this army ensured the security of the French interests there. Chanda Sahib became the Nawab of Karnatic in 1751. Dupleix was at the height of his political power.

The anti-climax for the French was not late in coming. Mohammed Ali, the son of the late Nawab Anwar-ud-din, took refuge in Trichinopoly. The repeated attempts of Chanda Sahib and the French to reduce the fortress failed. The English were not inactive. The successes of Dupleix; had very much

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compromised the position of the English. In 1751 Robert Clive, who earlier had failed to provide effective reinforcement to Mohammed Ali at Trichinopoly, suggested a countermove to Governor Saunders. He proposed that a surprise attack be made on Arcot, the capital of the Karnatic, in a bid to divert pressure on Trichinopoly. He rightly calculated that Chanda Sahib must rush to save his capital. The plan was well conceived. Rober Clive with a force of only 210 men stormed and captured Arcot in August 1751. A large force of4,000 men diverted by Chanda Sahib from Trichinopoly to Arcot failed to retake the town. Robert Clive's outlay resisted the onslaughts of his enemies and successfully sustained the famous siege for fifty-three days (September 23 to November 14) "immortalized and somewhat exaggerated in the glowing words of Macaulay". The capture of Arcot encouraged the English to push their schemes with greater vigour and demoralised the French and Chanda Sahib. In 1752 a strong English force under Stringer Lawrence relieved Trichinopoly. The French force outside Trichinopoly surrendered to the English in June 1752. Chanda Sahib was treacherously killed by the Raja of Tanjore.

Did u know? The French disaster at Trichinopoly sealed the fate of Dupleix. The Directors of the French Company dissatisfied with the political ambitions of Dupleix and the ruinous expense these involved decided to recall him. In 1754 Godeheu replaced Dupleix as the Governor-General of the French possessions in India. In January 1755, a provisional peace treaty was concluded between the two Companies in India.

The second round of the conflict also proved inconclusive. On land the superior English generalship had been demonstrated when their candidate Mohammed Ali was installed the Nawab of Karnatic. The French were, however, still strongly entrenched at Hyderabad where French soldier-diplomat Bussy had obtained further grants from the new Subahdar Salabat Jang (Muzaffar Jang had lately been killed in an accidental skirmish in February, 1751). Important districts of Northern Circars yielding an annual revenue of thirty lakh of rupees were ceded to the French Company. In this struggle the French predominant position in the Deccan Peninsula was definitely undermined. The English now had an edge over the French.

The Third Karnatic War (1758-63): Like the First Karnatic War, this conflict between the English and the French in India was an echo of the struggle in Europe. The outbreak of the Seven Years' War in Europe ended the short peace between the European Companies in India. In April 1757, the French Government sent Count de Lally who reached India after a voyage of twelve months in April 1758. In the meantime the English had defeated Siraj-ud-duala and captured Bengal in 1757. The conquest of Bengal placed at the disposal of the English the immense riches of Bengal and with that financial stick they could beat the French effectively in Southern India.

Count de Lally captured Fort St. David in 1758 and sanctioned a hasty and misconceived attack on Tanjore to exact an outstanding payment of 56 lakhs rupees from that ruler. The campaign ended in failure damaging French reputation seriously. Lally's next move was to besiege Madras, but the appearance of a strong English naval force before Madras compelled Lally to abandon the siege. Lally then summoned Bussy from Hyderabad. This was a capital mistake of Lally. Bussy's recall from Hyderabad weakened French position in that capital. The English fleet under the command of Pocock defeated the French fleet under D' Ache thrice and compelled him to retire from the Indian waters. The English command of the sea left the field open for them and the final victory was no longer in doubt. A staggering blow was struck at the French at Wandiwash (1760) by Sir Eyre Coote. Bussy was taken prisoner. The French in January 1761 ignominiously retreated to Pondicherry. Pondicherry after a blockade of eight months capitulated to the English. Mahe and Jinji were lost by the French in quick succession. Thus was rung down the curtain to the drama of Anglo-French rivalry in the south. Undoubtedly the French position in India was lost beyond redemption.

The third and the final round of the struggle proved decisive. Pondicherry and some other French settlements were no doubt returned to the French by the Treaty of Paris (1763) but these were never to be fortified. The French political cause in India was doomed for good.

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Causes for the Failure of the French:

The French position which at one time dazzled the Indian world by its political successes was destined to end in humiliation and failure. Among the various causes responsible for the defeat of the French and the victory of the English, the following few deserve special mention:

French Continental Preoccupations: The continental ambitions of France in the 18th century considerably strained her resources. The French monarchs of the time were fighting for "natural frontiers" for their country which meant acquisition of new territories towards the Low Countries, extension of the frontier to the Rhine and towards Italy. Such expansionist schemes involved that country deeper and deeper into the political muddle of Europe, taxed her energies and kept her constantly at war with the states of Europe. France cared more for a few hundred square miles of territory on her frontier to bigger stakes in North America or India. France attempted simultaneously the difficult task of continental expansion and colonial acquisitions. This divided her resources and made her unequal to the task in facing her adversaries. It was the misfortune of France that she gained almost nothing on the continent and lost her colonial possessions also. England, on the other hand, did not covet an inch of European territory. A part of Europe, England felt herself apart from it. England's interests in Europe were mainly confined to the maintenance of a balance of power in that continent. England's ambition was mainly colonial and in this single-minded objective she came off with flying colours. She won the struggle both in India and North America and worsted off France in both these regions.

Different Systems of Government in England and France: French historians have rightly attributed the failure of France in the colonial struggle to the inferior system of the government prevalent in France as compared to the English system of government. The French government was despotic and depended on the personality of the monarch. Even under Louis XIV, the *Grand Monarque*, the system was showing serious cracks. The numerous wars that Louis XIV waged sapped the vitality of the state, ruined her financial resources and made French power look like an inflated balloon. The deluge followed close on his death. His weak and sensual successor, Louis XV frittered away the resources of France upon his numerous mistresses and other favourites like dancers and hair-dressers. England, on the other hand, was ruled by an $3\frac{1}{2}$ enlightened oligarchy. Under the rule of the Whig Party, England took great strides towards a constitutional set-up, reducing the British realm into "a sort of a crowned republic." The system showed considerable vitality and grew from strength to strength. Alfred Lyall emphasises the rottenness of the French system of Government when he writes: "India was not lost by the French because Dupleix was recalled, or because La Bourdonnais and D'Ache both left the coast at critical moments or because Lally was headstrong and intractable. Still less was the loss due to any national inaptitude for distant and perilous enterprises in which the French have displayed high qualities... It was through the short-sighted, ill-managed European policy of Louis XV, misguided by his mistresses and by incompetent ministers, that France lost her Indian settlements in the Seven Years War."

Differences in the Organisation of the two Companies: The French Company was a department of the state. The Company had been launched with a share capital of $5\frac{1}{2}$ million lives out of which the monarch subscribed million lives. Its directors were nominated by the king from the shareholders and they carried on the decisions of two High Commissioners appointed by the Government. Since the state guaranted dividend to the shareholders, the latter took very little interest in promoting the prosperity of the Company. So great was the lack of public interest that from 1725 to 1765 the shareholders never met and the Company was managed as a department of the state. Under these circumstances the financial position of the French Company progressively deteriorated. At one stage the resources of the Company dwindled to such a low ebb that it had to sell its trading rights to a group of merchants from St. Malo for an annual payment. From 1721 to 1740 the Comapany traded on borrowed capital. Constantly propped up by subsidies from the royal treasury, the Company was kept going by monopoly of tobacco and gambling in lotteries. Such a company was ill-equipped to support the ambitions of Dupleix or finance his expensive wars. The English Company, on the other hand, was an independent commercial corporation. While this Company could not remain altogether

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unaffected by the political upheavals in England, the interference of the government into its day-to-day affairs was very little. Whoever controlled the administration in England, the King or Parliament, there was great interest in the ruling circles for the well-being of the Company. Compared to the French Company, the English Company was financially sounder, its trade was far more extensive and business methods better. The directors of the English Company always emphasised the importance of trade. With them trade came first and politics later on. The English Company earned enough to finance its wars. It has been estimated that during 1736-1756, the total sales of the English Company amounted to £ 41,200,000 as compared to the total sales of Indian goods in France which were approximately £ 11,450,000 during the same period. Financially the English Company was so rich that at one time it was in danger of being regarded as a milch cow by the Government of England. In 1767 the English Company was asked to pay £ 400,000 a year to the British treasury. There was even talk of using the surplus funds of the Company in liquidating the national debt of England. When Dupleix inaugurated the policy of making political gains to compensate for the declining profits of the French Company he took the first step towards its decline.

Role of the Navy: The events of the Karnatic Wars amply demonstrate how the fortunes of the two Companies waxed and waned with their strength on the seas. During 1746, French successes on land followed her naval superiority along the Coromandel coast. True, the English naval power did not assert its superiority during the few years following 1748, more because England and France were officially at peace. Dupleix's astounding successes were won during 1748-51 when the English navy was temporarily out of action. The naval superiority of England during the Seven Years, War placed Count de Lally at a grievous disadvantage and he could not hope to repeat the exploits of Dupleix. The retirement of French fleet under D'Ache from the Indian waters left the field clear for the English and their final victory was no longer in doubt. During the Austrian War of Succession French maritime strength was so greatly reduced that, according to Voltaire, she was left with no warships during the Seven Years' War. Pitt the Elder made the maximum use of the superiority of England on the high seas. Superior naval force enabled the English East India Company to keep open her communications with Europe, cover her operation on land in the Karnatic by supplying reinforcements from Bombay and Calcutta and cut off and isolate French force in the Karnatic from the rest of the world. Superior maritime strength proved to be England's most powerful weapon in the struggle for colonial supremacy. Even if other factors were equally proportioned navy would have the casting vote.

Impact of English Successes in Bengal: The English conquest of Bengal in 1757 was undoubtedly of great significance. Besides enhancing the political prestige of the English Company, it placed at its disposal the vast resources in wealth and manpower of Bengal. The financial resources of the English Company considerably improved. At a time when Count de Lally was ill at ease as to how to make payments to his troops. Bengal sent not only troops but supplies to the Karnatic. The Deccan was too poor to finance the political ambition of Dupleix or military schemes of Count de Lally. True, Bussy had obtained the cession of the Circars from the Nizam, but there is no evidence of any remission of funds to Southern India except the lakh and a half of rupees sent by Bussy to Lally in 1758.

Decidedly the power of superior finance was on the side of the English. V. A. Smith emphatically declares: "Neither Bussy nor Dupleix singly, nor both combined, had a chance of success against the government which controlled the sea routes and the resources of the Gangetic valley. It is futile to lay stress upon the personal frailties of Dupleix, Lally or lesser men in order to explain the French failure. Neither Alexander the Great nor Napoleon could have won the empire of India by starting from Pondicherry as a base and contending with the power which held Bengal and command of the sea". "Dupleix", writes Marriott, "made a cardinal blunder in looking for the key of India in Madras; Clive sought and found it in Bengal''.

1.2 Conquest of British Raj in Bengal and the Battle of Plassey

The first English factory in Bengal was established at Hugli in 1651 under permission from Sultan Shuja, second son of Emperor Shahjehan and then Subahdar of Bengal. The same year, much pleased with the services of Mr. Boughton in curing a royal lady, the Subahdar granted the Company the privileges of free trade throughout Bengal, Bihar and Orissa for a nominal lump sum payment of

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Rs. 3,000. Soon after English factories sprang up at Kassimbazar, Patna and other places in the province. In 1698 the English obtained from Subahdar Azim-us-Shan the zamindari of the villages of Sutanuti, Kalikata and Govindapur, the present site of Calcutta, on payment of Rs. 1,200 to the previous proprietors. In 1717 Emperor Farrukhsiyar confirmed the trade privileges granted by earlier Subahdars of Bengal, besides according permission to the Company to rent additional territory around Calcutta.

In 1741 Alivardi Khan, the Deputy Governor of Bihar under Nawab Sarfaraz Khan, rose in revolt, killed the Nawab in a battle and to fortify his position as the new Subahdar of Bengal got a confirmation from Emperor Muhammad Shah by payment of a large sum of money. Alivardi Khan's rule of fifteen years was spent in fighting the Maratha menace which assumed alarming proportions during this period. Taking advantage of the Maratha incursions into Bengal, the English obtained the Nawab's permission to dig a ditch and throw up an entrenchment around their settlement of Fort William. Alivardi Khan's attention was drawn to the developments in the Karnatic where the European Companies had usurped all power and he was urged to expel the Europeans from Bengal before they struck roots there.

Note: The Nawab likened the Europeans to bees who would make him honey if left in peace but would sting an intruder to death.

Alivardi Khan died on 9 April 1756 and was succeded by his grandson, Siraj-ud-daula. The new Nawab besides facing rival claimants to the throne like Shaukat Jang of Purnea and Ghasiti Begum of Dacca had serious apprehensions about the designs of the English. Anticipating another round of Anglo-French struggle in Europe and its extension to India, the English had begun to strengthen the fortifications of Fort William and mounted guns on the walls of the fort. Besides, the English gave offence to Siraj-ud-daula by indirectly lending support to the claims of Ghasiti Begum besides giving asylum to political offenders from Bengal. Siraj-ud-daula's repeated pleadings with the English to desist from their nefarious projects only evoked evasive replies. Finding his authority flouted in his own dominions, Siraj-ud-daula launched the offensive against the English. Philip Woodruff's argument that plunder was the main motive behind the Nawab's attack on Fort William hardly stands the test of careful scrutiny. Fort William was besieged on 15 June 1756 and surrendered after a feeble resistance of five days. Governor Roger Drake and other important citizens escaped through the back door down the river Hooghly. The Nawab placed Calcutta under the charge of Manik Chand and returned to Murshidabad.

The Black Hole: Mention may be made here of the much propagated Black Hole Episode. Following the normal practices of war, English prisoners at Calcutta which included some women and children were lodged in a prison room of the fort. The number of prisoners is given out as 146 and the dimensions of the prison room as 18 feet long by 14 feet 10 inches wide. So the story goes, that out of the 146 white prisoners shut up on 20th June only 23 survived the next morning when the prison room was opened, the rest having trampled one other down for places near the window. Excessive heat and suffocation took a heavy tool.

Siraj-ud-daula has been painted as a monster of cruelty and directly responsible for the tragic happenings. J. Z. Holwell, one of the survivors of the Black Hole and the prime author of the story, did not mention the names of the victims. Probably the number of victims was far less. And they were kept in the guard-room or prison of Fort William itself. Further, it was a subordinate officer of the Nawab who had shut up English prisoners into that prison room, for which the Nawab himself was in no way directly responsible. The casualties were thus, in no way, due to malice or callous nature of the Nawab. The Nawab's fault lay in that he did not punish the guard responsible for the tragedy. Nor did he show any tenderness to the survivors. The prisoners fell victims to the summer solstice. The incident was considered so insignificant as not to deserve any mention at the hands of the contemporary Muslim historian Ghulam Hussain, the author of *Siyar-ul-Mutakherin*. However, the East India Company's authorities used the episode as a propaganda device to malign the Nawab and won support of the British public opinion for the war of aggression which it was to wage almost uninterruptedly for the terrible retribution that followed it.

The Battle of Plassey: When the news of the capitulation of Calcutta reached Madras, the authorities there immediately decided to direct an army which had been built up to fight against the French towards Calcutta. The command of the expedition was given to Robert Clive who had recently returned

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from England. Clive was urged to do his work as rapidly as possible for the Madras authorities wanted their troops back in Madras for defence against the impending French attack. The expedition sailed on 16 October 1756 and reached Bengal on 14 December. Manik Chand, the Nawab's officer incharge of Calcutta, was bribed and he surrendered Calcutta to the English after making a show of resistance. In February 1757, the Nawab made peace with Clive by the Treaty of Alinagar (Calcutta renamed so after Siraj-ud-daula captured it) restoring to the English their former privileges of trade, granting permission to fortify Calcutta and promising compensation for the losses suffered by the English.

The wheel had gone a full circle. Now the English were on the offensive. Taking advantage of the disaffection among the Nawab's officers, Clive arranged a conspiracy in which Mir Jaffar (the Commander-in-Chief of the Nawab's army), Rai Durlabh, Jagat Seth (an influential banker of Bengal) and Omi Chand, an intermediary, joined. It was planned to make Mir Jaffar the Nawab who in turn was to reward the services of the Company and pay compensation for the losses suffered by them earlier.

The English had given great offence to the Nawab by capturing the French settlement of Chandernagore in March 1757. At a time when the Nawab feared an Afghan invasion from the north and a Maratha invasion from the west, the English force under Clive proceeded towards Murshidabad to fight against the Nawab. On 23 June 1757 the rival forces faced each other on the battlefield of Plassey, a mango grove 22 miles south of Murshidabad. The English army consisted of 950 European infantry, 100 European artillery, 50 English sailors and 2,100 Indian sepoys. The Nawab's large army of 50,000 was commanded by the treacherous General Mir Jaffar. An advance party of the Nawab's troops led by Mir Mudan and Mohan Lal got the better of the English troops and forced Clive to withdraw his forces behind the trees. A stray shot from the English side, however, killed Mir Mudan. Siraj-ud-daula summoned his army officers and sought their advice. Mir Jaffar played upon the fears of the Nawab and counselled a withdrawal of the army behind the entrenchment. Further, the Nawab was advised to retire from the battlefield leaving the control of operations to his Generals. The card was well played. The Nawab retired to Murshidabad followed by 2,000 horsemen. The little band of Frenchmen who held out were soon overpowered by Clive's troops. Mir Jaffar merely looked on. Clive won the day and received a message of congratulations from Mir Jaffar. Mir Jaffar reached Murshidabad on 25th and proclaimed himself the Nawab of Bengal. Siraj-ud-daula was captured and put to death. Mir Jaffar rewarded the services of the English by the grant of the zamindari of 24-Parganas besides a personal present of £234,000 to Clive and giving 50 lakh rupees in reward to army and naval officers. The Company was compensated for the losses suffered at Siraj-ud-daula's capture of Calcutta. All French settlements in Bengal were surrendered to the English. It was also understood that British merchants and officials would no longer be asked to pay duties on their private trade.

Importance of the Battle of Plassey: The battle—rather the rout of Plassey—was hardly important from the military view-point. It was a mere skirmish. The total casualties were 65 on the Company's side and 500 in the Nawab's army. The English army showed no military superiority either in manoeuvres or startegy of the battle. It was desertion in the Nawab's camp that gave Clive the victory. After Mir Mudan's death treacherous commanders held the field. If Mir Jaffar and Rai Durlabh had remained faithful the outcome of the battle would have been different. It was treason that drove the Nawab from the battlefield, it was treason that made Clive the victor. Perhaps it was in the game of diplomacy that Clive excelled. He played on the fears of the Jagat Seths, worked up the ambition of Mir Jaffar and won a victory without fighting. K. M. Pannikar believes that Plassey was a transaction in which the rich bankers of Bengal and Mir Jaffar sold out the Nawab to the English.

The battle of Plassey is important because of the events that followed it. Plassey put the British yoke on Bengal which could not be put off. The new Nawab, Mir Jaffar, was dependent on British bayonets for the maintenance of his position in Bengal and for protection against foreign invasions. An English army of 6,000 troops was maintained in Bengal to help the Nawab maintain his position. Gradually all real power passed into the hands of the Company. How hopeless was the position of Mir Jaffar is clear from the fact that while he wanted to punish Diwan Rai Durlabh and Ram Narayan, the deputy governor of Bihar, for disloyalty, the English held his hand. Mr. Watts, the British Resident at Murshidabad, held considerable influence. Ghulam Hussain Khan, the Muslim historian, noted

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that English recommendation was the only sure way to office. Very soon Mir Jaffar found the English yoke galling and intrigued with the Dutch to oust the English from Bengal. Clive thwarted this design and defeated the Dutch at Bedara (November 1759). When Mir Jaffar refused to read the writing on the wall, he had to give place to Mir Kasim, a nominee of the Company, in 1760.

The battle of Plassey and the subsequent plunder—for there was not much difference then between fair trade and plunder—of Bengal placed at the disposal of the English vast resources. The , first instalment of wealth paid to the Company immediately after Plassey was a sum of £800,000, all paid in coined silver. In the graphic language of Macaulay, "the fleet which conveyed this treasure to Calcutta consisted of more than a hundred boats." Bengal then was the most prosperous province, industrially advanced and commercially great. "The immense commerce of Bengal", wrote Verelst in 1767, "might be considered as the central point to which all the riches of India were attracted. Its manufactures find their way to the remotest part of India." The vast resources of Bengal helped the English to conquer the wars of the Deccan and extend their influence over Northern India.

A great transformation came about in the position of the English Company in Bengal. Before Plassey the English Company was just one of the European Companies trading in Bengal and suffering various exactions at the hands of the Nawab's officials. After Plassey the English Company virtually monopolised the trade and commerce of Bengal. The French never recovered their lost position in Bengal, the Dutch made a last bid in 1759 but were humbled. From commerce the English proceeded to monopolise political power in Bengal.

Plassey proved a battle with far-reaching consequences in the fate of India. "There never , was a battle." writes Malleson, "in which the consequences were so vast, so immediate and so permanent." Col. Malleson certainly overstates the case when he writes that it was Plassey which "made England the great Mohammadan power in the world; Plassey which forced her to become one of the main factors in the settlement of the burning Eastern Question; Plassey which necessitated the conquest and colonisation of the Cape of Good Hope, of the Mauritius, the protectorate over Egypt." Nevertheless, the battle of Plassey was an important event in the chain of developments that made the English the masters of India. Eric Stokes, a modern writer, describes "The Plassey Revolution as the first English eassy in private profiteering on a grandiose scale". The consequences of Plassey shaped the form of British overrule and the modes of cultural contact.

Self-Assessment

1. Choose the correct option:

(*i*) The first English Factory was established at Hugli in ___ .

(*a*) 1651 (*b*) 1653 (*c*) 1654 (*d*) 1660

(*ii*) In 1717, the Emperor ..... confirmed the trade privileges granted by earlier Subahdars of Bengal.

(*a*) Siraj-ud-daula (*b*) Alivardi Khan (*c*) Farrukhsiyar (*d*) Mir Jaffer

(*iii*) Which Nawab compared the English to bees?

(*a*) Mir Jafar (*b*) Alivardi Khan (*c*) Farrukhsiyar (*d*) Mir Qasim

(*iv*) Mir Jaffar Proclaimed himself the Nawab of Bengal on

(*a*) 26 June (*b*) 28 June (*c*) 25 June (*d*) 24 June

(*v*) The Battle of Plassey was fought on

(*a*) 20 June, 1757 (*b*) 22 June, 1757 (*c*) 23 June, 1757 (*d*) 24 June, 1757

1.3 Mir Jafar and Mir Qasim

Mir Jafar

Mir Jafar was the first Nawab of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa under the British rule in India. He succeeded Siraj-ud-Daulah.

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Mir Jafar or Sayyid Mir Muhammed Jafar Ali Khan bears the formal title of Shuja ul-Mulk, Hashim ud-Daula, Nawab Jaafar Ali Khan Bahadur, Mahabat Jang. He was the second son of Sayyid Ahmad Najafi. He is remembered in India by the name of Gaddar-e-Hind. He took over the reign as the eighth Nawab of Bengal and also counted as the first of Najafi dynasty.

Mir Jafar became the Nawab of Bengal by cheating Nawab Siraj-Ud-Daulah and surrendered the Nawab's army against Robert Clive in the battle field. His rule is regarded as the initiation of the rule of British in India. It was a key stem in the complete domination of British in India. He got a job in the army of the Nawab and gradually promoted himself. Nawab Alivardi Khan afterwards married off his half-sister Shah Khanam and provided 7000 horses to command. His early military career was glorious. Mir Jafar rescued the nephew of Alivardi Khan, the hapless Sauqat Jung, from the hold of Mirza Baqir at Katak. He also played a vital role in various military campaigns of Alivardi Khan, against the Marathas and against the earlier Nawab Murshid Quli Khan's grandson.

He was an ambitions man. He had conspired along with Ataullah (the faujdar of Rajmahal) of murdering Alivardi Khan. However, the conspiracy was disclosed and he was deprived of most of his powers. Thereafter he returned to Murshidabad and was successful to win the trust of Siraj-Ud-Daulah, the grandson of the Nawab. There he conspired with Shawkat Jang to invade Bengalwhich was again disclosed resulting in his replacement. There was a pact between the British and Mir Jafar to overthrow Siraj in order to make him the Nawab of Bengal.

The British soldiers under the command of Robert Give advanced to Murshidabad and confronted Siraj in the Battle of Plassey in the year 1757. Mir Jafar's army betrayed Siraj-Ud-Daulah by denying fighting for him and in the end Siraj was defeated and killed. Mir was made the new Nawab. However he realised that the British had high expectations and he attempted to set free from them with the help of the Dutch. The Dutch were defeated by the British and British retaliated by compelling Mir to renounce the throne in favour of Mir Qasim, his son-in-law. Mir Qasim was made the ruler but he did not bow to the British. The Company fought with him and he was overthrown. Mir Jafar however was able to gain the confidence of the British and he was again made the Nawab of Bengal in the year 1763. He was the Nawab till he died in the year 1765.

Mir Qasim

Mir Qasim (also spelt **Mir Kasim**; full name: **Mir Kasim Ali Khan**) was the Nawab of Bengal from 1760 to 1763. He was installed as Nawab by the British East India Company replacing Mir Jafar, his father-in-law, who had himself been installed by the British after his role in the Battle of Plassey. However, Mir Jafar had started to assert independence by trying to tie up with the Dutch East India Company. The British eventually overran the Dutch forces at Chinsura and replaced Mir Jafar with Mir Qasim. Qasim later fell out with the British and fought them at the Battle of Buxar. His defeat has been suggested as the last real chance of preventing a British-ruled India following Britain's victory in the Seven Years War.

The Alliance with the English East India Company

Nawab Mir Jafar had sent to Calcutta his kinsman, Mir Qasim, to represent him at the Conference regarding the Administration and settlement of the apportionment of 10 annas of the revenue to Mir Jafar and 6 annas to the English, and regarding the enjoyment of the office of Diwan by Mir Jafar.

On the death of Sadiq Ali Khan (Mir Miran); the eldest son of Nawab Mir Jafar, the Army demanding their pay which had fallen into arrear for some years mutinied in a body, besieged the Nawab in the Chihil Satun Palace, and cut off supplies of food and water. In consequence, the Nawab wrote to Mir Qasim Khan to the effect that the army had reduced him to straits for demand of arrear pay.

Mir Qasim Khan, in concert with Jagat Seth conspired with the English Chiefs, and induced the latter to write to Nawab Mir Jafar to the effect that the mutiny of the army for demand of pay was a very serious matter, and that it was advisable that the Nawab abandoning the Fort should come down to Calcutta, entrusting the Fort and the Subah to Mir Qasim Khan.

Mir Qasim with full self-confidence, on attaining his aim, returned to Murshidabad. The English Chiefs leaguing with Mir Qasim Khan brought out Nawab Jafar Khan from the Fort, placed him on a boat, and sent him down to Calcutta. Mir Qasim entered the Fort, mounted the masnad of Nizamat,

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and issued proclamations of peace and security in his own name. He sent a message to Raja Rajballab to bring back the Emperor to Azimabad Patna, whilst he himself afterwards set out for Azimabad, in order to wait on the Emperor, after attending to and reassuring his army, and making some settlement in regard to their arrears of pay. Leaving his uncle, Mir Turab Ali Khan, as Deputy Nazim in Murshidabad, Mir Qasim carried with himself all his effects, requisites, elephants, horses, and treasures comprising cash and jewelleries of the harem, and even gold and silver decorations of the Imambara, amounting to several lakhs in value, and bade farewell to the country of Bengal. After arriving at Monghyr (Munger), and attending to the work of strengthening its fortifications, he marched to Azimabad (Patna), in order to wait on the Emperor. Before Mir Qasim's arrival at Azimabad, the Mughal Emperor Shah Alam II had returned to that place, and the English going forward to receive him had accommodated His Majesty in their Factory. Subsequently, Qasim Ali Khan also arrived, had the honour of an audience with the Emperor, and received from the latter the title of Nawab Ali Jah NaSiru-l-mulk Imtiazu-d-daulah Qasim Ali Khan Nasrat Jang. But the officers of the Emperor marking some change in the conduct of Qasim Ali Khan marched back with the Emperor to Benaras, without giving any intimation thereof to the aforesaid Khan. Nawab Qasim Ali Khan followed them up to the confines of Buxar and Jagadishpur, and after pillaging those places returned to Azimabad, halted at the residence of Ram Narain, and set himself to the work of administration of the affairs of that place.

Conflict with British

Upon ascending the throne, Mir Qasim repaid the British with lavish gifts. To please the British, Mir Qasim robbed everybody, confiscated lands, reduced Mir Jafar's purse and depleted the treasury. He also transferred the districts of Burdwan, Midnapur and Chittagong to the British East India Company. However, he soon tired of British interference and endless avarice and like Mir Jafar before him, yearned to break free of the British. He shifted his capital from Murshidabad to Munger in present day Bihar where he raised an independent army, financing them by streamlining tax collection.

He opposed the British East India Company's position that their imperial Mughal licence (*dastak*) meant that they could trade without paying taxes (other local merchants with *dastaks* were required to pay up to 40% of their revenue as tax). Frustrated at the British refusal to pay these taxes, Mir Qasim abolished taxes on the local traders as well. This upset the advantage that the British traders had been enjoying so far, and hostilities built up. After losing a number of skirmishes, Mir Qasim overran the Company offices in Patna in 1763, killing several Europeans including the Resident. Mir Qasim allied with Shuja-ud-Daula of Avadh and Shah Alam II, the itinerant Mughal emperor, who were also threatened by the British. However, their combined forces were defeated in the Battle of Buxar in 1764, ceding control of the rich Ganges plain to the British.

The short campaign of Mir Qasim was significant as a direct fight against British outsiders by native Bengali. Unlike Siraj-ud-Daulah before him, Mir Qasim was an effective and popular ruler. Their success at Buxar established the British as conquerors of Bengal in a much more real sense than the Battle of Plassey seven years earlier.

Mir Qasim was defeated by during the Battle of Murshidabad, Battle of Gherain and the Battle of Oondwa Nullah.

Death

Plundered of most of his treasures, placed on a lame elephant and expelled by Shuja-ud-Daula after he had been routed at the Battle of Buxar, 23 October 1764; he fled to Rohilkhand, Allahabad, Gohad and Jodhpur, eventually settling at Kotwal, near Delhi in 1774.

Mir Qasim died in obscurity and abject poverty possibly from dropsy, at Kotwal, near Delhi on 8 May 1777. His two shawls, the only property left by him, had to be sold to pay for his funeral.

1.4 Clive's 2nd Governorship and English in Bengal from 1757-1772

Settlement of Bengal the Dual System: Clive's solution of the political tangle of Bengal was the setting up of the infamous Dual System whereby the Company acquired real power while the responsibility for administration rested on the shoulders of the Nawab of Bengal.

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In the hey days of the Mughal Empire the two principal officers of the Central government in a province were the Subahdar and the Diwan. The Subahdar looked after the *Nizamat* functions, i.e., military defence, police and administration of criminal justice, while the Diwan was the chief financial officer and in charge of revenue affairs, besides being responsible for the administration of civil justice in the province. The two officers served as a check on each other and were directly responsible to the Central government. After the death of Aurangzeb the Mughal central authority weakened and Murshid Kuli Khan, the Nawab of Bengal, exercised both the *Nizamat* and *Diwani* functions.

The *firman* issued by Emperor Shah Alam an 12 August 1765 granted the Diwani functions to the Company in return for an annual payment of Rs. 26 lakhs to the Emperor and providing for the expenses of the *Nizamat* (fixed at Rs. 53 lakhs). Earlier in February 1765, Najm-ud-Daula was allowed to succeed as Nawab of Bengal (after the death of his father Mir Jaffar) on the condition that he practically surrendered the *Nizamat* functions, i.e., the military defence and foreign affairs of the province entirely into the hands of the Company and the civil administration to the care of a Deputy Subahdar to be named by the Company and not removable without their consent. Thus, the Company acquired the *Diwani* functions from the Emperor and the *Nizamat* functions from the Subahdar of Bengal.

At this time the Company was neither willing nor able to undertake the direct collection of revenue. For the exercise of *Diwani* functions, the Company appointed two Deputy Diwans, Mohammad Reza Khan for Bengal and Raja Shitab Roy for Bihar. Mohammad Reza Khan also acted as Deputy Nazim. Thus the whole administration, Nizamat as well as Diwani, was exercised through Indian agency, though the actual power rested with the Company. This system of government came to be remembered as Dual System or Dyarchy, i.e., rule of two, the Company and the Nawab. In actual practice the Dual System proved a sham, for the East India Company exercised all political power and used the Indian agency merely as an instrument for their purposes.

Clive's Justification of the Dual System: Clive was fully conscious of the fact that all power had passed into the hands of the Company and nothing was left to the Nawab except the name and shadow of authority. "This name", wrote Clive to the Select Committee, "this shadow, it is indispensably necessary we should seem to venerate". Clive gave his reasons for the new set up:

Firstly, open assumption of authority would have brought the Company in its true colours and might have achieved the miracle of uniting some Indian princes against the Company and thus embroil them in war;

Secondly, it was very doubtful whether the French, the Dutch or the Danes would readily acknowledge the Company's subahship and pay into the hands of their servants the duties on trade or the quit-rents of those districts which they had long possessed by virtue of Imperial firmans or grants from former Nawabs of Bengal;

Thirdly, open assumption of political power could create complications in England's diplomatic relations with France, Holland, Portugal or Sweden and might urge those powers to join in an anti-British front the like of which Europe saw later during 1778-80 (the American War of Independence);

Fourthly, the Company did not have at its disposal trained personnel to take over and run effectively the work of administration. Clive wrote to the Court of Directors that even "three times the present number of civil servants would be insufficient" for that purpose. The few servants of the Company that could be available for the task of administration were ignorant of Indian practices, languages and customs;

Fifthly, the Court of Directors were opposed to the acquisition of the territories for that might interfere with their trade and profits. The Directors were more interested in commerce and finance than territorial acquisitions; and

Lastly, Clive well understood that open assumption of political power of Bengal might move the British Parliament into interfering with the affairs of the Company.

Evil Effects of the Dual System: The scheme of government devised by Clive proved ineffective and unworkable and created anarchy and confusion in Bengal. It failed from the very moment of its inception.

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1. **Administrative breakdown:** Owing to the impotence of the *Nizamat*, the administration of law and order virtually broke down and the administration of justice was reduced to a farce. While the Nawab had no power to enforce law and provide justice, the Company on their part disavowed all responsibility for administration. In the countryside the dacoits roamed freely and the *Sannyasi* raiders reduced the government to a mockery. Sir George Cornewall declared in the British House of Commons in 1858, "I do most confidently maintain that no civilised government ever existed on the face of this earth which was more corrupt, more perfidious and more rapacious than the government of the East India Company from 1765 to 1784".
2. **Decline of Agriculture:** Bengal, once the granary of India was laid waste. The land revenue was annually farmed out to the highest bidder. The tax collectors or contractors had no permanent interest in the land and they rack rented the cultivators. The Bengali peasant suffered from the evils of over-assessment, harshness of collection and was subjected to the worst exactions by government officials.

   Then came the famine of 1770 which produced untold miseries and took a heavy tool of life. "The scene of misery that intervened" observed a servant of the Company in 1770, "and still continues, shocks humanity too much to bear description. Certain it is, that in several parts the living have been fed on the dead". During the famine land revenue was collected with severity and even extortion practised, while the servants of the Company added to the misery of the people by trading and profiteering in essential articles of foodstuff.
3. **Disruption of Trade and Commerce:** Agricultural depression adversely affected the trade and commerce of the country. By the *firman* of 1717 issued by Emperor Farrukhsiyar the Company had been granted the privileges of trading duty-free in Bengal. This concession authorised the President of the Company at Calcutta to issue *dastaks* or pass chits exempting the goods mentioned in it from duty, stoppage or even inspection. If its legitimate use worked against the interests of the country, its misuse ruined the country merchants and traders. The Company's servants virtually monopolised the internal trade of Bengal and would undersell the Indian merchants in the local markets. Clive himself referred to these abuses in the course of a speech in the House of Commons when he said that the Company's merchants traded not only as merchants but as sovereigns and had "taken the bread out of the mouths of thousands and thousands of merchants, who used formerly to carry on the trade, and who are, now reduced to beggary".
4. **Ruination of Industry and Skill:** The weaving industry of Bengal received a rude setback. The Company used political power to discourage the silk industry in Bengal, for the silk fabrics of Bengal competed with silk fabrics manufactured in England in the English markets. In 1769 the Court of Directors sent orders to the Bengal authorities urging them to encourage the manufacture of raw silk and discourage the weaving of silk fabrics. Thus the silk winders of Bengal were compelled to work in the Company's factories. To save themselves from such oppression and compulsion many silkwinders of Bengal cut off their thumbs. It was no longer profitable for the weaver to weave much when he could not keep the gains of his labour. William Bolts, a contemporary, wrote about the various and innumerable methods of oppressing the poor weavers which were duly practised by the Company's agents or *gomastahs* in the country, such as by fines, imprisonments, floggings, forcing bonds from them etc. Bolts mentions that the black gomastahs (agents) did not obtain the consent of the poor weaver, but invariably forced him to sign the contract and receive advance money.
5. **Moral Degradation:** Moral degradation also set in the Bengal society. The farmer realised that the more he laboured the more he would have to pay to the revenue-farmers and government officials would work no more than was absolutely necessary for the bare needs of his family. Similarly, the weaver who could not keep all the reward of his hard work did not give his best to his work. The incentive for work being no longer there, the society became static and showed unmistakable signs of decay.

English in Bengal from 1757-1772: Clive had the resolution of a task-master and the boldness of a dictator. The soldierly qualities of decisive action were amply displayed in his administrative reforms.

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1. **Civil Reforms:** The transformation of the Company into a political body had called for administrative reforms. The three revolutions of Bengal (1757, 1760 and 1764), had enriched the governors and councillors and demoralised the servants of the Company from top to bottom. The general desire to 'get-rich quick' had vitiated the whole atmosphere. Bribery and corruption were rampant and acceptance of presents was carried to extreme limits. The servants of the Company indulged in private trade and misused the Company's *dastak* to seek exemption from payment of internal duties. The servants of the Company put self-advancement above the interests of the Company.

   Clive compelled the servants of the Company to sign 'covenants' prohibiting acceptance of presents. He forbade the servants of the Company from indulging in private trade and made payment of internal duties obligatory.

   To compensate the servants of the Company for their low salaries and loss of income from cessation of private trade, Clive sought to regulate and regularise the control of internal trade. A Society of Trade was formed in August 1765 with monopoly of trade in Salt, Betelnut and Tobacco. All the production and import of these goods into Bengal was purchased by this Society and then sold at selected centres to the retailers. The profits from this trade were to go the superior servants of the Company on a graduated scale, the Governor to receive £ 17,5000 per annum out of the profits, a member of the Council and a Colonel in the army to get £ 7000, a Major's share was £ 2000 and so on the lower ranks to receive in a descending scale.

   The evils of private trade had raised the prices of ordinary commodities of life and the people of Bengal suffered. Clive sought to abolish plunder by the individual servants of the Company only to put the plundering activities of the Company's servants on a collective basis. The Society of Trade made the matters worse for the people. The Court of Directors disallowed the mostrous scheme in 1766. Clive decided to abolish the Society in January 1767 but the work of the Society was not actually wound up till September, 1768.

2. **Military Reforms:** As early as 1763 the Court of Directors had sent orders for reduction of the double *bhatta* (field allowances) paid to military officers in Bengal. Due to one or the other reason the enforcement of the order was deferred to until Clive's arrival. The double *bhatta* originally granted on active service was continued by Mir Jaffar in times of peace also. The practice had continued since then and *bhatta* was considered by military officers as a part of their salary. Thus the allowance of Bengal army officers was twice as high as of corresponding officers in the Madras army. The Directors sent orders that the *bhatta* be brought on par with the *bhatta* of Madras army Clive issued orders that with effect from I January 1766 double allowance would be paid only to officers on service outside the frontiers of Bengal and Bihar.

   The Court of Directors decided to end the Dual System of administration set up by Clive and in 1772 required the President and Council to 'stand forth as the Diwan' and take over charge for the entire care and management of the revenues of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. Warren Hastings dismissed the two Deputy Diwans, Mohammad Reza Khan and Raja Shitab Rai. The Governor and the Council formed the Board of Revenue and the Company appointed its own officers called Collectors to manage revenue affairs. The treasury was removed from Murshidabad to Calcutta. Thus the entire internal administration was transferred to the servants of the Company arid the Nawab deprived of even an ostensible share in the government. However, the Nawab still lived in a state of sovereignty. Hastings also reorganised the household of the Nawab of Bengal and appointed Munny Begum, the widow of Mir Jaffar, as the guardian of the minor Nawab Mubarak-ud-daula. The allowance of the Nawab was reduced from 32 lakhs to 16 lakhs. Further, Hastings redefined relations with the Emperor. He stopped the payment of 26 lakhs of rupees annually paid to Emperor Shah Alam since 1765. The districts of Allahabad and Kora assigned to the Emperor by Clive in 1765 were also taken back and sold to the Nawab of Oudh for 50 lakhs of rupees. Though the motivating force was economy, the plea put forward was that the Emperor had accepted the protection of the Marathas. Evidently the treatment meted out to the Emperor was harsh and an *ex-parte action*. The Emperor was never warned of the consequences of his dealings with the Marathas. Warren Hastings' action was a breach of a solemn promise and remains morally and legally indefensible.

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Revenue Reforms: The system of land revenue administration devised by Akbar and the great Mughal Emperors had broken down in the early eighteenth century and what the Company inherited was only confusion. Baden Powell remarks that "some theory or practice of revising the assessment, some customary period for such revision might have been expected, but none was left us".

In order to work out a satisfactory system of land revenue administration, Warren Hastings resorted to the devise of experimentation and tried to evolve a system by the proverbial method of trial and error.

In 1772 Warren Hastings made a five-year settlement of land revenue by the crude method of farming out estates to the highest bidder. Acting on the presumption that the zamindars were mere tax-gatherers with no proprietary rights, in the settlement of 1772 no preference was given to them and in fact in certain cases they were actually discouraged from bidding.

In 1773 changes were made in the machinery of collection. The Collectors who had been found to be corrupt and indulged in private trade were replaced by Indian Diwans in the districts. Six Provincial Councils were set up to superwise the work of Indian Diwans. The overall charge rested with the Committee of Revenue at Calcutta. The trend of Hastings' mind was towards centralization and he desired to ultimately centralise all functions into the hands of the Committee at Calcutta.

Warren Hastings tried to build up a framework of justice after the Mughal model. In 1772, a Diwani Adalat and a Faujdari Adalat were set up at the district level. The Diwani Adalat was presided over by the Collector who was competent to decide all civil cases including those concerning personal property, inheritance, caste, marriage, debts etc. In case of Hindus, the Hindu law was applicable, in case of Muslims the Muslim law. The Diwani Adalat could decide cases involving sums up to Rs. 500 above which appeals lay to the Sadar Diwani Adalat at Calcutta presided over by the President and two members of the Supreme Council assisted by Indian officers.

The District Faujdari Adalat was presided over by Indian officers of the Company who decided cases with the assistance of Qazis and Muftis. The Collector, a European officer, was authorised to exercise some control and supervision over the Faujdari Adalat (i.e. to see that the evidence was duly submitted and weighed and the verdict passed was fair and impartial and given in open court). The Mohammadan law was followed in the Faujdari Adalat. This Adalat could not award death sentence or order confiscation of property for which the confirmation of the Sadr Nizamat Adalat was necessary. Appeals from the Faujdari Adalat lay to the Sadr Nizamat Adalat presided over by the Deputy Nazim assisted by the Chief Qazi and the Chief Mufti and three Maulvis. The President and Council supervised the proceedings of this Court.

Estimate of Clive: Robert Clive may justly lay claim to be the true founder of British political dominion in India. He correctly read the intricacies of the political situation of the time and struck boldly and in the right direction. He outdid his French adversary Dupleix and achieved more permanent results. His successful conduct of the siege of Arcot (1751) turned the seales against the French in the Karnatic. In Bengal he won the battle of Plassey (1757) against Siraj-ud-daula and reduced the new Nawab Mir Jaffar to the position of a mere puppet of the English. With the resources of Bengal the English conquered South India and routed their only political rival in India, the French. Above all, he transformed a mere trading body that the East India Company was into a territorial power with the role of'king-maker' in Bengal. Coming back to Bengal in 1765, Clive consolidated the gains of the Company and regulated the foreign relations on a secure basis. Clive fully deserved the praise of Burke that "he settled great foundations".

Percival Spear in a recent study of Clive and his work in India points out that the British empire in India would have come into existence even without Clive, though in a different way and over a different time span. He concludes that "Clive was not a founder but a harbinger of the future. He was not a planner of empire but an experimenter who revealed something of the possibilities. Clive was the forerunner of the British Indian empire".

Clive's weakness for money and Machiavellian methods found critics even in England and he was charged for these in the British parliament. He exacted illegal presents and set a bad precedent for his successors who in order to enrich themselves engineered revolutions in Bengal (1760 and 1764). Clive joined in the general plunder of Bengal by organising the Society of Trade. In devising the

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scheme of Dual Government in Bengal Clive's paramount consideration was establishment of English power and not welfare of the people. The whole of Bengal was reduced to the position of an estate of the East India Company. Sardar K. M. Pannikar very aptly remarks that during 1765-1772 the Company eastablished a 'robber state' in Bengal and plundered and looted Bengal indiscriminately. During this period British Imperialism showed its worst side in India and the people of Bengal suffered greatly.

Clive failed to rise to the heights of a statesman. He proved to be a man of insight rather than foresight and his administrative settlement bequeathed a crop of difficulties to his successors. If the main justification of British rule in India was, as we are often told, the establishment of peace and order in this distracted land, then Clive can claim no share in this lofty work, for his various expedients only added to disorders in India.

1.5 Mysore and Its Resistance to the British Expansion

Eighteenth century India provided very favourable circumstances for the rise of military adventurers both in the north and the south. One such soldier of fortune, Haidar Ali (born 1721) started his career as a horseman and rose to the position of the ruler of Mysore. The process of usurpation of royal authority of the Wodeyar ruler Chik Krishnaraj started during 1731-34 when two brothers. Devraj (the Commander-in-chief) and Nanjaraj (the Controller of Revenue and Finance) controlled real power in the state. The quadrangular conflict for supremacy in the Deccan among the Marathas, the Nizam, the English and the French East India Companies dragged Mysore in the game of adventurous politics. The repeated incursions into Mysorean territories of the Marathas in 1753, 1754, 1757 and 1759 and of the Nizam in 1755 and the heavy financial demands made by the invaders rendered the Mysore state financially bankrupt and politically a fertile ground for military exploits at the hands of powerful neighbouring states. Devraj and Nanjaraj unable to rise to the occasion had to give place to a man of superior military talent, sound diplomatic skill and unquestioned qualities of leadership. By 1761 Haider Ali was the *de facto* ruler of Mysore.

Haider Ali prepared himself to meet the challenges of the time. A well-disciplined army with a strong and swift cavalry wing was necessary to meet the challenges of the Marathas, an effective artillery wing along could counter the French-trained Nizami armies. He was also aware of the superior Western know-how in arms manufactures. With French help Haidar Ali set up an arsenal at Dinajgul and also profited from the Western methods of training an army. Above all, he learnt the art of permutation-combination at the diplomatic chessboard and tried to out-manoeuvre his adversaries in the game.

During 1761-63 Haider Ali conquered Hoskote, Dod Bellapur, Sera, Bednur etc. and subjugated the poligars of south India.

The Marathas who had recovered fast from the Panipat debacle (1761) under Peshwa Madhav Rao frequently raided Mysore territory and defeated Haidar Ali in 1764, in 1766 and again in 1771 compelling Haidar to buy off the Marathas as also to surrender some important territories to them. Quick to take advantage of political confusion at Poona after the death of Peshwa Madhav Rao in 1772, Haidar Ali during 1774-76 not only recovered all the territories earlier surrendered to the Marathas but acquired Bellary, Cuddapah, Gooty, Kurnool and important territories in the Krishna-Tungabhadra Doab.

The First Angle-Mysore War (1767-69): Blinded by their easy successes in Bengal the English concluded a treaty with Nizam Ali of Hyderabad (1766) and in return for the surrender of Northern Circars committed the Company to help the Nizam with troops in his war against Haidar Ali. Haidar already had territorial disputes with the ruler of Arcot and differences with the Marathas. Suddenly Haidar found a common front of the Nizam, the Marathas and the Nawab of Carnatic operating against him. Undaunted, Haidar played the diplomatic game, bought the Marathas, allured the Nizam with territoral gains and together with the latter launched an attack on Arcot. After a see-saw struggle for a year and a half, Haidar suddenly turned the tables on the English and appeared at the gates of Madras. The panic-stricken Madras Government concluded the humiliating treaty on 4 April 1769 on the basis of mutual restitution of each other's territories and a defensive alliance between the two parties committing the English to help Haidar in case he was attacked by another power.

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The Second Anglo-Mysore War (1780-84): The treaty of 1769 between Haider Ali and the English Company proved more in the nature of a truce and Haidar Ali accused the Company of not observing the terms of the defensive treaty by refusing to help him when the Marathas attacked Mysore in 1771. Further, Haider found the French more helpful in meeting his military demands for guns, saltpetre and lead than the English. Some French military hardware naturally found its way to Mysore through Mahe, a French port on the Malabar coast. The outbreak of the American War of Independence and French alliance with the American colonists made Warren Hastings extremely suspicious of Haidar Ali's relations with the French. Under the circumstances the English attempt to caputure Mahe which Haidar considered to be under his protection, was a direct challenge to Haidar Ali.

Haidar Ali arranged a joint front with the Nizam and the Marathas against the common enemy — the English East India Company. In July 1780 Haidar attacked Carnatic and captured Arcot, defeating an English army under Colonel Baillie. Meanwhile the English detached the Marathas and the Nizam from the side of Haidar. Undaunted, Haidar boldly faced the English but suffered a defeat at Porto Novo (Nov. 1781). The following year Haidar inflicted a humiliating defeat on the English army under Col. Braithwaite; Braithwaite was taken a prisoner. Haidar died on 7 December 1782, leaving the task unfinished to his son, Tipu. Tipu continued the war for another year, but absolute success eluded both sides. Tired of war, the two sides concluded peace by the Treaty of Mangalore (March 1784) on the basis of mutual restitution of each other's territories. The second round of the struggle too proved inconclusive.

The Third Anglo-Mysore War (1790-92): British imperialism, true to its very nature, considered every peace treaty as a breathing time for another offensive against Tipu. Acting against the letter and spirit of the policy of peace and non-expansion loudly proclaimed in Pitt's India. Act (1784), Lord Cornwallis worked on the anti-Tipu suspicions of the Nizam and the Marathas and arranged a Triple Alliance (1790) with them against Tipu. Convinced of the inevitability of a war with the English, Tipu had sought the help of the Turks by sending an embassy to Constantinople in 1784 and again in 1785 and on to the French king in 1787.

Tipu's differences with the Raja of Travancore arose over the latter's purchase of Jaikottai and Cranganore from the Dutch in Cochin state; Tipu considered the Cochin state as his tributary state and thus considered the act of the Travancore Raja as violation of his sovereign rights. He decided to attack Travancore in April 1790. The English, itching for a war, sided with the ruler of Travancore (vide their earlier treaty of 1784) and declared war against Tipu. At the head of a large army Cornwallis himself marched through Vellore and Ambur to Bangalore (captured in March 1791) and approached Seringapatam. The English captured Coimbatore only to lose it later. Supported by the Maratha and Nizam's troops the English made a second advance towards Seringapatam. Tipu offered tough resistance but realised the impossibility of carrying further the struggle. The Treaty of Seringapatam (March 1792) resulted in the surrender of nearly half of Mysorean territory to the victorious allies. The British acquired Baramahal, Dindigul and Malabar while the Marathas got territory on the Tungabhadra side and the Nizam acquired territories from the Krishna to beyond the Pennar. Tipu had also to pay a war indemnity of over three crores of rupees. Tipu lost heavily in this round of strength and could only save his kingdom from total extinction by preparation and planning which seemed beyond his resources. Cornwallis summed up the Company's gain: "We have effectively crippled our enemy without making our friends too formidable".

The Fourth Anglo-Mysore War (1799): The East India company's policy in India alternated wars with spells of peace for recuperation of their resources. The arrival of imperialist Lord Wellesley as Governor-General in 1798 in the backdrop of Napoleonic danger to India augured ill for the maintenance of status quo. Wellesley was determined to either tame Tipu to submission or wipe out his independence altogether. The *modus operandi* was the Subsidiary Alliance System. The charge against Tipu Sultan of planning intrigues with the Nizam and the Marathas or sending emissaries to Arabia, Zaman Shah of Afghanistan or Constantinople or the French in the Isle of France (Mauritius) or the Directory at Versailles were convenient excuses to force down the desired end. Tipu's explanation that only "40 persons, French and of a dark colour, of whom 10 or 12 were artificers and the rest servants paid the hire of the ship, came here in search of employment" did not satisfy Wellesley. The operations against Tipu began on 17 April and with the fall of Seringapatam on 4 May 1799 brought

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to a close the history of Mysore's independence. Tipu died fighting bravely. The members of Tipu's family were interned at Vellore. The English annexed Kanara, Coimbatore, Wynead, Dharpuram besides the entire sea coast of Mysore. Some territories were given to the Nizam. A boy of the earlier Mysore Hindu royal family was installed on the *gaddi* of Mysore and a Subsidiary Alliance was imposed.

Administration of Tipu Sultan

The only system of government known to the Indian sub-continent at that time was despotism and Tipu's system could not be different. The Sultan was the embodiment of all civil, political and military authority in the state. He was his own foreign minister, his own commander-in-chief and acted as the highest court of appeal in his kingdom.

In spite of the absence of any constitutional checks on his authority, Tipu Sultan did not behave like an irresponsible despot. He displayed a high sense of duty to his office and believed that his subjects "constitute a unique trust held for God, the Real Master." He took great care to work for the welfare and happiness of the people.

The Central Administration. Tipu Sultan's zeal for innovation and improvement prompted him to introduce a number of changes in the system of government he inherited from his father. H.H. Dodwell gives Tipu the credit of being the first Indian sovereign who sought to apply the western methods to his administration. Each department was put under the charge of a chief assisted by a number of subordinate officers who constituted a Board. The decisions in the department were taken after full discussion where members enjoyed the right to dissent. The decisions were taken by a majority of votes and the minutes of the meetings were recorded. However, the final decision in all important matters rested with the Sultan.

There was no office of the Wazir or Prime Minister in Tipu's administration. The seven principal departments each under a *mir asif* was directly responsible to the Sultan. The seven departments were the Revenue and Finance Department (Mir Asaf Cutchehri), the Military Department (Mir Miran Cutchehri and the Zumra), the Commerce Department (Malikut-Tujjar Cutchehri), the Marine Department (Mir Yam Cutchehri) and the Treasury and Mint Department (Mir Khazain Cutchehri). Besides there were some minor departments like Post & Intelligence Department, the Public Buildings Department, the Cattle Department etc.

37 ½%

The Provincial and Local Administration: After 1784 Tipu divided his kingdom into seven provinces called *asafi tukris*. Later the number of provinces was increased to 17. The two principal officers in a province were the *asaf* (Civil Governor) and the *faujdar* (Military Governor) and the two were expected to act as a check on each other. The provinces were further divided into districts and further down there were a number of villages in each district. The traditional village *panchayats* provided the infrastructure for local administration.

Land Revenue: By and large Tipu continued the revenue system of Haidar Ali but introduced greater efficiency into it. He tried to establish direct relationship between the Government and the cultivator by discouraging the jagirdari system, resumption of unauthorised *inam* (rent free) lands and confiscation of the hereditary land rights of the poligars (zamindars).

The Government employed the method of inducement-cum-compulsion to bring more land under cultivation. The *Amil*, incharge of the district, toured his district and sanctioned taqavi (advances of money) loans to the needy peasants to purchase ploughs and extend cultivation. Further, if the *Amil* found that in a household there were a number of men and a few ploughs, he would urge the head of the family to acquire more ploughs; in case of defiance and if the *Amil* was satisfied that in a village there was more ground fit for cultivation (say, of sugarcane) than under actual plough then, as a penal measure, the Amil could charge the land tax cultivated on the basis of all cultivable land and not the land under actual cultivation.

The land revenue demand of the state ranged from 1/3 to 1/2 of the total produce, depending on the fertility of the land and availability of irrigation facilities. In 1792 the state's income from revenue was over two crores which was reduced to nearly one-half after the treaty of Seringapatam, 1792 (when he had to surrender half his kingdom to the E.I. Company and her allies). To make up for this loss in income, in 1765 Tipu increased the assessment by over pre-1792 rates.

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Trade and Commerce: In the fashion of European powers Tipu also realised that a country could be great only by developing its trade and commerce. He promoted both foreign and inland trade and imposed tight Government control over it.

Realising the importance of trade with the Persian gulf and Red Sea regions, he sought to establish commercial factors and stationing commercial agents at Muscat, Ormuz, Jeddah, Aden etc. He even planned to establish commercial relations with Pegu and China. A Commercial Board was established and the Regulations of 1793-94 set forth the general duties of the officers in the department. He declared government monopoly of trade in sandalwood, betelnut, pepper, cardamos, gold and silver bullion, foreign export of elephants etc. Similarly, for conduct of inland trade the Government acquired monopoly rights for purchase of the ryot's share of production of some specified articles, like sandal-wood and black pepper. A number of factories were set up in the Mysore state which manufactured a wide range of articles ranging from war ammunition, paper, sugar, silk fabrics, small tools and fancy goods.

Asok Sen believes that the principal aim of Tipu's trade policy was of making the government 'the chief merchant of his dominions' and the trader was to enrich the treasury. Economic activity came to be directly subordinated to political and military interests and were not compatible with the long-term interests of trade and industry, nor with the preparation of society and economy for the making of an industrial revolution under the aegis of capitalism.

Military Administration: Compulsion of circumstances required the Sultan to give his maximum care to the raising and maintenance of an efficient military force. Tipu Sultan's infantry was disciplined after the European model with Persian words of command. He did employ French officers to train his troops and raised a French corps also but unlike the Nizam and the Sindhia never allowed French corps to develop a pressure group value. In fact the number of French troops in his army gradually declined till it stood at only 20 Europeans in 1794 and after the fall of Seringapatam in 1799 stood at merely 4 officers and 45 non-commissioned officers and privates.

The strength of Tipu's army varied in accordance with the military requirements and resources available. On the eve of the Third Anglo-Mysore War Tipu's military forces comprised 45,000 regular infantry and 20,000 horse besides some irregular force. In 1793 after Tipu had surrendered half his territory to the English and their allies, his army was estimated to be 30,000 regular infantry, 7,000 cavalry, 2000 artillery besides 6,000 irregular cavalry.

Both Haidar Ali and Tipu realised the importance of a naval force but could not rise to the level of their main adversary, the East India Company. Whatever ships Haidar Ali had built were destroyed by Sir Edward Hughes when he entered Bangalore in 1780.

The English occupation of Tipu's Malabar possessions in the Third Anglo-Mysore war drew the Sutan's attention to the need for an effective naval task force. In 1796 Tipu set up a Board of Admiralty and planned for a fleet of 22 battleships and 20 large frigates. Three dockyards at Mangalore Wajidabad and Molidabad were established. However, his plans did not fructify and he found his resources unequal to the potential and resources of the English. It was probably realising this factor when he remarked, "I can ruin their resources by land but I cannot dry up the sea".

Estimate of Tipu Sultan: Born on 20 November 1750 to Haider Ali and Fatima after many prayers, the child was given the name of Tipu Sultan. Thus Sultan was a part of his name by which he was known both as a prince and a ruler. He received all the scholastic education of a Muslim prince and could freely converse in Arabic, Persian, Kanarese and Urdu. He know horse riding, shooting and fencing and was in possession of excellent health. He despised the use of palanquins and described them as fit only for use of women and invalids. Tipu Sultan possessed an energetic mind free from 'Eastern apathy or Eastern conservatism'. He was eager to learn and showed proper appreciation of the Western sciences and Western political philosophy. He actively supported the proposal of the French soldiers at Seringapatam to set up a Jacobin Club in 1797 and ordered a salute of 2,300 cannons, 500 rockets to celebrate the occasion. He is also reported to have planted the "Tree of Liberty" at Seringapatam, enrolled himself as a member of the Jacobin Club and allowed himself to be called Citizen Tipu.

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As an administrator and ruler Tipu was successful and earned the praise of his adversaries. Lieutenant Moore noted, "When a person travelling through a strange country finds it well cultivated, populous with industrious inhabitants, cities newly founded, commerce extending, towns increasing and everything flourishing so as to indicate happiness he will naturally conclude it to be under a form of government congenial to the minds of the people. This is a picture of Tippoo's country. Even Sir John Shore commented that the peasantry of Tipu's dominions were well protected andtheir labours encouraged and rewarded. Tipu also won the confidence and loyalty of his soldiers. In times when desertions by military commanders was not uncommon. Tipu's troops displayed discipline and fidelity that earned the notice of his contemporary European observers also.

Wilks remarks that "Haidar was born to create an empire, Tipu to lose one" seems correct in retrospect of history but does scant justice to the capabilities of Tipu and does not take into full account the heavy odds he faced. Tipu's boldness and spirit of innovations have been described as great negative points. While Haidar had maintained the fiction of the sovereignty of the Wodeyar dynasty till he lived, Tipu assumed the title of the Padshah in 1787, issued coins in his name, had Arabic names substituted for Hindu ones in the cyclic years and months and issued a new calendar. Tipu's innovations were not merely changes but improvements introduced by a mentally alert monarch.

The imperialist writers' depiction of Tipu as a 'monster pure and simple' and a bigoted monarch is obviously biased. Tipu's fanaticism has been over-played. It is true he crushed the Hindu Coorgs and the Nairs but he did not spare the Muslim Moplahs when they defied his authority. The discovery of Sringeri Letters reveals that in response to a request from the chief priest of the Sringeri temple, Tipu sanctioned funds for repair of the temple and installation of the image of goddess Sarada (after it had been damaged in a Maratha raid of 1791). The Sultan never interfered with worship in the Sri Ranganatha, the Narasimha and the Ganga-dharesvara temples situated within the Sernigapatam fort.

Tipu Sultan stands out as a fascinating personality in the history of South India. Brave and daring he stuck to his self-respect and spurned Wellesley's offer of a Subsidiary Alliance. He preferred a hero's death to the tame existence of a band-wagon of Western imperialism. His great misfortune was that he was pitted against the imperial giants who had both the will and capacity to buldoze the whole of India. His life and darings enthuse more the modern Indian mind than the host of other Indian princelings.

Self-Assessment

2. Fill in the blanks:

(*i*) The Quadrangular conflict for supremacy in the Deccan among the Marathas, the Nizam, the English and ..... dragged Mysore in the game of adventurous politics.

(*ii*) By ..... Haider Ali was the defacto ruler of Mysore.

(*iii*) With French help Haider Ali set up an arsenal at ..... and profited the western methods of training an army.

(*iv*) Haider played the diplomatic game, bought the Marathas, allured the ..... with territorial gains and together with the latter launched an attack on ..... .

(*v*) The Second Anglo Mysore War was ended in 1784 by the ..... .

1.6 The Three Anglo-Maratha Wars

The First Anglo-Maratha War, 1775-82: The first phase of the Anglo-Maratha struggle was brought about by the inordinate ambition of the English and accentuated by the internal dissensions of the Marathas. The Bombay Government hoped to set up in Maharashtra the type of Dual Government Clive had set up in Bengal, Bihar and Orrisa. The mutual differences of the Maratha leaders gave to the Company the much sought for opportunity. The fourth Peshwa Madhav Rao died in 1772, the fifth (Narayan Rao) succumbed to the intrigues of his uncle Raghunath Rao, another claimant for the *gaddi*. The birth of a posthumous son to Narayan Rao drove Raghunath Rao to the point of desperation and he signed with the Bombay Government the Treaty of Surat (1775) hoping to gain the coveted

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gaddi with the help of English subsidiary troops. However, the British attempt proved premature. In the war that followed fortune wavered on both sides till the two parties realised the futility of the struggle by concluding peace at Salbai (1782) on the basis of mutual restitution of each other's territories. It proved a drawn struggle. Both sides had a taste of each other's strength which ensured mutual respect and peace for the next twenty years.

The Second Anglo-Maratha War, 1803-1806: The second phase of the struggle was intimately connected with the circumstances created by the French menace to India. Wellesley who came to India as Governor-General in 1798 was an imperialist to the backbone and believed that the only possible way to safeguard India against French danger was to reduce the whole of India to a position of military dependence on the Company. He relentlessly pursued that objective by the infamous Subsidiary System of alliances. The Marathas refused all offers of the Governor-General for acceptance of the subsidiary alliance, but were driven into Wellesley's trap by their internal differences and criminal self-seeking.

In March 1800 Nana Fadnavis, the Chief Minister at Poona, died. "With him", remarked Colonel Palmer, the British Residents at Poona, "departed all the wisdom and moderation of the Maratha Government". Nana had well understood the inherent danger of English intervention in Maratha affairs and declined all overtures for a subsidiary alliance from Wellesley. Freed from Nana's vigilance, Baji Rao's worst qualities found a free play. With his fondness for intrigue, the Peshwa sought to keep up his position by putting the Maratha chiefs one against another. However, Baji Rao was caught in the net of his own intrigues. Both Daulat Rao Sindhai and Jaswant Rao Holkar sought pre-eminence at Poona. The Sindhia prevailed at first and the Peshwa passed under his virtual control. On 12 April 1800, the Governor-General advised the Resident at Poona to exert his 'utmost endeavours to engage' the Peshwa to conclude a secret treaty with the Company offering British help in turning out the Sindhia from the Deccan.. The Peshwa did not accept the offer and in May the Resident reported that 'no consideration but that of unavoidable and imminent destruction will induce his (Peshwa's) assent to the admission of a permanent subsidiary British force into his dominions'.

Events took a serious turn at Poona. In April 1801 the Peshwa brutally murdered Vithuji, the brother of Jaswant Rao Holkar. This brought the Holkar with a large army in the field against the Peshwa and the combined troops of the Peshwa and the Sindhia were defeated on 25 October 1802 at Hadapsar, near Poona. The Holkar placed Vinayak Rao, son of Amrit Rao, on the *gaddi* of the Peshwa. Baji Rao II fled to Basse in and on 31 December 1802 signed a treaty of 'perpetual and general alliance' with the English.

The Treaty of Bassein, 31 December 1802

1. The Peshwa agreed to receive from the Company 'a permanent regular native Infantry, with the usual proportion of field pieces and European artillery-men attached, and with the proper equipment of war-like stores and ammunition'— to be permanently stationed in his territories;
2. The Peshwa agreed to cede in perpetuity to the Company territories yielding an income of 26 lakhs of rupees. The territories surrendered were to be in Gujarat; territories south of the Tapti; territories between the Tapti and the Narbada and some territory near the Tungabhadra;
3. The Peshwa also surrendered the city of Surat;
4. The Peshwa agreed to give up all claims for *chauth* on the Nizam's dominions and also agreed not to resort to arms against the Gaekwar;
5. The Peshwa agreed to the Company's arbitration in all differences between him and the Nizam or the Gaekwar;
6. The Peshwa undertook not to keep in his employment Europeans of any nation at war with the English; and
7. The Peshwa also agreed 'neither to commence nor to pursue in future any negotiations with any power whatever' without giving previous notice and entering into mutual consultation with the East India Company.

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Importance of the Treaty: The importance of the Treaty of Bassein in the building up of British supremacy in India was variously estimated by the politician of the day. Lord Castlereagh, the President of the Board of Control, in a minute entitled 'Observations on the Treaty of Bassein' criticised the political wisdom of the policy and believed that Wellesley had exceeded his legal authority. He characterized the policy as 'critical and delicate' and thought that it was "hopeless to attempt to govern the Maratha Empire through a feeble and perhaps disaffected Peshwa". He apprehended that the Treaty would involve the English "in the endless and complicated distractions of that turbulent Maratha Empire".

Castlereagh's contentions were answered by Major-General Wellesley and in October 1804 John Malcolm prepared a rejoinder. Lord Wellesley believed that by the Treaty "the Company obtained for the first time something like a rational security for the improvement and continuance of the peace of India. A new power was thrown into the weight of its own scale; a lawful rights was established to interfere in the preservation of the Peshwa's authority, whenever it should be attacked; the intrigues of the foreigners were excluded from his capital...Our own military resources were considerably increased without expense to the Company; the army of the Peshwa likewise became bound at our call on every occasion of emergency..." The treaty was more than a mere defensive alliance, as it was described. The Governor-General himself wrote in 1804 that the flight of the Peshwa from Poona "seemed to hold out a very favourable opportunity for establishing in the most complete manner the interests of the British Power in the Maratha Empire".

True, the Treaty of Bassein was signed with a 'cypher' but it gave great political advantages to the English. The paramount British influence was established at Poona. The head of the Maratha Confederacy had accepted a position of dependent relationship on the Company with its natural corollary that the other Maratha chiefs (member of the Maratha Confederacy) were reduced to a similar position of subordination to the Company — a relationship which they had feared and would not accept without a fight.

By surrendering his foreign policy to the care of the Company, the Peshwa had made the Company responsible for every war in which the Peshwa's Government might be involved. Thus, the treaty made the Company arbiter in the disputes between the Peshwa and other Maratha chiefs and the Peshwa and other Indian rulers.

A specific clause in the treaty provided for the Company's mediation in all cases of disputes between the Peshwa and the Nizam. Thus, the Peshwa virtually surrendered all his claims over the Nizam. This marked the achievement of another object of Wellesley's policy, namely, that the state Hyderabad definitely passed under the Company's protection.

The Treaty of Bassein also put the Company in a very advantageous position in case of war with the Marathas or any other Indian or foreign rivals. The Company's subsidiary troops were encamped at the capitals of the four Indian powers — at Mysore, Hyderabad, Lucknow and Poona. From these four militarily focal points the Company's troops could spread and meet any opponent.

The Treaty of Bassein did not establish the Company's political supremacy in India but certainly was an important milestone in that direction. Thus Sidney Owen's remark that "the treaty by its direct and indirect operations gave the Company the Empire of India" merely contains the exaggeration of a true political phenomenon.

The national humiliation was too much for the Marathas. The Sindhia and the Bhonsle challenged British power, while the Gaikwar and the Holkar kept aloof. Quick blows dealt by Arthur Wellesley in the Deccan and by Lord Lake in Northern India shattered Maratha power and the two chiefs accepted humiliating treaties. By the Treaty of Deogaon (17 December 1803) the Bhonsle Raja ceded to the Company the province of Cuttuck and whole of the territory west of the river Warda. The Sindhia concluded the Treaty of Surji-Arjangaon (30 December 1803) by which he surrendered to the Company all his territories between the Jamuna and the Ganges, all territories situated to the north of the principalities of Jaipur, Jodhpur and Gohud besides the fort of Ahmednagar, the harbour of Broach and his possessions between the Ajanta Ghat and the river Godavri. Both the princes also accepted British Residents at their courts.

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In April 1804 Holkar was drawn into a conflict with the Company. Some hasty and uncalculated moves on the part of the Company's Generals gave an initial advantage to Jaswant Rao Holkar, but his defeat was never in doubt. Meantime, Wellesley had been called back from India by the Home authorities and a change in policy in India was contemplated. It was Sir George Barlow who concluded with Holkar the Treaty of Rajpurghat (25 December 1805) by which the Maratha chief gave up his claims to places north of the river Chambal, over Bundelkhand, over the Peshwa and other allies of the Company.

In the second round of the struggle the Maratha power had been shattered though not completely annihilated. The English conquest of Delhi, apart from other gains, considerably enhanced their prestige and put them in the forefront of the Indian political scene.

The Third Anglo-Maratha War, 1817-1818: The third and the final phase of the struggle began with the coming of Lord Hastings as Governor-General in 1813. He resumed the threads of aggressive policy abandoned in 1805 and was determine to proclaim British Paramountcy in India. The breathing time that the Marathas had got after Wellesley's recall in 1805 was not utilized by them for strengthening their power, but wasted in mutual conflicts Hastings' moves against the Pindaris transgressed the sovereignty of the Maratha chiefs and the two parties were drawn into a war. By carefully calculated moves the English forced humiliating treaties on the Raja of Nagpur (27 May 1816), the Peshwa (13 June 1817) and the Sindhai (5 November 1817). Exasperated the Peshwa made the last bid to throw off the British yoke. Daulat Rao Sindhia, Appa Sahib of Nagpur, Malhar Rao Holkar II also rose in arms. The Peshwa was defeated at Khirki, Bhonsle's army routed at Sitabaldi and Holkar's army crushed at Mahidpur. The entire Maharatha force was routed by superior military power of the Company. Baji Rao's possession of Poona and its districts were merged in the Bombay Presidency, while the other princes were confined to greatly reduced territories in subordination to the Company.

Causes for the Defeat of the Marathas

While the Marathas proved superior to the various Muslim powers that rose on the ruins of the Mughal Empire, they were inferior to the English in material resources, military organisation, diplomacy and leadership. In fact, a static eastern people steeped in medievalism could not successfully contend with the dynamic English nation rejuvenated by the forces of the Renaissance, fortified with the latest military weapons and saturated in Machiavellian methods of statecraft.

1. **Inept Leadership:** The character of the Maratha state being despotic the personality and character of the head of the state counted for much. In the absence of a settled constitution, the state descended into a terrible engine of oppression in the hands of worthless and selfish leaders. Peshwa Baji Rao II and Daulat Rao Sindhia, who controlled the supreme government at Poona, by their misdeeds brought the doom of the empire built by the efforts of Baji Rao I and his successors. Baji Rao II had a criminal stain in his character. Besides driving many loyal sirdars into the enemy's camp, Baji Rao himself moved into the Company's camp when he signed the Treaty of Bassein (31 December 1802) accepting the subsidiary system of alliance. Thus, he bartered away Maratha independence for his selfish ends which even unfortunately, were not fully realised. Daulat Rao Sindhia was an unworthy successor of Mahadaji Sindhia. He was indolent and a lover of luxury even at the cost of public business. Broughton wrote about him, "This light-hearted prince is by no means insensible to the embarrassment of his affairs...But these things affect him for an hour. A tiger, or a pretty face, an elephant fight or a new supply of paper-kites have each sufficient attraction to direct his chagrin.." Sardesai writes about these two leaders thus: "Their misdeeds brought the Poona court and society to such a moral degradation that no one's life, property or honour was safe. People even in distant parts of the land had to suffer terrible misery through misrule, oppression, plunder and devastation. The sirdars and jagirdars, particularly of the southern Maratha country were so completely alienated that they rushed for escape into the arms of the English". Perhaps Jaswant Rao Holkar was the ablest and most enterprising of Maratha leaders, but he too had unbalanced mind bordering on insanity.

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The total absence of first rate personalities was an important cause of the fall of the Marathas. Unfortunately most of the eminent leaders died towards the end of the eighteenth century. Mahadaji Sindhia in February 1794, Haripant Phadke in June 1794, Ahalya Bai Holkar in August 1795, Peshwa Madhav Rao II in October 1795, Tukoji Holkar in August 1797 and Nana Fadnavis in March 1800, succeeded by weaklings and imbeciles like Baji Rao II, Daulat Rao Sindhia, Jaswant Rao Holkar and the lot. On the other hand, the East India Company was lucky in having the services of able persons like Elphinstone, John Malcolm Colonel Colins, Jonathan Ducan, Arthur Wellesley (later on the conqueror of Napoleon), Lord Lake and above all Richard Wellesley.

2. **Inherent Defects of Maratha State:** Jadunath Sarkar contends that there were inherent defect in the character of the Maratha state and at no tyme any concerted attempt had been made at well-thought-out organised communal improvement, spread of education or unification of the people either under Shivaji or under the Peshwas. The cohesion of the peoples of Maratha state, argues Sarkar, was not organic, but artificial, accidental and therefore precarious. The religio-national movement which had worked in the destruction of the Mughal Empire in the seventeenth century had spent itself in the process of expansion of the Maratha Empire. The defects of the Maratha state though very evident in the heydays of the Empire became glaring in the nineteenth century when they had to contend With a European power organised on the best pattern of the West.
3. **Absence of Stable Economic Policy:** The economic policy of the Maratha state was hardly conducive to a stable political set-up. During the long wars against Aurangzeb, the Maratha people had been uprooted, the peasants had given up cultivation and joined the profession of the soldier. Even after the withdrawal of the Mughals from Maharashtra, the Maratha people tried to live on the sword, now fighting and plundering the Mughals in their provinces of Gujarat, Malwa, Bundelkhand etc. Under the early Peshwas the wars of the state were financed by the plunder of the territories conquered and by collection of *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi* from dependent territories. Thus, the Maratha Empire subsisted not on the resources of Maharashtra, but on the tribute levied from newly acquired territories. When the Maratha Empire reached its optimum point of expansion such new sources of income dried up, while it cost the state the co-operation of the princes from whom the tribute was exacted. The later Maratha leaders made the matters worse by civil wars, thereby ruining the economy of Maharashtra. Wellesley wrote, "They have not left a stick standing at the distance of 150 miles from Poona; they have eaten the forage and the grain, have pulled down the houses and have used the material as firewood and the inhabitants are fled with their cattle." A terrible famine visited the Deccan in 1804 taking a very heavy toll of life. The Maratha chiefs were reduced to such straits that they had to mortgage most of their territories to bankers. Thus the Maratha leadership failed to evolve a stable economic policy to suit the changing needs of time. In the absence of any industry or foreign trade openings, fighting was the only lucrative opening for the youth. War became the 'national industry' of the Marathas and recoiled on the economy of the state.
4. **Weakness of Maratha Political Set-up:** Even in its heydays, the Maratha Empire was a loose confederation under the leadership of the Chhatrapati and later the Peshwa. Just as the Peshwa usurped the power of the Chhatrapati, the subordinate 'war lords' usurped the authority of the Peshwa. Powerful chiefs like the Gaikwar, the Holkar, the Sindhia and the Bhonsle carved out semi-independent kingdoms for themselves and paid lip-service to the authority of the Peshwa. When the Poona Government weakened after the disaster of Panipat, the feudal units fell apart and even weakened each other by internal conflicts. Malet wrote about the Maratha confederacy, "The seeds, however, of domestic dissensions are thickly and deeply sown in the Maratha system (if system it may be called) and it is perhaps as good a security as any that their neighbours can have that the whole of its parts composed as it now is, cannot be brought into cordial coalition." There was irreconcilable hostility between the Holkar arid the Sindhia, while the Bhonsle Raja of Nagpur claimed the kingship of the Maratha Empire. Not unoften the Maratha chief took sides against each other, much to the detriment of the nation and the state. In the war of succession (1743-50) between Madho Singh and Ishwari Singh for the *gaddi* of Jaipur after the death of their father Raja Singh, the Sindhia and the Holkar took opposite sides. Mutual jealousies prevented the Maratha sirdars from offering a united front to the East India Company. In 1803 when the

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Sindhia and the Bhonsle went to war against the English Company, Jaswant Rao Holkar kept aloof waiting the outcome of the conflict. In 1804 Holkar himself was drawn into a conflict with the Company and single-handed could not meet the challenge. Thus, the absence of a corporate spirit among the Maratha chiefs considerable weakened their ranks.

5. **Inferior Military System of the Marathas:** In military strength the Marathas were no match for the English. Though not lacking in personal prowess and valour, the Marathas were inferior to their opponents in organisation of the forces, in war weapons, in disciplined action and effective leadership. The centrifugal tendencies of divided command and improper organisation account for much of the Maratha failures. Treachery in the Maratha ranks played havoc. Fortescue in his *History of the British Army* points out that at the battle of Assaye Pohlam's artillery brigade betrayed the master; had Pohlam's brigade done its duty, the position of the British would have been in great jeopardy. Again, Monsieur Perron, the Commander-in-Chief, was a mere adventurer whose chief motive was to take all his ill-gotten wealth out of India. He resigned on the eve of the Second Maratha War. His successor, Monsieur Louis Bourquin, was merely a cook in Calcutta about whom Compton says that "there is no more contemptible character among the military adventurers of the Hindustan than Bourquin, cook, pyrotechnist and poltroon." The mercenary soldiers of the Marathas had no higher motive than of personal interest; loss of a battle meant at worst a temporary loss of employment to them.

   Arthur Wellesley's contention has been greatly developed by Sir Alfred Lyall in his book *Rise and Expansion of British Power in India* to prove that the abandonment of the guerilla system of warfare was a cardinal mistake of the Marathas. Thomas Munro, an authority on the military affairs of the time, pointed out that the victories which Holkar won against Monson were because of 'marches' and convoys rather than of battles and 'sieges'. It is further contended that the neglect of cavalry on the part of the Sindhia and concentration on artillery and infantry affected adversely the mobility of the army, depriving it of the chief advantage it had possessed against the armies of the Mughals. The argument has been carried too far. One wonders how the Sindhia could keep his control over the far-flung empire by keeping a band of guerillas, particularly when he had to fight pitched battles against desperate enemies in the deserts of Rajputana. Perhaps the Maratha fault lay not in abandoning the guerilla system of warfare, but in inadequate adoption of the modem techniques of warfare. The Marathas neglected the paramount importance of artillery. Mahadaji Sindhia deserves the credit of trying to fight the enemy with the enemy's weapons. His battalions were trained on the European model and factories were set up for the manufacture of fire-arms, but these departments were entirely in the hand of foreigners whose loyalty in times of need was always in doubt. The Poona Government also set up an artillery department, but it hardly functioned effectively. The importance of powerful artillery we realise when we consider how British artillery easily reduced many Maratha forts which had baffled the Mughal armies under Aurangzeb. Undoubtedly, the. best results could have been achieved in a coordinated development of all the three wings of the army, viz., infantry, cavalry and artillery.

6. **Superior English Diplomacy:** The English were superior to the Marathas in the game of diplomacy. Before actual operations would start the Company would take care to win allies and isolate the enemy diplomatically. The absence of unity among the Maratha chiefs considerably simplified the task of the British. In the Second Maratha War the English won over the Gaekwar and the Southern Maratha Jagirdars to their side, while the Peshwa was their ally by the Treaty of Bassein. These diplomatic gains gave to the Company supply bases at Poona and in Gujrat and enabled them to take quick offensive against the Sindhia's territories of Ahmednager and Broach. Similarly, the friendship of the Southern Maratha Jagirdars ensured to the Company the line of communication between the British army and their supply base at Seringapatam.

7. **Superior English Espionage:** The Marathas were careless about military intelligence. The Marathi historian Sardesai points out that while every British officer who toured their country used his eyes and afterwards his tongue and pen, and while a number of Britishers could speak and understand Maratha, the Marathas knew nothing about England, about the British syste'm of Government, about their settlements and factories in India and outside, their character and inclinations, their arms and armaments, perhaps even Nana Phadnavis did not at all possess such details and the Marathas were woefully ignorant.

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As against this, the Company's spy system was perfect. The Company's Residents in the courts of Indian princes supplied all sorts of information to the Company's secretariat. In 1803 when the Second Maratha War broke out the Company possessed knowledge of the potentialities of their foe, their strength and weaknesses, their military methods or want of method and, above all, an understanding of the dissensions in the Maratha confederacy. C.W. Malet while stationed at Surat collected detailed information about the families of Sindhia and Holkar. Palmer wrote in December 1798, "I consider it as the duty of every British subject in this country, however situated, to contribute to the utmost of his power, to the stock of general information". That the Holkar did not participate in the Second Maratha War commencing in 1803 and the Gaekwar remained aloof from all subsequent Maratha conflicts was ^11 calculated by Wellesley and partially a success of his diplomacy.

8. **Progressive Outlook of the English:** While the Europeans had been emancipated from the shackles of the Church and Divinismand were devoting their energies to scientific inventions, extensive ocean voyages and acquisition of colonies, the Indians were still wedded to old dogmas and notions. If the ideal of our upper classes wars performance of rituals, the lower classes were fascinated by the Bhakti cult preached by Nanak, Kabir, Chaitanya and others. Baji Rao II cared more for religious merit and distributed gifts among Brahmins to earn religious merit and gave very little attention to mundane matters of the state. J.N. Sarkar points out that growth of orthodoxy and Brahmin-Maratha differences sapped the vitality of the state. G.W. Forrest in his *Maratha series* writes that "the jealousy which from various causes ever subsists between the Maratha chiefs and the Brahmins would prevent the union of the whole empire which must be most formidable to the rest of India." Thus, the entire Indian outlook was medieval and not modern.

   We might say that when the English attacked the Marathas, the latter were already past the prime of their power. The Maratha power had lost its early vigour and momentum. Thus the English attacked a 'divided house' which started crumbling at the first push.

1.7 Summary

- The First Karnatic War was an extension of the Anglo-French War in Europe. The Austrian War of Succession broke out in March 1740. Despite the wishes instructions of the home authorities, hostilities broke out in India in 1746. The English navy under Barnett took the offensive when it captured some French ships. Dupleix, the French Governor-General of Pondicherry since 1741, sent an urgent appeal to La Bourdonnais, the French Governor of Mauritius (Isle of France) for help. La Bourdonnais with a squadron consisting of over 3,000 men fought his way towards the Coromandel coast, defeating an English fleet on the way. Madras was now besieged by the French, both by land and sea.
- The First Karnatic War is memorable for the battle of St. Thome fought between the French and the Indian forces of Anwar-ud-din, the Nawab of Karnatic (1744-49). Differences arose between the French and the Nawab over the custody of Madras after its reduction in 1746.
- Dupleix was appointed governor of all the Mughal territories south of the river Krishna. The Nizam surrendered some districts in the Northern Circars to the French. Further, at the request of the new Subahdar, a French army under an able officer Bussy was stationed at Hyderabad. The stationing of this army ensured the security of the French interests there. Chanda Sahib became the Nawab of Karnatic in 1751. Dupleix was at the height of his political power.
- Rober Clive with a force of only 210 men stormed and captured Arcot in August 1751. A large force of4,000 men diverted by Chanda Sahib from Trichinopoly to Arcot failed to retake the town. Robert Clive's outlay resisted the onslaughts of his enemies and successfully sustained the famous siege for fifty-three days (September 23 to November 14) "immortalized and somewhat exaggerated in the glowing words of Macaulay". The capture of Arcot encouraged the English to push their schemes with greater vigour and demoralised the French and Chanda Sahib.

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- The second round of the conflict also proved inconclusive. On land the superior English generalship had been demonstrated when their candidate Mohammed Ali was installed the Nawab of Karnatic.
- The outbreak of the Seven Years' War in Europe ended the short peace between the European Companies in India. In April 1757, the French Government sent Count de Lally who reached India after a voyage of twelve months in April 1758. In the meantime the English had defeated Siraj-ud-duala and captured Bengal in 1757. The conquest of Bengal placed at the disposal of the English the immense riches of Bengal and with that financial stick they could beat the French effectively in Southern India.
- A staggering blow was struck at the French at Wandiwash (1760) by Sir Eyre Coote. Bussy was taken prisoner. The French in January 1761 ignominiously retreated to Pondicherry. Pondicherry after a blockade of eight months capitulated to the English. Mahe and Jinji were lost by the French in quick succession. Thus was rung down the curtain to the drama of Anglo-French rivalry in the south. Undoubtedly the French position in India was lost beyond redemption.
- The first English factory in Bengal was established at Hugli in 1651 under permission from Sultan Shuja, second son of Emperor Shahjehan and then Subahdar of Bengal.
- Soon after English factories sprang up at Kassimbazar, Patna and other places in the province. In 1698 the English obtained from Subahdar Azim-us-Shan the zamindari of the villages of Sutanuti, Kalikata and Govindapur, the present site of Calcutta, on payment of Rs. 1,200 to the previous proprietors. In 1717 Emperor Farrukhsiyar confirmed the trade privileges granted by earlier Subahdars of Bengal, besides according permission to the Company to rent additional territory around Calcutta.
- Philip Woodruff's argument that plunder was the main motive behind the Nawab's attack on Fort William hardly stands the test of careful scrutiny. Fort William was besieged on 15 June 1756 and surrendered after a feeble resistance of five days. Governor Roger Drake and other important citizens escaped through the back door down the river Hooghly. The Nawab placed Calcutta under the charge of Manik Chand and returned to Murshidabad.
- In February 1757, the Nawab made peace with Clive by the Treaty of Alinagar (Calcutta renamed so after Siraj-ud-daula captured it) restoring to the English their former privileges of trade, granting permission to fortify Calcutta and promising compensation for the losses suffered by the English.
- The wheel had gone a full circle. Now the English were on the offensive. Taking advantage of the disaffection among the Nawab's officers, Clive arranged a conspiracy in which Mir Jaffar (the Commander-in-Chief of the Nawab's army), Rai Durlabh, Jagat Seth (an influential banker of Bengal) and Omi Chand, an intermediary, joined. It was planned to make Mir Jaffar the Nawab who in turn was to reward the services of the Company and pay compensation for the losses suffered by them earlier.
- The English had given great offence to the Nawab by capturing the French settlement of Chandernagore in March 1757. At a time when the Nawab feared an Afghan invasion from the north and a Maratha invasion from the west, the English force under Clive proceeded towards Murshidabad to fight against the Nawab. On 23 June 1757 the rival forces faced each other on the battlefield of Plassey, a mango grove 22 miles south of Murshidabad. The English army consisted of 950 European infantry, 100 European artillery, 50 English sailors and 2,100 Indian sepoys. The Nawab's large army of 50,000 was commanded by the treacherous General Mir Jaffar. An advance party of the Nawab's troops led by Mir Mudan and Mohan Lal got the better of the English troops and forced Clive to withdraw his forces behind the trees. A stray shot from the English side, however, killed Mir Mudan. Siraj-ud-daula summoned his army officers and sought their advice. Mir Jaffar played upon the fears of the Nawab and counselled a withdrawal of the army behind the entrenchment. Further, the Nawab was advised to retire from the battlefield leaving the control of operations to his Generals. The card was well played. The Nawab retired to Murshidabad followed by 2,000 horsemen. The little band of Frenchmen

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who held out were soon overpowered by Clive's troops. Mir Jaffar merely looked on. Clive won the day and received a message of congratulations from Mir Jaffar. Mir Jaffar reached Murshidabad on 25th and proclaimed himself the Nawab of Bengal. Siraj-ud-daula was captured and put to death. Mir Jaffar rewarded the services of the English by the grant of the zamindari of 24-Parganas besides a personal present of £234,000 to Clive and giving 50 lakh rupees in reward to army and naval officers.

- The battle of Plassey is important because of the events that followed it. Plassey put the British yoke on Bengal which could not be put off. The new Nawab, Mir Jaffar, was dependent on British bayonets for the maintenance of his position in Bengal and for protection against foreign invasions. An English army of 6,000 troops was maintained in Bengal to help the Nawab maintain his position.
- Mir Jafar became the Nawab of Bengal by cheating Nawab Siraj-Ud-Daulah and surrendered the Nawab's army against Robert Clive in the battle field. His rule is regarded as the initiation of the rule of British in India.
- The British soldiers under the command of Robert Give advanced to Murshidabad and confronted Siraj in the Battle of Plassey in the year 1757. Mir Jafar's army betrayed Siraj-Ud-Daulah by denying fighting for him and in the end Siraj was defeated and killed. Mir was made the new Nawab.
- To please the British, Mir Qasim robbed everybody, confiscated lands, reduced Mir Jafar's purse and depleted the treasury. He also transferred the districts of Burdwan, Midnapur and Chittagong to the British East India Company. However, he soon tired of British interference and endless avarice and like Mir Jafar before him, yearned to break free of the British.
- Clive's solution of the political tangle of Bengal was the setting up of the infamous Dual System whereby the Company acquired real power while the responsibility for administration rested on the shoulders of the Nawab of Bengal.
- In the hey days of the Mughal Empire the two principal officers of the Central government in a province were the Subahdar and the Diwan. The Subahdar looked after the *Nizamat* functions, i.e., military defence, police and administration of criminal justice, while the Diwan was the chief financial officer and in charge of revenue affairs, besides being responsible for the administration of civil justice in the province. The two officers served as a check on each other and were directly responsible to the Central government. After the death of Aurangzeb the Mughal central authority weakened and Murshid Kuli Khan, the Nawab of Bengal, exercised both the *Nizamat* and *Diwani* functions.
- The *firman* issued by Emperor Shah Alam an 12 August 1765 granted the Diwani functions to the Company in return for an annual payment of Rs. 26 lakhs to the Emperor and providing for the expenses of the *Nizamat* (fixed at Rs. 53 lakhs). Earlier in February 1765, Najm-ud-Daula was allowed to succeed as Nawab of Bengal (after the death of his father Mir Jaffar) on the condition that he practically surrendered the *Nizamat* functions, i.e., the military defence and foreign affairs of the province entirely into the hands of the Company and the civil administration to the care of a Deputy Subahdar to be named by the Company and not removable without their consent. Thus, the Company acquired the *Diwani* functions from the Emperor and the *Nizamat* functions from the Subahdar of Bengal.
- The three revolutions of Bengal (1757, 1760 and 1764), had enriched the governors and councillors and demoralised the servants of the Company from top to bottom. The general desire to 'get-rich quick' had vitiated the whole atmosphere. Bribery and corruption were rampant and acceptance of presents was carried to extreme limits. The servants of the Company indulged in private trade and misused the Company's *dastak* to seek exemption from payment of internal duties. The servants of the Company put self-advancement above the interests of the Company.
- Eighteenth century India provided very favourable circumstances for the rise of military adventurers both in the north and the south. One such soldier of fortune, Haidar Ali (born 1721) started his career as a horseman and rose to the position of the ruler of Mysore.

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- The quadrangular conflict for supremacy in the Deccan among the Marathas, the Nizam, the English and the French East India Companies dragged Mysore in the game of adventurous politics. The repeated incursions into Mysorean territories of the Marathas in 1753, 1754, 1757 and 1759 and of the Nizam in 1755 and the heavy financial demands made by the invaders rendered the Mysore state financially bankrupt and politically a fertile ground for military exploits at the hands of powerful neighbouring states. Devraj and Nanjaraj unable to rise to the occasion had to give place to a man of superior military talent, sound diplomatic skill and unquestioned qualities of leadership. By 1761 Haider Ali was the *de facto* ruler of Mysore.
- He was also aware of the superior Western know-how in arms manufactures. With French help Haidar Ali set up an arsenal at Dinajgul and also profited from the Western methods of training an army. Above all, he learnt the art of permutation-combination at the diplomatic chessboard and tried to out-manoeuvre his adversaries in the game.
- Undaunted, Haidar played the diplomatic game, bought the Marathas, allured the Nizam with territoral gains and together with the latter launched an attack on Arcot. After a see-saw struggle for a year and a half, Haidar suddenly turned the tables on the English and appeared at the gates of Madras. The panic-stricken Madras Government concluded the humiliating treaty on 4 April 1769 on the basis of mutual restitution of each other's territories and a defensive alliance between the two parties committing the English to help Haidar in case he was attacked by another power.
- The treaty of 1769 between Haider Ali and the English Company proved more in the nature of a truce and Haidar Ali accused the Company of not observing the terms of the defensive treaty by refusing to help him when the Marathas attacked Mysore in 1771.
- Haidar Ali arranged a joint front with the Nizam and the Marathas against the common enemy — the English East India Company. In July 1780 Haidar attacked Carnatic and captured Arcot, defeating an English army under Colonel Baillie.
- Tipu continued the war for another year, but absolute success eluded both sides. Tired of war, the two sides concluded peace by the Treaty of Mangalore (March 1784) on the basis of mutual restitution of each other's territories. The second round of the struggle too proved inconclusive.
- Acting against the letter and spirit of the policy of peace and non-expansion loudly proclaimed in Pitt's India. Act (1784), Lord Cornwallis worked on the anti-Tipu suspicions of the Nizam and the Marathas and arranged a Triple Alliance (1790) with them against Tipu.
- At the head of a large army Cornwallis himself marched through Vellore and Ambur to Bangalore (captured in March 1791) and approached Seringapatam. The English captured Coimbatore only to lose it later. Supported by the Maratha and Nizam's troops the English made a second advance towards Seringapatam. Tipu offered tough resistance but realised the impossibility of carrying further the struggle. The Treaty of Seringapatam (March 1792) resulted in the surrender of nearly half of Mysorean territory to the victorious allies.
- The East India company's policy in India alternated wars with spells of peace for recuperation of their resources. The arrival of imperialist Lord Wellesley as Governor-General in 1798 in the backdrop of Napoleonic danger to India augured ill for the maintenance of status quo.
- The first phase of the Anglo-Maratha struggle was brought about by the inordinate ambition of the English and accentuated by the internal dissensions of the Marathas. The Bombay Government hoped to set up in Maharashtra the type of Dual Government Clive had set up in Bengal, Bihar and Orrisa. The mutual differences of the Maratha leaders gave to the Company the much sought for opportunity.
- The second phase of the struggle was intimately connected with the circumstances created by the French menace to India. Wellesley who came to India as Governor-General in 1798 was an imperialist to the backbone and believed that the only possible way to safeguard India against French danger was to reduce the whole of India to a position of military dependence on the Company. He relentlessly pursued that objective by the infamous Subsidiary System of alliances.

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- The third and the final phase of the struggle began with the coming of Lord Hastings as Governor-General in 1813. He resumed the threads of aggressive policy abandoned in 1805 and was determine to proclaim British Paramountcy in India. The breathing time that the Marathas had got after Wellesley's recall in 1805 was not utilized by them for strengthening their power, but wasted in mutual conflicts Hastings' moves against the Pindaris transgressed the sovereignty of the Maratha chiefs and the two parties were drawn into a war.

1.8 Key-Words

1. Countermove	:	A move made in opposition or retaliation to another
2. Accidental skirmish	:	A meeting, particularly a sudden or accidental meeting
3. Entrenched	:	Establish great strength or security
4. In cursions	:	An invasion or attack
5. Colonisation	:	The establishment of colonies
6. Convoys	:	A group of ships or vehicles travelling together, typically accompanied by armed troops.

1.9 Review Questions

1. Explain the expansion of the British in India discussing the Karnatic Wars.
2. Briefly describe the rise of British Power in Bengal.
3. Discuss the Battle of Plassey.
4. What do you mean by Clive's 2nd Governorship? Discuss.
5. How Mysore resisted to the expansion of English. Discuss it highlighting Anglo-Mysore War.
6. Describe the Anglo-Maratha Wars.

Answers: Self-Assessment

1. (*i*) (*a*) (*ii*) (*c*) (*iii*) (*b*) (*iv*) (*c*) (*v*) (*c*)
2. (*i*) French East India Company (*ii*) 1761 (*iii*) Dindigul
   (*iv*) Nizam, Arcot (*v*) Treaty of Mangalore

1.10 Further Readings

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Notes

Unit 2: Consolidation of British Raj (1818-1843) and Development of Central Structure (1773-1863)

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Objectives

After studying this unit, students will be able to:

- Discuss the consolidation of British Raj
- Understand the development of central structure
- Explain Regulating Act and Pitt's India Act

Introduction

The wars of Lord Hastings (1813-23) opened a new stage in the relations of the East India Company *vis-a-vis* the Indian states. The Imperial idea grew and the theory of Paramountcy began to develop. In February 1814 Hastings noted in his diary: "Our object ought to be to render the British Government paramount in effect. If not declaredly so." The treaties that he concluded with the Indian states were not on the basis of reciprocity and mutual amity, but imposed the obligation on the part of the Indian states to act in subordinatte cooperation with the British Government and acknowledge its supremacy. Thus, the Indian states surrendered all forms of external sovereignty to the East India Company. The states, however, retained full sovereignty in internal administrations

In the early days of the Company, the senior and junior merchants, factors and "writers" performed commercial as well as administrative functions. The Court of Directors exercised the patronage of nominating their favourites and not unoften their sons and those of their friends as Civil Servants. There are cases of civil posts being sold. Warren Hastings created highly paid posts which increased the cost of administration but did not improve efficiency or remove corruption. Lord Cornwallis took steps for Europeanization of the services. He further raised the pay scales of civil officials but did nothing to improve the method of selection and training of Civil Servants. Lord Wellesley took the first step for training of Civil Servants when he founded the fort William College, in Calcutta in November 1800 where the Civil Servants of the Company were to receive training in the literature, science and languages of India. The college did not find the favour of the Court of Directors and was continued merely as a language school for Bengal Civil Servants till 1854. In England, the Company in 1806 established the East India College at Hailey bury for imparting a two years' training to the young officers appointed for service in the East.

The European merchants companies had to apply a uniform legal system in the territories under their control. However, it was Lord Cornwallis who improved and elaborated the system by setting up an hierarchy of courts, both for civil and criminal cases.

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2.1 Consolidation of the British Raj (1818-1843)

The decades following the retirement of Lord Hastings saw the rapid increase of the influence of the Company in the internal administration of the states. The British Residents were usually the organs of communication between the Government of India and the rulers of Indian states. Gradually their influence and power increased. Mountstuart Elphinstone explained his work as Resident thus—intelliegence work, reporting situation of native Raja's armies and palace intrigues, performing military duties. As early as 1805 Cornwallis wrote to Lord Lake that "unless the British Residents exercised a power and an ascendancy that they ought not to exercise native governments would be immediately dissolved." With the assertion of the Company's Paramountcy and adoption of the policy of 'subordinate cooperation' under Lord Hastings down to 1857 "the Resident ministers of the Company at Indian courts were slowly but effectively transformed from diplomatic agents representing a foreign power into executive and controlling officers of a superior government." Lord Hastings himself noted in his private journal: "Instead of acting in the character of ambassador, he (the Resident) assumes the functions of a dictator; interferes in all their private concerns, countenances refractory subjects against them and makes the most ostentatious exhibitions of his exercise of authority". Raja Chandu Lai during his administration in Hyderabad took his orders from the Resident, Colonel Low, Colonel Walker acted as an administrator. Resident when he helped the Gaekwar to collect revenue from the feudal chiefs. Colonel Macaulay wrote to the Raja of Cochin: The resident will be glad to learn that on his arrival near Cochin the Raja will find it convenient to wait upon him." Henry mead, a journalist, wrote before 1857: "The whole functions of the government were carried on in most cases by the Resident in fact, if not in appearance. The titular monarch sighed in vain for the personal freedom enjoyed by his subjects.

Did u know? It was Warren Hastings who organised a rudimentary framework of the judicial system by setting up Diwani and Faujdari Adalats at the district level; appeals from these adalats could be made to the Sadar Diwani Adalat and Sadar Nizamat Adalat at Calcutta.

The Raja of Mysore maintained stud horses, race horses, organised gold cups and presented heavy purses because the Resident was a lover of sports of turf''.

The Charter Act of 1833 metamorphosed the character of the Company. The Company was asked to wind up its commercial business. It assumed political functions in fact and name. A radical change followed in the policy towards the Indian states. The Company adopted the practice of insisting on its prior sanction and approval in all matter of succession in states. Later they found it practicable to advise the princes on the choice ministers.

The policy of annexation of states whenever and wherever possible was laid down by the Court of Directors in 1834. The policy was reiterated with emphasis in 1841 when the Court of Directors issued a directive to the Governor-General "to persevere in the one clear and direct course of abandoning no just and honourable accession of territory or revenue". The Governors-General of this period were frankly annexationists. Annexations were made to acquire new territories and new sources of revenue on the plea of failure of natural heirs or misgovernment. The Company as the supreme power had the right to withhold sanction for 'adoption' of heirs and the states in such cases 'lapsed back' to the Supreme Power. The Supreme authority which gave, it was argued, had the right to take back also. As to the problem of misgovernment in native states, the Company itself was to be greatly blamed. The Subsidiary System was full of evil consequences for the rulers of the Indian states. "Wherever the Subsidiary System is introduced", wrote Munro, "the country will soon bear the marks of it, in decaying villages and decreasing population". "If ever there was a device for insuring mal-government", wrote Sir Henry Lawrence in 1848, it is that of a native Ruler and Minister both relying on foreign bayonets and directed by a British Resident. Even when all these are able, virtuous and considerate, still the wheels of government could hardly move smoothly. Each of the

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three may work incalculable mischief, but no one of them can do good if thwarted by others". Karl Marx wrote in 1853: "As to native states, they virtually ceased to exist from the moment they became subsidiary to or protected by the Company. If you divide the revenue of a country between two governments, you are sure to cripple the resources of one or the administration of both... the conditions under which they are allowed to retain their apparent independence are, at the same time, the conditions of permanent decay and an utter inability of improvement". William Bentinck annexed Mysore (1831), Cachar (1832), Coorg (1834), and Jaintia(1835). Auckland annexed Karnul, Mandavi (1839), Kolaba and Jalaun (1840). Dalhousie annexed about half a dozen Indian states including big states like Nagpur, Satara and Oudh.

Did u know? The Resident at Travancore was a savant and the Raja built an observatory and maintained men of science.

Even after the establishment of the East India Company's undisputed supremacy in 1818, the policy of the East India Company *vis-a-vis* the Indian states was "chaotic, indefinite and contradictory." "The authorities of the East India Company" writes K.M. Pannikar, "were wavering with every passing fancy as to whether the rulers were zamindars, feudatories, tributaries or independent sovereigns; and each Governor-General and each Resident held and enforced his own views." Sometimes a Governor-General followed earlier precedents, at other times created new precedents. While a good number of Indian states were annexed, some states like Khairpur in 1832, Bahawalpur in 1833, Kashmir in 1846 were assured of the Company's policy of non-intervention into the internal affairs of their states Prof. Dodwell very aptly sums up the position thus: "Besides the rights vested by treaty in the Company, there had arisen, under no sanction but that of superior power on the one side and reluctant acquiescence on the other, a body of precedents relating to successions and to interference in the internal administration of the states. Together these constituted the Company's paramountcy — undefined, undefinable, but always tending to expand under the strong pressure of political circumstances."

2.2 Development of the Central Structure (1773-1863)

1. **The Rule of Law:** The British deserve the credit for having introduced in India the modern concept of the rule of law. This meant the end of arbitrary authority exercised by the earlier rulers of India. A person could now know his rights and privileges and a set procedure was laid down for asserting them.
2. **Equality before Law:** In the eyes of law all men were considered equal, irrespective of their religion, caste or class. This meant the end of the earlier practice of varying the law according to the class and status of the person, say between a Brahmin or a non-Brahmin or between a zamindar and a peasant. Henceforth, under British administration, the humblest of the humble could move the court for his legitimate rights. In actual practice, however, the principle of equality before law was violated when laws became complicated and beyond the grasp of uneducated poor masses; they had to engage lawyers who charged excessive fees and preferred to work for the rich; in addition, the prevalence of corruption in the administrative machinery and the police worked against the rights of the masses.
3. **Recognition of Personal Civil Law:** The Company's authorities recognised the rights of the various Indian communities — Hindu, Muslim, Parsi or Christian — to be judged by law of their community, particularly in matters connected with marriage, adoption, of joint family matters like succession and partition of property.
4. **Growth of trained judicial officers and professional lawyers:** In pre-British times, the landlords and the rulers played a notable role in deciding judicial disputes. In contrast, under Company's rule, written law (and later codified law) promoted confidence in the judicial system. The emergence of a professional class of lawyers trained to defend the rights of their clients augued in the modern system if judicial administration (of course, with all its limitations).

The Company's judicial system was praised because it was based on the principle of sovereignty of law, introduction of codified secular law and Western concept of justice. However, it produced many undesirable effects.

Changes in Economic Policy: The East India Company's victories in the battles of Plassey (1757), and Buxar (1764) brought about a change in the pattern of Company's trade with India. In 1765, Emperor Shah Alam II was forced to grant the *Diwani* of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa to the Company which become a source of great surplus income for the Company. In 1765 Lord Clive estimated the total revenue of Bengal at 4 millions which after defraying all administrative expenses would leave a net surplus income at £1,650,000. The quantum of surplus income increased year after year due to increase in rate of land revenue demand and ruthless method of collection of land revenue from the farmers. The 'surplus revenue' from Bengal was used by the Company as its 'investment' to purchase Indian goods for export from India. Obviously, the export of Indian good increased year after year but India as a country did not receive any imported goods or bullion in return. Hence, the process of 'drain of wealth' from India started.

The latter half of the 18th century witnessed the beginning of Industrial Revolution in England. A new capitalist class emerged which through the support of the ruling Whig Party brought about another shift in Company's economic policy in India.

Social Legislation and Educational Policy: In 1808, the Court of Directors sent a despatch to Lord Minto (Governor-General 1807-13) reiterating the Company's policy of non-interference in the socio-religious beliefs of the people living in the Company's territories. The obvious instruction to the Governor-General was to restrain the Christian Missions from their proselytizing activites. The Charter Act of 1813 struck a different note when it lifted all restrictions on the entry of missionaries of the U.K. into India.

The Court of Directors gauged the progressive mood of the Parliament and could hope for renewal of the Charter of Company due in 1833 only if it could present the pro-reform postures and policies of the East India Company in India. As such, the Court of Directors advised Lord William Bentinck (Governor-General, 1828-35) to act fast and remove the most conspicious abuses in Hindu society. Thus (in the environment of reform) Regulation XVII of 4 Dec., 1829 declared practice of *Sati* illegal in Bengal Presidency and in 1834 its operation was extended to Madras and Bombay presidencies; Infanticide had already been declared illegal by Bangal Regulations of 1795 and 1804 but its strict enforcement was given due attention. The question of Widows' Remarriage was carried out by Act of 1856 which legalized marriage of widows and declared issues from such marriages as legitimate. Attention was also given to education of women. The process thus started was carried out under the Crown administration after 1858.

Changes in Education Policy: The Western Christian Missions were pioneers in the field of introduction of Modern system of education in India.

The English Company's authorities did not accept responsibility for the education of the people living in Company's administrative territories in the 18th century. All the same, the Company's government set up the Calcutta Madras (1781), followed by a Sanskrit College (1792) at Benaras. However, a body of reformers in Bengal, who no doubt admitted the value of Oriental learning, but believed that better results could be achieved through a knowledge of English language and Western literature available in English. The most conspicuous among them was Raja Rammohan Roy, who joined hands with David Hare and with the help of Sir Edward Hyde East, (the Chief Justice of Bengal) founded in March 1817 the Hindu College at Calcutta. Another, extreme pro-Western wing popularly known as Young Bengal Group crusaded for the acceptance of the West in toto i.e. Western thought, social values, great veneration for Christianity and in general a great disgust for Eastern culture and Indian religions.

Orientalist-Anglicist Controversy: Till 1823, the educational clause of the Charter Act of 1813 remained unimplemented. However, in 1823 a General Committee of Public Instruction was set up to take charge of government educational and utilise the educational grants. Unfortunately, the ten members of the General Committee of Public Instruction were divided into equal groups, viz., the Orientalists (who advocated the utilisation of funds for promotion of oriental subjects) and the Anglicists

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(who crusaded for the cause of Western Sciences and Western literature through the medium of English language). The statement continued till Lord William Bantinck, the Governor-General appointed G.B. Macaulay as the Chairman of the Committee. Macaulay's famous minute dated 2 February, 1835 advocated the Anglicists' point of view. Lord William Bentinck's government passed a resolution on 7 March 1835 which declared the Government's orders that henceforth government funds would be utilised for "promotion of European literature and science" through the medium of English language. A further Government notification of 1838 made it clear that henceforth no funds would be made available for oriental learning.

Wood's Education Despatch of 1854: In 1854 Sir Charles Wood, President of the Board of Control and later the first Secretary of State for India, sent a comprehensive Despatch on Education to the Government of India in which he recommended "a property articulated scheme of education from the primary school to the University" for the whole of British India. The Despatch reiterated that (*i*) the aim of education in India was to be diffusion of European languages (*ii*) through the medium of both English and Indian languages. In brief, it recommended medium of instruction to be vernacular languages at the primary level, followed by Anglo-vernacular schools at the middle and high school levels and education through the English medium at College and University levels. It also recommended the setting up of universities at Calcutta, Bombay and Madras on the model of the London University.

The British commercial community both in Calcutta and in Britain became strong supporters of the cause of anglicization of education in India. The English-educated Indian middle class not only helped in exploitation of India's natural resources but became the great consumers of British goods from neckties to shoes.

2.3 The Regulating Act of 1773

Circumstances Leading to the Act: The first association of the British with the work of administration under what is called the system of Dual Government (1765 to 1772) is a discreditable and shameful page of British history, which has been summed up in a contemporary Muslim history, the *Siyar-ul Mutakherin*, thus: "The new rulers paid no attention to the concerns of the people and suffered them to be mercilessly oppressed and tormented by officers of their own appointing." Then came the famine of 1770 in Bengal which was one of the most appalling disasters in the recorded history of India. The Company was not responsible for the famine but it and its agents were largely to blame for a complete collapse of government. W.E.H. Lecky describes the plight of the people in the following words: "Never before had the Indians experienced a tyranny which was so skilful, so searching and so strong..."

During the twelve years preceding Warren Hastings' administration the servants of the Company thronged back to England loaded with wealth and what was strongly suspected of being the plunder of Bengal. The incursion of these 'Nabobs' with their lavish notions and orientalized habits into the aristocratic circles of the time is one of the most striking social phenomena of eighteenth century England. Contemporary memoirs and letters reveal the mingled contempt, envy and hatred with which they were regarded. While the servants of the Company were making huge profits, the Company itself was on the verge of insolvency.

It was an ill-chosen moment for the Company to go bankrupt, especially when it had so few friends, being hated by all and sundry. Yet that is what it contrived to do.

A blind folly had for some time past possessed the Directors and shareholders of the Company.

In 1769 when the Company was in debt to the tune of £6 millions, a dividend of 12.5% was decleared, though the Directors had to conceal facts and falsify accounts. When news reached England of the famine in Bengal and Haider Ali's successful onslaught into the Carnatic, the Company's stock showed a spectacular decline and before long rumours got abroad of the Company's true financial position. The Directors in sheer desperation applied to the Bank of England for a loan of £1,000,000.

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The fat was really in the fire when the Directors of the bankrupt Company applied to the Government for relief; for in doing so, they signed the death warrant of their Company's independence. The opportunity to turn its distress to the advantage of the State and especially of its Royal Head was too good for the resurrected Tories to miss. Lord North with secure majorities in both Houses of Parliament prudently referred the application to Parliament. A Select Committee was appointed to enquire into the Company's affairs. This Committee was presided over by General Burgoyne who in proposing a resolution for the appointment of the Committee declared: 'The most atrocious abuses that ever stained the name of civil government called for redress...if by some means sovereignty and law are not separated from trade, India and Great Britian will be sunk and overwhelmed never to rise again."

Certainly, the conduct of the Directors supplied abundant food for speculation. In March of that year (1772) they had declared another dividend of 12.5% in August they asked the Government for of loan of £ 1 million. The discrepancy was so glaring that it caused the House of Commons to appoint a second (Secret) Committee to investigate the reasons for it. Why should a Company go bankrupt, members pertinently asked, when its servants were returning to England with their pockets bulging with gold. It was an interesting question.

In the spring of the following year the Committees of Enquiry issued their reports. As expected these were highly condemnatory. Two Acts of Parliament were passed. The first granted the Company a loan of £ 1, 400,000 at 4% interest on certain conditions. The second was the important Regulating Act. The Regulating Act was not passed without opposition in Parliament. The bill was fiercely opposed by the Company and its friends.

Provisions of the Regulating Act: The Act remodelled the constitution of the Company both in England and in India. In England the right of vote in the Court of Proprietors was raised from £ 500 to £ 1,000. It was provided that the Court of directors, hitherto elected every year, was henceforth to be elected for four years. The number of Directors was fixed at 24, one-fourth retiring every year. The Directors were required to "lay before the Treasury all correspondence *from* India dealing with the revenues and before a Secretary of Stage everything dealing with civil and military administration." Thus, for the first time the British Cabinet was given the right of controlling Indian affairs, although the right was imperfect.

In Bengal a collegiate government was created consisting of a Governor-General (President) and four members of the Council. The vote of the majority was to bind the Council, the Governor-General having a casting vote when there was an equal division of opinion. Three members of the Council formed a quorum. The first Governor-General (Warren Hastings) and Councillors (Philip Francis, Clavering, Monson and Barwell) were named in the Act. They were to hold office for five years, and could be removed earlier only by the King on the recommendation of the Court of Directors. Future appointments were to be made by the Company. The Governor-General-in-Council were vested with the civil and military government of the Presidency of Fort William in Bengal. They were to superintend and control in certain matters the subordinate Presidencies of Madras and Bombay.

The Act empowered the Crown to establish by charter a Supreme Court of Judicature, consisting of a Chief Justice and three puisne judges. The Supreme Court was to be a Court of Equity and of Common Law, a Court of Admiralty, and Ecclesiastical Court. All the public servants of the Company were made amenable to its jurisdiction. All British subjects in Bengal, European and Indian, could seek redress in the Supreme Court against oppression ; the Supreme court could also entertain suits, actions and complaints against persons in the Company's service or any of His Majesty's subjects. The Court could determine all types of cases and grant redress through all the methods then in vogue in English judicial procedure. The Court was given both original and appellate jurisdiction. Following the British custom, the Court heard these cases with the help of a jury of British subjects. The Supreme Court was constituted in 1774 with Sir Elijah Impey as Chief Justice and Chambers, Lemaister and Hyde as the Puisne judges.

The Regulating Act laid down the fundamental principle of honest administration by providing that "no person holding or exercising any civil or military office under the Crown shall accept, receive or take directly or indirectly any persent, gift, donation, gratuity or reward, pecuniary or otherwise."

Liberal salaries were provided for the Governor-General (£ 25,000), each member of the Council (£ 10,000), the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court (£ 8,000) and for each puisne Judge (£ 6000) a year.

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Assessment of the Act: The Act appointed a Governor-General but shackled him with a Council that might reduce him to impotence as was actually the case with Warren Hastings from 1774 to 1776 when he was almost uniformly outvoted in the Council. The Act established a Supreme Court of Justice but made no attempt accurately to define the field of its jurisdiction, specify the law it was to administer or draw a line of demarcation between its functions and those of the Council. The Act was a compromise throughout and intentionally vague in many of its provisions. It did not openly assert the sovereignty of the British Crown or invade the titular authority of the Nawab of Bengal. The Act had "neither given the state a definite control over the Company nor the Directors a definite control over their servants, nor the Governor-General a definite control over his Council nor the Calcutta Presidency a definite control over Madras and Bombay." The Act was based on the theory of checks and balances. In actual practice it broke down under the stress of Indian circumstances and its own inherent defects. Hence the chief defects of the new system inaugurated by the Act were: (*i*) the unworkable relations which it established between the Governor-General and his Council,(*ii*) the anomalous relations between the new Supreme Court administering English law, and the country courts already existing in Bengal. The Council and the Court were ranged in two hostile camps set against each other on the borderland of debatable jurisdictions. The Governor-General-in-Council could make no laws that the judges did not condescend to notice. There was the serious lacuna in the Act of a supreme legislative authority nearer than England to arbitrate in these quarrels and to mark off the proper sphere of the executive and judicial departments, (*iii*) The insufficient authority of the Governor-General-in-Council over the other Presidencies. In all these respects the system broke down completely when put to operation.

Importance of the Act: It must be said for the Regulating Act that it was the first serious attempt made by a European power to organise government in a far-off country inhabited by a civilised people. There were no European colonists here as in North American administration among whom could easily work the type of institutions functioning in the mother country. Unlike South America again Indian territories of the East India Company did not represent an undeveloped country. Thus "the Regulating Act tried to sail in an unchartered sea. It left the details of administration in India to the devices of the Company. It tried, however, to organise an honest and efficient supreme authority in Bengal, at Madras and at Bombay. To provide against the abuse of their powers by the servants of the Company, it set up a Supreme Court of Judicature at Calcutta. In England no public servant was then above the law, he was accountable for whatever he did to ordinary courts. The Act in short was a well-meant attempt to introduce a better system of government but being designed in ignorance of the real nature of the problem it was a total failure and only added to Hastings' difficulties instead of strengthening his hands."

The Regulating Act was in operation for eleven years till it was superseded by the Pitt's Act of 1784. Warren Hastings was the only Governor-General who had to administer India under it.

Pitt's India Act, 1784

Circumstances Leading to the Passing of the Act: In 1781 as in 1772, both a Select and a Secret Committee were appointed to go into the affairs of the Company. The former (the Select Committee) investigated the relations between the Supreme Court and the Council in Bengal, the latter (the Secret Committee) the causes of the Maratha War. The voluminous reports they presented were freely used as arsenals for weapons against the Company by party orators in Parliament. Parliamentary interference in the affairs of the Company was obviously once again called for, especially when the Directors of the Company were obliged openly to confess that the war had beggared them and to apply to the State for another loan of a million pounds. After a measure drafted by Dundas, Chairman of the Secret Committee, had been rejected, Fox introduced his India Bill in Parliament. The measure was really inspired by Burke and, behind him, by Philip Francis. This bill sought to transfer all the political and military powers of the Company to a Board of Seven Commissioners to be nominated in the first instance by Parliament and afterwards by the Crown, and all its commercial powers to a subordinate body of nine Assistant Directors who were ultimately to be nominated by the holder of East India stock, though they too in the first instance were to be appointed by Parliament. The bill if it had been passed would in effect have swept aside the Company as a political power and brought

all political appointments under the control of a commission which was to be appointed in the first instance by Parliament and afterwards by the Crown. The chief advocates of this measure had ten years earlier opposed North's Act as an intolerable invasion of the right of property. The feature of the Bill upon which the Opposition seized was the surrender of the immensely valuable patronage of India to the Ministry or the Crown and Pitt thundered against it as the most desperate and alarming attempt at the exercise of tyranny that ever disgraced the annals of any country. The Bill, however, was passed in the House of Commons by large majorities only to be rejected in the House of Lords through the intervention of George III. The Bill was thrown out and the Ministry— the coalition of Fox and North—resigned. It may be observed in passing that for the first and the last time a British Ministry was wrecked on an Indian issue. Pitt came into power and in January 1784 he moved for leave to bring in his India Bill and leave was granted; even the second reading was taken but the Bill was not destined to be put on the statute book for the new Ministry had to resign. Pitt's new Parliament met in May 1784. Following the lines laid down in his Bill of January, the new Bill was finally carried in the House of Commons in July, and in the House of Lords in August 1784. Fox, throughout the session, continued to refer to the superior merits of his own Bill. Pitt had taken the precaution of neutralising the opposition of the English Company with the result that the measure was introduced in parliament fortified and recommended by the consent of the Company. In essentials Fox's and Pitt's measures were on the same lines except that the latter did not touch the patronage of the Company.

Notes Pitt himself pointed out that while Fox's India Bill ensured a permanency of men, his Bill ment a permanency of system.

Provisions of the Act: The Act of 1784 introduced changes mainly in the Company's Home Government in London. It greatly extended the control of the State over the company's affairs. While the patronage of the Company was left untouched, all civil, military and revenue affairs were to be controlled by a Board popularly known as the Board of Control, consisting of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, one of the principal Secretaries of State and four members of the Privy Council appointed by the King. A Secret Committee of three Directors was to be the channel through which important orders of the Board were to be transmitted to India. The Court of Proprietors lost the right to rescind, suspend or revoke any resolution of the Directors which was approved by the Board of Control.

In India, the chief government was placed in the hands of a Governor-General and Council of three. The Governor-General was still left liable to be over-ridden by the Council but as the number of Councillors was reduced to three, he, by the use of his casting vote, could always make his will predominate if he had one supporter. Beyond this the Act of 1784 did not go. This defect was met in the Act of 1793, whereby the Governor-General was empowered to disregard the majority in Council provided he did so in a formal way accepting the responsibility of his own action. Under the Act of 1784 the Presidencies of Madras and Bombay were subordinated to the Governor-General and Council of Bengal in all matters of diplomacy, revenue and war. Last but not the least, only covenanted servants were in future to be appointed members of the Council of the Governor-General. The experiment of appointing outsiders had proved calamitous.

Observations on the Act: Pitt's India Act of 1784 brought about two important changes in the constitution of the Company. First, it constituted a department of state in England known as the Board of Control, whose special function was to control the policy of the Court of Directors, thus introducing the Dual System of government by the Company and by a Parliamentry Board which lasted till 1858. The Board of Control had no independent executive power. It had no patronage. Its power was veiled; it had access to all the Company's papers and its approval was necessary for all despatches that were not purely commercial, and in case of emergency the Board could send its own draft to the Secret Committee of the Directors to be signed and sent out in its name. The Act thus placed the civil and military government of the Company in due subordination to the Government in

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England. The Court of Directors retained their patronage and their right of dismissing their servants. The head of the Board was at first one of the Secretaries of State without special salary, but after 1793 a special President of the Board was appointed and this officer was ultimately responsible for the government of British India until he was succeeded in 1858 by the Secretary of State for India. Pitt's India Act thus settled the main lines of the Company's Home and Indian Government down to 1858.

Secondly, the Act reduced the number of members of the Executive Council to three, of whom the Commander-in-Chief was to be one. It also modified the Councils of Madras and Bombay on the pattern of that of Bengal.

Among the most striking provisions of the Act was the prohibition not merely of all aggressive wars in India but of all treaties of guarantee with Indian Princes like those with the nawabs of Carnatic and Oudh on the ground that "to pursue schemes of conquest and extension of dominion in India are measures repugnant to the wish, the honour and the policy of this nation." But this declaration was more honoured in breach than in observance in subsequent years. In fact the Act was a very skilful measure bearing all the marks of a political compromise. Burke admitted that it was "as able and skilful a performance for its own purposes as ever issued from the wit of man." Pitt, as Sir Courtney Ilbert has pointed out, has done two things: (*i*) he had avoided the charge of conferring patronage on the Crown, and (*ii*) the appearance of radically altering the Company and the Government in England.

Self-Assessment

1. Choose the correct options:

(*i*) ..... was the first Governor General of India.

(*a*) Lord Hastings (*b*) Waren Hestings (*c*) Dalhousie (*d*) Cornwallis.

(*ii*) The Supreme Court was established in Calcutta in the time of ..... .

(*a*) Waren Hastings (*b*) Dalhousie (*c*) Cornwallis (*d*) Lord Hastings.

(*iii*) Asiatic Association of Bengal was established in ..... .

(*a*) 1781 (*b*) 1783 (*c*) 1784 (*d*) 1788.

(*iv*) Who is regarded as the fever of civil services and police service.

(*a*) Lord Kening (*b*) Cornwallis (*c*) Lord Hastings (*d*) Dalhousie

(*v*) Who propagated subsidiary Alliance?

(*a*) Dalhousie (*b*) Wellesley (*c*) Cornwallis (*d*) Lord Canning.

2.4 Summary

- The decades following the retirement of Lord Hastings saw the rapid increase of the influence of the Company in the internal administration of the states. The British Residents were usually the organs of communication between the Government of India and the rulers of Indian states. Gradually their influence and power increased. Mountstuart Elphinstone explained his work as Resident thus—intelliegence work, reporting situation of native Raja's armies and palace intrigues, performing military duties.
- The Charter Act of 1833 metamorphosed the character of the Company. The Company was asked to wind up its commercial business. It assumed political functions in fact and name. A radical change followed in the policy towards the Indian states. The Company adopted the practice of insisting on its prior sanction and approval in all matter of succession in states. Later they found it practicable to advise the princes on the choice ministers.
- Even after the establishment of the East India Company's undisputed supremacy in 1818, the policy of the East India Company *vis-a-vis* the Indian states was "chaotic, indefinite and contradictory."
- "Besides the rights vested by treaty in the Company, there had arisen, under no sanction but that of superior power on the one side and reluctant acquiescence on the other, a body of precedents relating to successions and to interference in the internal administration of the states. Together these constituted the Company's paramountcy— undefined, undefinable, but always tending to expand under the strong pressure of political circumstances."

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- Madras and Bombay presidencies; Infanticide had already been declared illegal by Bangal Regulations of 1795 and 1804 but its strict enforcement was given due attention.
- In 1854 Sir Charles Wood, President of the Board of Control and later the first Secretary of State for India, sent a comprehensive Despatch on Education to the Government of India in which he recommended "a property articulated scheme of education from the primary school to the University" for the whole of British India.
- The Act remodelled the constitution of the Company both in England and in India. In England the right of vote in the Court of Proprietors was raised from £ 500 to £ 1,000. It was provided that the Court of directors, hitherto elected every year, was henceforth to be elected for four years. The number of Directors was fixed at 24, one-fourth retiring every year.
- In Bengal a collegiate government was created consisting of a Governor-General (President) and four members of the Council. The vote of the majority was to bind the Council, the Governor-General having a casting vote when there was an equal division of opinion. Three members of the Council formed a quorum. The first Governor-General (Warren Hastings) and Councillors (Philip Francis, Clavering, Monson and Barwell) were named in the Act. They were to hold office for five years, and could be removed earlier only by the King on the recommendation of the Court of Directors. Future appointments were to be made by the Company.
- The Act empowered the Crown to establish by charter a Supreme Court of Judicature, consisting of a Chief Justice and three puisne judges. The Supreme Court was to be a Court of Equity and of Common Law, a Court of Admiralty, and Ecclesiastical Court. All the public servants of the Company were made amenable to its jurisdiction.
- The Act appointed a Governor-General but shackled him with a Council that might reduce him to impotence as was actually the case with Warren Hastings from 1774 to 1776 when he was almost uniformly outvoted in the Council. The Act established a Supreme Court of Justice but made no attempt accurately to define the field of its jurisdiction, sefecify the law it was to administer or draw a line of demarcation between its functions and those of the Council.
- In 1781 as in 1772, both a Select and a Secret Committee were appointed to go into the affairs of the Company. The former (the Select Committee) investigated the relations between the Supreme Court and the Council in Bengal, the latter (the Secret Committee) the causes of the Maratha War.
- Pitt came into power and in January 1784 he moved for leave to bring in his India Bill and leave was granted; even the second reading was taken but the Bill was not destined to be put on the statute book for the new Ministry had to resign. Pitt's new Parliament met in May 1784. Following the lines laid down in his Bill of January, the new Bill was finally carried in the House of Commons in July, and in the House of Lords in August 1784. Fox, throughout the session, continued to refer to the superior merits of his own Bill. Pitt had taken the precaution of neutralising the opposition of the English Company with the result that the measure was introduced in parliament fortified and recommended by the consent of the Company. In essentials Fox's and Pitt's measures were on the same lines except that the latter did not touch the patronage of the Company.
- The Act of 1784 introduced changes mainly in the Company's Home Government in London. It greatly extended the control of the State over the company's affairs. While the patronage of the Company was left untouched, all civil, military and revenue affairs were to be controlled by a Board popularly known as the Board of Control, consisting of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, one of the principal Secretaries of State and four members of the Privy Council appointed by the King. A Secret Committee of three Directors was to be the channel through which important orders of the Board were to be transmitted to India. The Court of Proprietors lost the right to rescind, suspend or revoke any resolution of the Directors which was approved by the Board of Control.
- Among the most striking provisions of the Act was the prohibition not merely of all aggressive wars in India but of all treaties of guarantee with Indian Princes like those with the nawabs of Carnatic and Oudh on the ground that "to pursue schemes of conquest and extension of dominion in India are measures repugnant to the wish, the honour and the policy of this nation.

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2.5 Key-Words

1. Thwarted : Prevent from accomplishing something, oppose successfully
2. Augured : To foretell events, to exhibit signs of future events.
3. Wrecked : A voilent and destructive crash, ruined

2.6 Review Questions

1. From 1818 to 1843 was the period of consolidation of British Raj. Discuss.
2. Discuss the development of central structure in British Raj from 1773 to 1863.
3. Discuss the implementations of 1773 Regulating Act.
4. Explain the implementations of Pits India Act. How does it differ from Regulating Act.

Answers: Self-Assessment

1. (*i*) (*b*) 2. (*a*) 3. (*c*) 4. (*b*) 5. (*b*)

2.7 Further Readings

1. V.D. Mahajan, History of Modern India, S. Chand and Co. Ltd. New Delhi.
2. Chandra, Bipin, India's Struggle for Freedom (1857–1947) Penguin, Delhi, 1996.

Notes

Unit 3: Socio-Religious Reforms Movement

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Objectives

After studying this unit, students will be able to:

- Discuss social reforms made by Brahma Samaj.
- Explain the improvements made by Arya Samaj to curb the superstitions and rumeurs spread in Hindu Religion.
- Understand Singh-Sabha Movement.

Introduction

For some time it seemed that India was completely bowled over by new Western ideas and Western values in life. It seemed that India had lagged behind in the rase for civilisation. This produced diverse reactions. Some English-educated Bengali youth (known as Derozios) developed a revulsion against Hindu religion and culture, gave up old religious ideas and traditions and deliberately adopted practices most offensive to Hindu sentiments, such as drinking wine and eating beef. More mature minds led by Rammohan Roy were certainly stimulated by Western ideas and Western values but refused to break away from Hinduism; their approach was to reform Hindu religion and society and they saw the path of progress in an acceptance of the best of the East and the West. Another current was to deny the superiority of Western culture and prevent India from becoming a colourless copy of Europe; they drew inspiration from India's past heritage and reinterpreted it in the light of modern rationalism. This neo- Hinduism preached that Europe had much to learn from India's spiritualism.

The new concept of secularization was born. The term secularization implies that what was previously regarded as religious was no longer regarded as such. The magic wand was moved by rationalism *i.e.*, the *emergence* of a tendency to regulate individual religious and social life in accordance with the principles of reason and to discard traditional beliefs and practices which cannot stand the test of modern knowledge. This approach brought a great change in the concept of 'pollution and purity' which formed an integral part of traditional Hindu religion. The educated persons could see no logic behind labelling certain forbidden vegetables such as garlic, ginger, onion, beetroot as impure; rather food value of vegetables received more importance. Further, domestic rituals underwent a change. For example, the attainment of puberty by girls was no longer an occasion for elaborate rituals; it began to be looked upon as a natural stage in the process of growth. Urbanisation, modernisation, new trends in eating at tables and restaurants promoted new outlook and erosion of orthodox way of living.

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The ferment of ideas gave an expansive touch to Indian culture. A spirit of renaissance pervaded the whole country. Indian intellectuals closely scrutinized the country's past and found that many beliefs and Practices were no longer of any use and needed to be discarded; they also discovered that many aspects of India's cultural heritage were of intrinsic value to India's cultural awakening. The result was the birth of many socio-religious reform movements touching almost every segment of Indian society.

The reform movements fall in two broad categories: *One*, Reformist movements like the Brahmo Samaj, the Prarthana Samaj and the Aligarh movement, *Two*, Revivalist movement like the Arya Samaj, the Ramakrishna Mission and the Deoband movement. Both the reformist and revivalist movements depended on a varying degree on an appeal to the lost purity of the religion they sought to reform. The only difference between one reform movement and the other lay in the degree to which it relied on tradition or on reason and conscience.

Another significant aspect of all the reform movements was their emphasis on both religious and social reform. This link was primarily due to two main reasons, (*i*) Almost every social custom and institution in India derived sustenance from religious injunctions and sanctions. This meant that no social reform could be undertaken unless the existing religious notions which sustained the social customs were also reformed, (*ii*) Indian reformers well understood the close interrelation between different aspects of human activities. Rammohun Roy, for example, believed that religious reform must precede demand for social reform or political rights.

3.1 The Brahmo Samaj (The Society of God)

The Brahmo Samaj was the earliest reform movement of the modern type which was greatly influenced by modern Western ideas. Rammohan (1774-1833) was the founder of Brahmo Samaj. He was a very well-read man. He studied Oriental languages like Arabic, Persian and Sanskrit and attained proficiency in European languages like English French, Latin, Greek and Hebrew. His extensive studies freed his mind from the bigotry that characterised Bengali.

Although Rammohan Roy was a man of versatile genius, the governing passion of his life was religious reform. At a time when the Bengali youth under the influence of Western learning was drifting towards Christianity, Rammohan Roy proved to be the champion of Hinduism. While he defended Hinduism against the hostile criticism of the missionaries, he sought to purge Hinduism of the abues that had crept into it. At the early age of fifteen he had criticised idolatry and supported his viewpoint by quotations from the Vedas.

Did u know? Raja Ram Mohan Roy re-interpreted Hindu doctrines and found ample spiritual basis for his humanitarianism in the Upanishads. He started a campaign for the abolition of *sati*, condemned polygamy and concubinage, denounced casteism, advocated the right of Hindu widows to remarry.

He rejected Christianity, denied the divinity of Jesus Christ, but accepted the humanis of Europe Thus, Rammohan Roy sought to effect a cultural synthesis between the East and the West. Even today he is recognised as the forerunner of Modern India and a great path-finder of his century, for he embodied the new spirit of enquiry, thirst for knowledge, broad humanitarianism-all to be achieved in the Indian setting. In the words of Dr. Macnicol.

For him God was shapeless, invisible, omnipresent and omnipotent, but the guiding spirit of the universe and omniscient. In August 1828, Roy founded the Brahmo Sabha which was later renamed Brahmo Samaj. The Trust Deed executed in 1830 explained the object of the Brahmo Samaj as "the worship and adoration of the Eternal, Unsearchable, Immutable, Being who is the Author and Preserver of the Universe". The Samaj declared its opposition to idol worship and "no graven image, statue or sculpture, carving, painting, picture, portrait or the likeness of anything was to be allowed in the Samaj building. There was no place for priesthood in the Samaj building. There was

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no place for priesthood in the Samaj nor sacrifices of any kind were allowed. The worship was performed through prayers and meditation and readings from the Upanishads. Great emphasis was laid on "promotion of charity, morality, piety, benevolence, virtue and strengthening of the bonds of union between men of all religious persuasions and creeds"

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"Rammohan Roy was the herald of new age" and the fire he kindled in India has brunt ever since. Rammohan Roy accepted the concept of one God as propounded by the upanishads.

It should be clearly understood that Rammohan Roy never intended to establish a new religion. He only wanted to purge Hinduism of the evil practices that had crept into it. Roy remained a devout Hindu till the end if his life and always wore the sacred thread.

From the beginning the appeal of the Brahmo Samaj had remained limited to the intellectuals and educationally enlightened Bengalis living in the towns. The orthodox Hindus led by Raja Radhakant Deb organised the Dharma Sabha with the object of countering the propaganda of Brahmo Samaj. The early death of Rammohan in 1833 left the Brahmo Samaj without the guiding soul and a steady decline set in.

The informal association of the two Sabhas gave a new strength in membership and purpose to the Brahmo Samaj. Tagore worked on two fronts. Within Hinduism the Brahmo Samaj was a reformist movement, outside he resolutely opposed the Christian missionaries for their criticism of Hinduism and their attempts at conversion. Tagore condemned idol worship, discouraged pilgrimages, ceremonials and penances among the Brahoms. Under his leadership branches of the Samaj were established in various towns and the Brahmo message spread in the countryside of Bengal.

Did u know?

It was left to Debendranath Tagore (1817-1905) to infuse new life into the Brahmo Samaj and give the theist movement a definite form and shape. Tagore joined the Samaj in 1842. Earlier, Tagore headed the Tattvabodhini Sabha (founded in 1839) which was engaged in search of spiritual truth.

Keshab Chandra Sen joined the Brahmo Samaj in 1858. Soon after Tagore appointed him the Acharya of the Brahmo Samaj. The energy, vigour and persuasive eloquence of Keshab popularised the movement and the branches of the Samaj were opened outside Bengal, in the U.P., the Panjab, Bombay, Madras and other towns. In Bengal itself there were 54 branches in 1865. However, Keshab's liberal and cosmopolitan outlook brought about a split in the Samaj.

On the social front, Keshab spoke against the caste system and even advocated intercaste marriages. To Debendranath these developments looked too radical and by virtue of his position as the sole trustee of the dismissed Keshab from the office of the Acharya in 1865. Keshab and his followers left the parent body in 1866 and formed the *Brahmo Samaj of India*. Debendranath's Samaj henceforth came to known as the *Adi Brahmo Samaj*.

A further split in Keshab's Brahmo Samaj of India came in 1878. Some close disciples of Keshab began to regard Keshab as an incarnation. This was not liked by his progressive followers. Further, Keshab began to be accused of authoritarianism. All along Keshab Chandra had advocated a minimum age for marriage of Brahmos, but did not follow his own precepts. In 1878 Keshab married his thirteen-year old daughter with minor Hindu Maharaja of Cooch-Bihar with all the orthodox Hindu ceremonials. He justified his action on the plea that such was the will of God and that he had acted on intuition. Most of Keshab's followers felt disgusted and set up a new organisation called the *Sadharan Brahmo Samaj*.

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The Brahmo Samaj has played a notable role in the Indian Renaissance. H.C.E. Zacharias writes: "Rammohan Roy and his Brahmo Samaj form the starting point for all the various Reform Movements—whether in Hindu religion, society or politics—which have agitated Modern India". The intellectual mind which had been cut off its moorings by the Christian propaganda found a way out in the Brahmo Samaj. In the field of religious reform the main significance of Brahmo Samaj lay not in what it retained of traditional Hinduism but what it discarded of the old beliefs of Hinduism. It's overall contribution may be summed up thus: (*i*) it discarded faith in divine *Avatars*; (*ii*) it denied that any scripture could enjoy the status of ultimate authority transcending human reason and conscience; (*iii*) it denounced polytheism and idol-worship; (*iv*) it criticised the caste system; (*v*) it took no definite stand on the doctrine of Karma and transmigration of soul and left it to individual Brahmos to believe either way.

In matters of social reform. Brahmo Samaj has influenced Hindu society. It attacked many dogmas and superstitions. It condemned the prevailing Hindu prejudice against going abroad. It worked for a respectable status for woman in society—condemned *sati*, worked for abolition of *purdah* system, discouraged child marriages and polygamy, crusaded for window remarriage, provision of educational facilities etc. It also attacked casteism and untouchability though in these matters it attained limited success.

Notes Under Keshab's influence the Samaj began to cut itself from Hindu moorings; henceforth religious scriptures of every sect and every people including the Christians, Muslims, Parsis began to be read in the Brahmo Samaj meetings.

The Brahmo Ideas in Maharashtra or the prarthana Samaj

The Brahmo ideas spread in Maharashtra where the Paramahansa Sabha was founded in 1849. In 1867, under the guidance of Keshab the Prarthana Samaj (Prayer Congregation) was established in Bombay. In Bombay the followers of Prarthana Samaj never "looked upon themselves as adherents of a new religion or of a new sect, outside and alongside of the general Hindu body, but simply as a movement within it". Apart from the worship of one God, in Western India the main emphasis has been on social reform, upon 'works' rather than 'faith'. They believed that the true love of God lay in the service of God's children. Their approach was not confrontation with Hindu orthodoxy, but they relied on education and persuasion.

In the field of social reform the focus was on four objects: (*i*) Disapproval of caste system, (*ii*) Raising the age of marriage of both meals and females, (*iii*) Window remarriage, (*iv*) Women education.

The prominent leaders of the Samaj were Justice Mahadev Govinda Ranade (1842-1901), R.G. Bhandarker (1837-1925) and N.G. Chandavarkar (1855-1923). The Depressed Classes mission, the Social Service League and the Deccan Education Society have done creditable work in the field of social and educational reforms.

A number of Brahmo Samaj centres were opened in the Madras State. In the Punjab the Dayal Singh Trust sought to implant Brahmo ideas by the opening of Dayal Singh College at Lahore in 1910.

3.2 The Arya Samaj

The Arya Samaj movement was an outcome of reaction to Western influences. It was revivalist in form though not in content. The founder, Swami Dayanand, rejected Western ideas and sought to revive the ancient religion of the Aryans.

Mulshanker (1824-83) popularly known as Dayanand was born in a Brahmin family living in the old Morvi state in Gujarat. His father, a great Vedic scholar, also assumed the role of the teacher

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and helped young Mulshankar acquire good insight into Vedic literature, logic, philosophy, ethics etc. Dayanand's quest for the truth goaded him to *yogabhyas* (contemplation or communion) and to learn yoga it was necessary to leave home. For fifteen years (1845-60) Dayanand wandered as an ascetic in the whole of India studying *Yoga*. In 1875 he formally organised the first Arya Samaj unit at Bombay. A few years later the headquarters of the Arya Samaj were established at Lahore. For the rest of his life, Dayanand extensively toured India for the propagation of his ideas.

Dayanand's ideal was to unite India religiously, socially and nationally— Aryan religion to be the common religion of all, a classless and casteless society, and an India free from foreign rule. He looked on the Vedas as India's 'Rock of Ages', the true original seed of Hinduism. His motto was 'Go back to the Vedas'. He gave his own interpretation of the Vedas. He disregarded the authority of the later Hindu scriptures like the Puranas and described them as the work of lesser men and responsible for the evil practices of idol worship and other superstitious beliefs in Hindu religion. Dayanand condemned idol worship and preached unity of Godhead. His views were published in his famous work *Satyartha Prakash* (The True Exposition).

Dayanand launched a frontal attack on the numerous abuses (like idolatry, polytheism, belief in magic, charms, animal sacrifies, feeding the dead through sraddhas etc.) that had crept into Hindu religion in the 19th century. He rejected the popular Hindu philosophy which held that the physical world is an illusion (*maya*), that man's soul is merely a part of God, temporarily separated from God by its embodiment in the illusory mask of the body and that man's object, therefore, was to escape the world where evil existed and to seek union with God. Against this belief, Dayanand held that God, soul and matter (*prakriti*) were distinct and eternal entities and every individual had to work out his own salvation in the light of the eternal principles governing human conduct. In rejecting monism, Dayanand also dealt a severe blow at the popular belief in pre-determination. The swami contended that human beings were not playthings of fate and as such no one could avoid responsibility for his actions on the plea that human deeds were predetermined. Dayanand accepted the doctrine of *karma*, but rejected the theory of *niyati* (destiny). He explained that the world is a battlefield where every individual has to work out his salvation by right deeds.

Task

Why Dayanand Challenged the dominant position of the Brahmin priestly class in the spiritual and social life of the Hindus.

Dayanand challenged the dominant position of the Brahmin priestly class in the spiritual and social life of the Hindus. He ridiculed the claim of the priests that they could act as intermediaries between man and God. The swami asserted every Hindu's right to read and interpret the Vedas. He strongly condemned the caste system based on birth, though he subscribed to the Vedic notion of the four-varuna system in which a person was not born in any *varuna* (caste), but was identified as a Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya or Shudra according to the occupation he followed. The swami was also a strong advocate of equal status between man and woman; he pleaded for widow remarriage and condemned child marriages. In a sarcastic language he described the Hindu race as "the children of children".

It should be clearly understood that Dayanand's slogan of 'Back to the Vedas'' was a call for revival of Vedic learning and Vedic purity of religion and not revival of Vedic times. He accepted modernity and displayed patriotic attitude to national problems.

The creed and principles of the Arya Samaj first defined at Bombay in 1875 were revised at Lahore in 1877. The Ten Principles were approved by Dayanand and have remained unaltered to this day. The Principles are:

1. Good is the primary source of all true knowledge.
2. God who is All-truth, All-knowledge, Almighty, Immortal, Creator of universe, alone is worthy of worship.

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3. The Vedas are the books of true knowledge.
4. An Arya should always be ready to accept truth and abandon untruth.
5. All actions must conform to *dharma*, that means after due consideration of right and wrong.
6. The principle aim of this Samaj is to promote the world's well-being, material, spiritual and social.
7. All persons should be treated with love and justice.
9. Ignorance should be dispelled and knowledge increased.
10. Everybody should consider his own progress to depend on the uplift of all others .
11. Social well-being of mankind should be placed above the individual's well-being.

Perhaps the most phenomenal achievement of the Arya Samaj has been in the field of social reform and spread of education. The Samaj based its social programme entirely on the authority of the Vedas, of course conditioned by rationalism and utilitarianism. The Arya Samaj's social ideals comprise, among others, the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, the equality of sexes, absolute justice and fairplay between man and man and nation and nation and love and charity towards all. The Arya Samaj lays great emphasis on education and enjoins on all Arya Samajists to endeavour "to diffuse knowledge and dispel ignorance". The D. A.V. institutions spread over the length and breadth of the country are a standing proof of the educational achievements of the Samaj. The nucleus for this movement was provided by the Anglo Vedic School established at Lahore in 1886. The education imparted in D.A.V. Institutions combines the best of the modern and classical Indian studies. The orthodox opinion in the Arya Samaj which stands for the revival of Vedic ideal in modern life set up the Gurukula Pathsala at Hardwar in 1902.

The Arya Samaj movement gave "proud" self-confidence and self-reliance to the Hindus and undermined the belief in the superiority of the White Race and Western culture. As a disciplined Hindu organisation, it has succeeded in protecting Hindu society from the onslaught of Islam and Christianity. Rather, the Samaj started the *shudhi* movement to convert non-Hindus to Hinduism Further, it infused a spirit of intense patriotism. The Samaj always remained in the forefront of political movement and produced leaders of the eminence of Lala Hans Raj, Pandit Guru Dutt and Lala Lajpat Rai. Dayanand's political slogan was 'India for the Indians'.

While the Brahmo Samaj and the Theosophical Society appealed to English educated elite only, Dayanand's message was for the masses of India also. The Arya Samaj movement has taken deep roots in the Punjab, Haryana, the Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Rajasthan.

3.3 Singh Sabha Movement

Four years before the setting up of the Arya Samaj, the Sikh gentry of Amritsar had convened meetings to protest against the speeches of a Hindu orator who had made scurrilous re-marks against the Sikh gurus. These protest meetings had been organized by a society which described itself as the Singh Sabha. It had the support of the rich, landed gentry and the orthodox. "The society's objects included the revival of the teachings of the gurus, production of religious literature in Punjabi, and a campaign against illiteracy. The founders also sought to 'interest high placed Englishmen in, and assure their association with, the educational programme of the Singh Sabha.' To ensure the patronage of the government the Sabha resolved 'to cultivate loyalty to the crown'." Thakar Singh Sandhawalia was president and Gyani Gyan Singh secretary of the Amritsar Shri Guru Singh Sabha. The government extended its patronage to the educational programme of the organization.

"In 1879 another Singh Sabha was formed at Lahore. Leaders of this Sabha were a group of educated and energetic men of the middle class." The governor of the Punjab, Sir Robert Egerton, agreed to become its patron and induced the viceroy.

Lord Lansdowne, to lend his support: The Lahore Singh Sabha opened branches in many towns, sent missionaries to the villages, established liaison with Sikh regiments, and began publishing journals in Punjabi.

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In 1883 the Lahore and Amritsar Sabhas were merged, but the association proved a failure. The Amritsar Sabha had been constituted by an easy-going group of conservatives dominated by men like Khem Singh Bedi, who, by virtue of his descent from Nanak, was wont to accept homage due to a guru. The Lahore group was radical and strongly opposed to the institution of 'gurudom'. The two groups clashed on the right of untouchable Sikhs to worship in the gurdwaras; the conservatives sided with the priests who allowed untouchables to enter only at specified hours without the right to make offerings. The debate became acrimonious. The conservatives dissociated themselves from the movement and thenm became openly hostile.

The rapid expansion of the Arya Samaj and the anti-Sikh bias of many of its leaders constituted a challenge to the Singh Sabha movement. It also brought about the final rupture between the Samaj and some of its Sikh supporters.

The two Singh Sabhas again rejoined hands and doubled their efforts to start a college of their own. At a largely attended meeting held in Lahore, a plan was drawn up; a *hukumnama* was issued from the Golden Temple asking Sikhs to give a tenth of their income (*dasvandh*) towards the building of the college. English well-wishers organized a committee in London to raise funds in England. Sikh princes, encouraged by the viceroy and the commander-in-chief, made handsome donations; the Anglo-Indian *Civil and Military Gazette* supported the cause with enthusiasm. Money began to pour in from all over the province. On 5 March 1892, the lieutenant governor, Sir James Lyall, who had taken personal interest in the venture, laid the foundation stone of the Khalsa College at Amritsar.

It was inevitable an organization such as the Singh Sabha which had such multifarious activities should evolve its own politics as well. These crystallized in the formation in 1902 of the Chief Khalsa Diwan pledged 'to cultivate loyalty to the crown,' to safeguard Sikh rights vis-a-vis the other communities, and to fight for adequate representation of Sikhs in services, particularly the army. Almost from its inception its most effective leader was Sunder Singh Majithia.

The most important aspects of the Singh Sabha movement were educational and literary. From 1908 onwards, an education conference was convened every year to take stock of the progress of literacy in the community and collect money to build more schools. The teaching of Gurmukhi and the Sikh scriptures was compulsory in these Khalsa schools.

The impetus given to education in its turn stimulated the publication of books, magazines, tracts, and newspapers.

Its circulation increased under the editorship of Vir Singh, who rose to prominence as a novelist, poet, and a commentator of scriptural writings. Vir Singh also started the *Khalsa Tract Society* and published literature on different aspects of Sikh history and religion.

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The earliest venture in Punjabi journalism was the weekly *Khalsa Akhbar*. In 1899 the *Khalsa Samacar* was founded and soon became the leading theological journal of the community.

A spate of books on Sikhism, both in Gurmukhi and English, were published. Of the Gurmukhi, Gyani Gyan Singh's *Panth Prakas* and *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa* and Kahan Singh's voluminous encyclopaedia of Sikh literature (*Guru Sabdaratnakar Mahankos*) were of lasting significance. M. A. Macauliffe's monumental work on the life and teachings of the Sikh gurus was also published at this time.

The Singh Sabha movement not only checked the relapse of the Sikhs into Hinduism but retaliated by carrying proselytizing activities into the Hindu camp. Large numbers of Hindus of northern and western Punjab and Sindh became sahajdhari Sikhs and the sahajdharis were baptized to become the Khalsa.

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The rise and expansion of the Arya Samaj in the Punjab had a decisive bearing on the course of Hindu-Sikh relations and on the pattern of anti-British political movements in the province. The *sudhi* crusade launched by the Samaj was fiercely resisted by the Sikhs. The more the Samajists claimed Sikhism to be a branch of Hinduism, the more the Sikhs insisted that they were a distinct and separate community. This action and reaction broke up the close social relationship which had existed between the two sister communities. It found expression in the publication of a booklet *Ham Hindu Nahin Hain*—we are not Hindus—by the scholarly Kahan Singh, who was then chief minister of Nabha. Although the Singh Sabha movement petered out in the 1920s it left a legacy of a chronically defensive attitude towards Hinduism.

Dayanand's teachings also had a strong political flavour. In proclaiming his intention to purify Hinduism of its post-Vedic accretions, he desired to liberate Hindu society from non-Hindu domination. His criticism of Islam and Christianity in effect was the criticism of Indian Muslims and the English. Consequently the renaissance of Hinduism brought about by the Arya Samaj had a strong anti-Muslim and anti-British bias which was often discernible in the utterances of Punjabi Hindu nationalists, large numbers of whom were Arya Samajists, for example, Lajpat Rai, Ajit Singh, Hans Raj, and the majority of Punjabi Hindu terrorists. The domination of the Indian National Congress by Arya Samajists gave the freedom movement an aspect of Hindu resurgence and was chiefly responsible for the aloofness of the Muslims and the Sikhs.

Self-Assessment

I. Choose the correct option:

(*i*) Who was the teacher of 'Swami Dayanand Saraswati?

(*a*) Swami Salizanand (*b*) Swami Birzanand

(*c*) Swami Birzanand (*d*) Swami Aranganand.

(*ii*) Dayanand was born in the state of ..... .

(*a*) Maharashtra (*b*) Orissa

(*c*) Gujarat (*d*) Bengal.

(*iii*) When and where Arya Samaj was founded?

(*a*) In 1871 Maharashtra (*b*) In 1875 Bombay

(*c*) In 1873 Gujarat (*d*) In 1876 Orissa.

(*iv*) Arya Samaj Lahor was established in .....

(*a*) 1870 (*b*) 1875

(*c*) 1872 (*d*) 1877

(*v*) Gurukul Vidyalaya was established in ..... .

(*a*) Haridwar (1902) (*b*) Dehradun (1902)

(*c*) Haridwar (1905) (*d*) Dehradun (1905)

3.4 Summary

- The Brahmo Samaj was the earliest reform movement of the modern type which was greatly influenced by modern Western ideas. Rammohan (1774-1833) was the founder of Brahmo Samaj. He was a very well-read man. He studied Oriental languages like Arabic, Persian and Sanskrit and attained proficiency in European languages like English French, Latin, Greek and Hebrew.
- At a time when the Bengali youth under the influence of Western learning was drifting towards Christianity, Rammohan Roy proved to be the champion of Hinduism. While he defended Hinduism against the hostile criticism of the missionaries, he sought to purge Hinduism of the abues that had crept into it.
- A further split in Keshab's Brahmo Samaj of India came in 1878. Some close disciples of

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Keshab began to regard Keshab as an incarnation. This was not liked by his progressive followers. Further, Keshab began to be accused of authoritarianism. All along Keshab Chandra had advocated a minimum age for marriage of Brahmos, but did not follow his own precepts. In 1878 Keshab married his thirteen-year old daughter with minor Hindu Maharaja of Cooch-Bihar with all the orthodox Hindu ceremonials. He justified his action on the plea that such was the will of God and that he had acted on intuition. Most of Keshab's followers felt disgusted and set up a new organisation called the *Sadharan Brahmo Samaj*.

- In 1867, under the guidance of Keshab the Prarthana Samaj (Prayer Congregation) was established in Bombay. In Bombay the followers of Prarthana Samaj never "looked upon themselves as adherents of a new religion or of a new sect, outside and alongside of the general Hindu body, but simply as a movement within it". Apart from the worship of one God, in Western India the main emphasis has been on social reform, upon 'works' rather than 'faith'. They believed that the true love of God lay in the service of God's children.
- Mulshanker (1824-83) popularly known as Dayanand was born in a Brahmin family living in the old Morvi state in Gujarat. His father, a great Vedic scholar, also assumed the role of the teacher and helped young Mulshankar acquire good insight into Vedic literature, logic, philosophy, ethics etc. Dayanand's quest for the truth goaded him to *yogabhyas* (contemplation or communion) and to learn yoga it was necessary to leave home. For fifteen years (1845-60) Dayanand wandered as an ascetic in the whole of India studying *Yoga*. In 1875 he formally organised the first Arya Samaj unit at Bombay. A few years later the headquarters of the Arya Samaj were established at Lahore. For the rest of his life, Dayanand extensively toured India for the propagation of his ideas.
- Dayanand launched a frontal attack on the numerous abuses (like idolatry, polytheism, belief in magic, charms, animal sacrifies, feeding the dead through sraddhas etc.) that had crept into Hindu religion in the 19th century. He rejected the popular Hindu philosophy which held that the physical world is an illusion (*maya*), that man's soul is merely a part of God, temporarily separated from God by its embodiment in the illusory mask of the body and that man's object, therefore, was to escape the world where evil existed and to seek union with God.
- Four years before the setting up of the Arya Samaj, the Sikh gentry of Amritsar had convened meetings to protest against the speeches of a Hindu orator who had made scurrilous re-marks against the Sikh gurus.
- "In 1879 another Singh Sabha was formed at Lahore. Leaders of this Sabha were a group of educated and energetic men of the middle class." The governor of the Punjab, Sir Robert Egerton, agreed to become its patron and induced the viceroy.
- In 1883 the Lahore and Amritsar Sabhas were merged, but the association proved a failure. The Amritsar Sabha had been constituted by an easy-going group of conservatives dominated by men like Khem Singh Bedi, who, by virtue of his descent from Nanak, was wont to accept homage due to a guru. The Lahore group was radical and strongly opposed to the institution of 'gurudom'.
- The two Singh Sabhas again rejoined hands and doubled their efforts to start a college of their own.
- The most important aspects of the Singh Sabha movement were educational and literary. From 1908 onwards, an education conference was convened every year to take stock of the progress of literacy in the community and collect money to build more schools. The teaching of Gurmukhi and the Sikh scriptures was compulsory in these Khalsa schools.
- The Singh Sabha movement not only checked the relapse of the Sikhs into Hinduism but retaliated by carrying proselytizing activities into the Hindu camp. Large numbers of Hindus of northern and western Punjab and Sindh became sahajdhari Sikhs and the sahajdharis were baptized to become the Khalsa.

Notes

3.5 Key-Words

1. Emergence : To rise from appearance
2. Introspective : Self-evaluation
3. Intolerant : Illiberal

3.6 Review Questions

1. Who established Brahm Samaj and why? Has this organisation succeeded in its objectives. Discuss.
2. What were the objectives of Arya Samaj? Discuss its role in Freedom movement.
3. Briefly describe Singh Sabha Movement.
4. The founder of Arya Samaj, Swami Dayanand Sarswati is regarded as Martin Luther, why? Explain.

Answers: Self Assessment

1. (*i*) (*b*) (*ii*) (*b*) (*iii*) (*c*) (*iv*) (*d*) (*v*) (*a*)

3.7 Further Readings

1. V.D. Mahajan, History of Modern India, S. Chand and Co. Ltd. New Delhi.
2. Chandra, Bipin, India's Struggle for Freedom (1857–1947) Penguin, Delhi, 1996.

Notes

Unit 4: Reforms of Cornwallis

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4.1 Reforms of Cornwallis
4.2 Reforms in Public Services
4.3 Police Reforms
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Objectives

After studying this unit, students will be able to:

- Discuss the Reforms of Cornwallis
- Understand the Reforms in Public Services
- Explain the Police Reforms

Introduction

In 1786 the Court of Directors sent Cornwallis, a nobleman of high rank and aristocratic disposition, to India to carry out the policy of peace outlined in Pitt's India Act and to reorganise the administrative system in the country. Cornwallis was specially charged with the duty of finding out a satisfactory solution of the land revenue problem, establishing an honest and efficient judicial machinery and of reorganising the commercial department of the Company. In India Cornwallis took up the threads of the administrative system devised by Warren Hastings and built a superstructure which remained substantially in force till 1858.

William Cavendish Bentinck succeeded Lord Amherst as Governor-General of India and took charge of Indian administration in July 1828. Bentinck began his career as an Ensign in the army, but soon rose to the position of a Lieutenant-Colonel. In 1796 he became a Member of Parliament. He fought with distinction against the forces of Revolutionary and Napoleonic France in Northern Italy. In consideration of his military experience, he was appointed Governor of Madras in 1803 to counter possible French designs in the Deccan. In 1806 some Madras regiments stationed at Vellore mutinied against the orders of the Commander-in-Chief forbidding them to use their caste-marks or wear earrings. The Vellore Mutiny was suppressed but the Court of Directors abruptly terminated Bentinck's services.

In 1828 Bentinck was selected to succeed Lord Amherst as Governor-General. Bentinck was a true Whig, inspired by the same ideals which characterised the ruling classes in the Era of Reform in England. While in command of English troops in Sicily in 1812, William Bentinck had encouraged the Sicilians to adopt a constitutional government on the English model. In the eulogistic language of Macaulay, inscribed on Bentinck's statue at Calcutta, William Bentinck "infused into Oriental Despotism the spirit of British freedom; who never forgot that the end of government is the welfare of the governed; who abolished cruel rites; who effaced humiliating distinctions; who allowed liberty to the expression of public opinion; whose constant study it was to elevate the moral and intellectual character of the people committed to his charge".

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Eight years of Dalhousie's rule are full of important events in every field. He is regarded as one of the greatest Governors-General of India and his contribution to the building up of the British Empire in India is very great. If there occurred any possibility of annexing an Indian state, Dalhousie did not miss it. Innes says: "His predecessors had acted on the general principle of avoiding annexation if it could be avoided; Dalhousie acted on the principle of annexing if he could do so legitimately." His annexations were both of 'war' and 'peace'. His annexations of war based on 'the right of conquest' were those of the Punjab and Pegu and of 'peace' came by the application of the Doctrine of Lapse and included among others of Oudh, Satara, Jaitpur, Jhansi and Nagpur. In the field of social and public reforms Dalhousie's contributions are equally great, as by those he laid the foundations on which modern India has been built up.

4.1 Reforms of Cornwallis

Credit goes to Lord Cornwallis for making radical changes in the Civil Service of the Company. He reserved all the superior jobs for English-men and Europeans. He believed that only the Englishmen and Euro-peans by their birth and training were fit to rule the country. However, subordinate jobs were given to the Indians. He prohibited private trade for the servants of the Company and made it clear that those who violated this rule would be severely dealt with. On the positive side, he raised their salaries so that they could maintain a decent standard of living in India and also take something back home. For example, the salary of a Collector was fixed at Rs. 1,500 a month. His commission on revenue collection also brought him some money. The same was the case with other servants. The object of these reforms was to make the servants both efficient and honest. The Charter Act of 1793 put the reforms of Cornwallis on a permanent footing. It was declared that, "all vacancies happening in any of the offices, places or employments in the civil lines of the Company's service in India shall be from time to time filled up and supplied from amongst the Civil Servants of the Company belonging to the President wherein such vacancies shall respectively happen." No office carrying a salary of more than £500 a year was to be given to any servant who had not lived in India for at least three years as a covenanted servants. It was also provided that the seniority rule was to be strictly followed in matters of promotion.

4.2 Reforms in Public Services

The servant of the English Company were both inefficent and corrupt. They spent a lot of their time in carrying on private trade. They were corrupt because they got very low salaries. Cornwallis was determined to see that the servants of the Company become honest and upright. He was able to induce the Directors to pay good salaries to the servants of the Company. He reduced the number of officers but increased the salaries of others. He demanded whole-time service from the servants of the Company. Private trade was completely prohibited. Cornwallis refused to oblige those Englishmen who came to India with chits from the Directors and members of the Board of Control. On one occasion, he refused to oblige so great a person as Dundas, President of the Board of Control.

While-making appointments, he gave the best jobs only to the Europeans in general and the Englishmen in particular. He was convined that the Indians were unworthy of trust and they could not be allowed to fill in any but the humblest offices in the government. The exclusion of the Indians from all effective share of the Government of their own country was almost without a parallel. Cornwallis treated the Indians with scorn. He stigmatized the whole nation as unworthy of trust and incapable of honourable conduct. The Cornwallis system was calculated to debase rather than uplift the people fallen under the dominion of the Company. He would have got the same amount of loyalty, efficiency and uprightness from the Indian officers as he got from the Europeans and Englishmen if he had given them the same salaries.

Organisation of the Civil Service: The organisation of an efficient Civil Service which worked according to set rules, in contrast to the personal rule of the monarch in pre- British times, was another feature of the administration of the English East India Company.

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In the early days of the Company, the senior and junior merchants, factors and "writers" performed commercial as well as administrative functions. The Court of Directors exercised the patronage of nominating their favourites and not unoften their sons and those of their friends as Civil Servants. There are cases of civil posts being sold. Warren Hastings created highly paid posts which increased the cost of administration but did not improve efficiency or remove corruption. Lord Cornwallis took steps for Europeanization of the services. He further raised the pay scales of civil officials but did nothing to improve the method of selection and training of Civil Servants. Lord Wellesley took the first step for training of Civil Servants when he founded the fort William College, in Calcutta in November 1800 where the Civil Servants of the Company were to receive training in the literature, science and languages of India. The college did not find the favour of the Court of Directors and was continued merely as a language school for Bengal Civil Servants till 1854. In England, the Company in 1806 established the East India College at Haileybury for imparting a two years' training to the young officers appointed for service in the East.

The doors of the Company's Civil Servants were closed to Indians. However, the Charter Act of 1833 carried clause 87 which sought to remove colour bar in matter of appointments to Civil Services. All the same, in actual practice no Indian was appointed to Higher Civil Services. Even the famous Queen Victoria's Proclamation of 1858 which contained an assurance that "our subjects of whatever race or creed, be freely and impartially admitted to office in our service", did not materially change the policy of keeping the Civil Service of the Company as a close preserve of the British nationals. As a sop to Indian sentiments and to give a semblance of racial equality in Civil Services, the Company created the posts of Deputy Collector and Deputy Magistrate to which some Indians could hope to rise.

Judicial Reforms:

The first impulse of Cornwallis was towards concentration of authority in the district in the hands of the Collector. This trend was also in line with the instructions of the Court of Directors who had enjoined economy and simplification. In 1787 the Collectors in-charge of districts were made judges of Diwani Adalats, were given more magisterial powers and empowered to try criminal cases with certain limits.

Further changes were made in the field of criminal administration during 1790-92. The District Faujdari Adalats presided over by Indian judges were abolished and in their place four circuit courts, three for Bengal and one for Bihar, were set up. These circuit courts were presided over by European covenanted servants who decided cases with the help of Qazis and Muftis. These courts toured the districts twice a year and tried persons committed by the city magistrates. Further, the Sadr Nizamat Adalat at Murshidabad so far presided by a Mohammedan judge was replaced by a similar court set up at Calcutta comprising the Governor-General and members of the Supreme Council assisted by the Chief Qazi and two Muftis.

Cornwallis Code: Cornwallis' judicial reforms took the final shape by 1793 and were embodied in the famous Cornwallis Code. The new reforms were based on the principle of separation of powers. Under the influence of the eighteenth century French philosophers, Cornwallis sought to separate the revenue administration from the administration of justice. The Collector was the head of revenue department in a district and also enjoyed extensive judicial and magisterial powers. Cornwallis rightly believed that concentration of all powers in the hands of the Collector in the district retarded the improvement of the country. How could the Collector acting as a judge of the Diwani Adalat redress the wrongs done by him as collector or assessor of revenue? Thus neither the landlords nor the cultivators could regard the Collector as an impartial judge in revenue cases. The Cornwallis Code divested the Collector of all judicial and magisterial powers and left him with the duty of administration of revenue. A new class of officer called the District Judge was created to preside over the District Civil Court. The District Judge was also given magisterial and police functions.

A gradation of civil courts was set up. The distinction between revenue and civil cases was abolished and the new Diwani courts were competent to try all civil cases. At the lowest rung of the ladder were the Munsiffs' courts presided over by Indian officers and competent to decide cases involving disputes up to 50 rupees. Next came the courts of Registrars presided over by European officers which tried cases up to 200 rupees.

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Appeals from both these courts lay to the District or City Courts. District Judges presided over District Courts and decided civil suits with the assistance of Indians well-versed in Law.

Above the District Courts were the four Provincial Courts of Appeal at Calcutta, Murshidabad, Dacca and Patna. These courts were also to supervise the working of District Courts and on the basis of their report the Sadr Diwani Adalat could suspend the District Judges. In certain cases it had original jurisdiction also. These courts presided over by English Judges heard appeals in suits involving disputes up to l ,000 rupees. Next in order of gradation came the Sadr Diwani Adalat at Calcutta presided over by the Governor-General and his Council which heard appeals from Provincial Courts in cases involving over l ,000 rupees. Appeals lay to the King-in-Council in disputes involving more than £ 5,000. Regulations also laid down the procedure to be followed in these courts and also the qualifications of Indian officers attached to these courts. The Mohammedan law was administered in respect to Mohammedans and Hindu law in respect to Hindus.

Even the European subjects in the districts were made amenable to the jurisdiction of the local civil courts. Europeans intending to reside in the districts away from Calcutta were not given licences until they agreed to submit themselves to the jurisdiction of the district civil courts. Further, Government servants were made answerable before the civil courts for the acts done by them in their official capacity. Thus Cornwallis proclaimed the principle of Sovereignty of Law in India.

Important changes were introduced in the field of criminal administration. The District Faujdari Adalats presided over by Indian officers were abolished. The District Judge was given magisterial powers to order the arrest of criminals and disturbers of peace. The petty cases were decided by the District Judge himself while for serious offences he committed the culprits to the four circuit courts. The provincial circuit courts of appeal which heard appeals in civil cases also worked as criminal circuit courts. The judges of these circuit courts toured their divisions twice a year and decided criminal cases with the assistance of Indian Qazis and Muftis. These courts could pass sentences of death or life imprisonment subject to the confirmation of the Sadr Nizamat Adalat which was the highest court of appeal in criminal cases. The Governor-General enjoyed the general power of pardon or commutation of punishment.

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Reform of Criminal Law: If Warren Hastings had asserted the right of the Company's government to interfere with the administration of law, Cornwallis maintained that the Company had the right to reform the criminal law itself. The Mohammedans take their criminal law to be divinely ordained.

During 1790-93 Cornwallis introduced certain changes in the criminal law which were regularised by a Parliamentary Act of 1797. In December 1790 a rule was framed for the guidance of Mohammedan law officers that in all trials of murder they were to be guided by the intention of the murderer either evident or fairly inferable and not by the manner or instrument of perpetration. Further, in cases of murder, the will of the heir or kindred of the deceased were not to be allowed to operate in the grant of pardon or in the demand of compensation money as a price of blood. Again, the usual punishment of amputation of limbs of body was replaced by temporary hard labour or fine and imprisonment according to circumstances of the case. Regulation IX of 1793 amended the law of evidence by providing that 'the religious persuasions of witnesses shall not be considered as a bar to the conviction or condemnation of a prisoner'. Thus non-Muslims could give testimony against Muslims in criminal cases—not permitted so far according to the Muslim law of evidence.

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Task What do you mean by Cornwallis code?

Observations on Judicial Reforms: The judicial system set up by Cornwallis was based on the principle of equity and Western conception of justice. Codified secular law took the place of the religious law or personal law of the ruler or his local agent. The sovereignty of law was proclaimed in unmistakable terms. Even Government officials, for acts done by them in their official capacities, could be tried in the courts. However, in its immediate effects the Cornwallis Code produced many undesirable effect. The novel, unfamiliar and elaborate code was so complicated that the common man could not profit by it. Justice proved very expensive and gave opportunities to a man of means to wear out the uneducated and the poor man. False witnesses were produced. Falsehood, chicanery and deceit began to yield dividends. Litigation greatly increased. Law courts proved insufficient and could not cope with the increased work resulting in great delay in the disposal of justice. Above all, the traditional judicial functionaries like the Panchayats, Zamindars, the Qazi, the Faujdar, the Nazim etc. were replaced by European judges ignorant of the customs and habits of Indians.

Did u know? In 1817, Munro commented that nine-tenths of the European judges knew as little of India as if they had never left Great Britain.

Judicial Reorganization: The English Indian Company acquired territories in India through various processes. The island of Bombay was obtained through cession in full sovereignty from the British Crown in 1868. On the Coromandal coast, the English Company acquired Madras and adjoining territories granted to it permanently and irrevocably by the nawab of Carnatic. In Bengal, the situation was very complex because of the Dual authority of the *diwani* system. Emperor Shah Alam II's firman granted to the Company in 1765 the Diwani of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. As such, the Company was responsible for the Diwani functions only which included administration of civil justice also. The nawab of Bengal exercised the Nizamat functions which meant maintenance of law and order and administration of criminal justice.

The laws made for Bombay provided for religious toleration, trial by jury and the establishment of a Court of Judication. In 1718, the jury system was abolished and the appeals were to be made to the Governor and Council and the judges included a Hindu, a Muslim, a Parsi, a Portuguese and the Company's employees. In 1726, the Court of Directors sought the permission of the king of England to establish Mayor's Court; consequently three Mayor's Courts composed in each case of the Mayor and nine aldermen were established at Fort William (Calcutta), Madras and Bombay for trial of disputes between employees within these town and the dependent factories.

In the early stages of British conquest of India, the Company's authorities found not a unified but a diverse judicial system, Hindu and Muslim, operating in different parts of the country. Broadly speaking in pre-British India, the judicial set-up was a mix of Hindu law of the Shastras and Muslim Koranic law supplemented by customary law supported by the rulling power. The European merchant companies which established their factories and plantations in India could not easily accept the Muslim criminal law which provided for the amputation of limbs of the body or stoning of criminals as penalties; nor could they accept the principle that the evidence of an infidel (kafir) could not be recognised against a Mohammadan (the faithful) or that there should be a privileged law for the Brahmin alone. With the rise of national states in Europe, the concept of territoral and public law had developed in European national states. The European merchants companies had to apply a uniform legal system in the territories under their control. It was Warren Hastings who organised a rudimentary framework of the judicial system by setting up Diwani and Faujdari Adalats at the district level; appeals from these adalats could be made to the Sadar Diwani Adalat and Sadar Nizamat Adalat at Calcutta. However, it was Lord Cornwallis who improved and elaborated the system by setting up

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an hierarchy of courts, both for civil and criminal cases. In the district, at the lowest rung of the ladder were the Munsiff's Courts presided over by Indian officers competent to decide cases involving disputes up to 50 rupees; next came the Registrars' Courts presided over by European officers which tried cases upto 200 rupees; appeals from these courts lay to the District or City Courts. Appeals from District (Zilla) Courts lay to the four Provincial Courts. Next in order of gradation were the Sadar Diwani Adalat and Sadar Nizamat Adalat. In certain Diwani cases appeals could also be made to the Privy Council in England. The Cornwallis Code of 1793 gave the final shape to the judicial system which continued without many changes for long.

4.3 Police Reforms

To supplement and implement the judicial reforms important changes were introduced in the police administration. In Calcutta itself a state of near lawlessness prevailed and ruffians and bad characters went unpunished. In many streets people passed after sunset only at the peril of their lives. "The outskirts of Calcutta had more the appearance of a jungle than an inhabited town," remarked a Police Superintendent. Even the Police Superintendents were corrupt. The Regulation of 1791 defined the powers of the Police Superintendent. To induce the police officials to act honestly and with promptitude Cornwallis raised the salaries of all police officers and offered good rewards for the discovery and arrests of burglars and murderers.

In the districts the zamindars were deprived of all police powers and they were no longer to be considered responsible for robberies committed in their estates unless their complicity could be proved. The English magistrates were given control of the district police. Each district was divided into areas of 400 square miles and each area placed under the charge of a Police Superintendent assisted by an establishment of constables.

The Rule of Law: The British deserve the credit for having introduced in India the modern concept of the rule of law. This meant the end of arbitrary authority exercised by the earlier rulers of India. A person could now know his rights and privileges and a set procedure was laid down for asserting them. However, in actual practice many instances of interference with the rights and provileges of the individuals took place. All the same, an opportunity was provided for bringing officers guilty of breach of law to the court.

1. **Equality before Law:** In the eyes of law all men were considered equal, irrespective of their religion, caste or class. This meant the end of the earlier practice of varying the law according to the class and status of the person, say between a Brahmin or a non-Brahmin or between a zamindar and a peasant. Henceforth, under British administration, the humblest of the humble could move the court for his legitimate rights. In actual practice, however, the principle of equality before law was violated when laws became complicated and beyond the grasp of uneducated poor masses; they had to engage lawyers who charged excessive fees and preferred to work for the rich; in addition, the prevalence of corruption in the administrative machinery and the police worked against the rights of the masses.
2. **Recognition of Personal Civil Law:** The Company's authorities recognised the rights of the various Indian communities — Hindu, Muslim, Parsi or Christian — to be judged by law of their community, particularly in matters connected with marriage, adoption, of joint family matters like succession and partition of property.
3. **Growth of trained judicial officers and professional lawyers:** In pre-British times, the landlords and the rulers played a notable role in deciding judicial disputes. In contrast, under Company's rule, written law (and later codified law) promoted confidence in the judicial system. The emergence of a professional class of lawyers trained to defend the rights of their clients augured in the modern system if judicial administration (of course, with all its limitations).

   The Company's judicial system was praised because it was based on the principle of sovereignty of law, introduction of codified secular law and Western concept of justice. However, it produced many undesirable effects. The novel, unfamiliar and elaborate system was beyond the comprehension of the common man who could not hope for quick and cheap justice. Falsehood, chicanery and deceit began to yield dividends. Litigation increased and the professional lawyers

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exploited the uneducated persons involved in judicial disputes. Worst of all, the appointment of English judges saturated with racial complex and ignorant of Indian customs and habits proved very biased in disputes involving Indians vs Europeans and Anglo-Indians. All the same, it served the interests of the Company's authorities in collection of land revenue and other taxes and also in maintenance of law and order.

Self-Assessment

1. Fill in the blanks:

(*i*) The Regulation of ..... defined the powers of the Police Superintendent.

(*ii*) In ....., the Jury System was abolished and the appeals were to be made to the Governor and Council and the Judges included a Hindu, a Muslim, a Parsi ..... and the company's employees.

(*iii*) Regulation IX of ..... amended the law of evidence by providing the religious persuasions of witnesses shall not be considered as a bar to the conviction of a prisoner.

(*iv*) Cornwallis introduced certain changes in the criminal law which were regularised by a Parliamentary Act of ..... .

(*v*) Cornwallis Judicial reforms took the final shape by ..... .

4.4 Summary

- Credit goes to Lord Cornwallis for making radical changes in the Civil Service of the Company. He reserved all the superior jobs for English-men and Europeans. He believed that only the Englishmen and Euro-peans by their birth and training were fit to rule the country. However, subordinate jobs were given to the Indians. He prohibited private trade for the servants of the Company and made it clear that those who violated this rule would be severely dealt with. On the positive side, he raised their salaries so that they could maintain a decent standard of living in India and also take something back home. For example, the salary of a Collector was fixed at Rs. 1,500 a month. His commission on revenue collection also brought him some money. The same was the case with other servants. The object of these reforms was to make the servants both efficient and honest. The Charter Act of 1793 put the reforms of Cornwallis on a permanent footing. It was declared that, "all vacancies happening in any of the offices, places or employments in the civil lines of the Company's service in India shall be from time to time filled up and supplied from amongst the Civil Servants of the Company belonging to the President wherein such vacancies shall respectively happen."
- The first impulse of Cornwallis was towards concentration of authority in the district in the hands of the Collector. This trend was also in line with the instructions of the Court of Directors who had enjoined economy and simplification. In 1787 the Collectors in-charge of districts were made judges of Diwani Adalats, were given more magisterial powers and empowered to try criminal cases with certain limits.
- Further changes were made in the field of criminal administration during 1790-92. The District Faujdari Adalats presided over by Indian judges were abolished and in their place four circuit courts, three for Bengal and one for Bihar, were set up.
- Cornwallis' judicial reforms took the final shape by 1793 and were embodied in the famous Cornwallis Code. The new reforms were based on the principle of separation of powers.
- At the lowest rung of the ladder were the Munsiffs' courts presided over by Indian officers and competent to decide cases involving disputes up to 50 rupees. Next came the courts of Registrars presided over by European officers which tried cases up to 200 rupees.
- During 1790-93 Cornwallis introduced certain changes in the criminal law which were regularised by a Parliamentary Act of 1797. In December 1790 a rule was framed for the guidance of Mohammedan law officers that in all trials of murder they were to be guided by the intention of the murderer either evident or fairly inferable and not by the manner or instrument of

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perpetration. Further, in cases of murder, the will of the heir or kindred of the deceased were not to be allowed to operate in the grant of pardon or in the demand of compensation money as a price of blood. Again, the usual punishment of amputation of limbs of body was replaced by temporary hard labour or fine and imprisonment according to circumstances of the case.

4.5 Key-Words

1. Imprisonment	:	Life sentence, confine to put in prison
2. Commutation	:	The process of commuting a judicial sentence
3. Rudimentary framework	:	Basic framework

4.6 Review Questions

1. Cornwallis is called as the farther of public services. Why?
2. Discuss the reforms made by Cornwallis.
3. Write a short note on the administrative and judiciary reforms.

Answers-Self Assessment

1. (*i*) 1791 (*ii*) 1718, a Portuguese (*iii*) 1793 (*iv*) 1797
   (*v*) 1793

4.7 Further Readings

1. V.D. Mahajan, History of Modern India, S. Chand and Co. Ltd. New Delhi.
2. Chandra, Bipin, India's Struggle for Freedom (1857–1947) Penguin, Delhi, 1996.

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Unit 5: Reforms of William Bentinck

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Objectives

After studying this unit, students will be able to:

- Discuss the reforms of William Bentinck

Introduction

William Cavendish Bentinck succeeded Lord Amherst as Governor-General of India and took charge of Indian administration in July 1828. Bentinck began his career as an Ensign in the army, but soon rose to the position of a Lieutenant-Colonel. In 1796 he became a Member of Parliament. He fought with distinction against the forces of Revolutionary and Napoleonic France in Northern Italy. In consideration of his military experience, he was appointed Governor of Madras in 1803 to counter possible French designs in the Deccan. In 1806 some Madras regiments stationed at Vellore mutinied against the orders of the Commander-in-Chief forbidding them to use their caste-marks or wear earrings. The Vellore Mutiny was suppressed but the Court of Directors abruptly terminated Bentinck's services.

5.1 Administrative Reforms

Undoubtedly, Bentinck took effective steps to root out social evils like *sati* and infanticide, established law and order in the country by suppressing the *thugs*, gave a larger share to the Indians in the subordinate services, expressed noble sentiments regarding the liberty of the press and took vital decisions regarding the educational system in India. He, however, did nothing to liberalize the administration or extend the blessings of political liberty to India to deserve the great praise Macaulay has showered on him. The Company's government remained as despotic as ever. P.E. Roberts is very correct when he remarks that "the famous statement represents rather the pious aspirations of the Governor-General and the ultimate tendency of his policy, than anything actually achieved".

Abolition of Sati and Cruel Rites: No previous Governor-General of India had ever tackled social problems with greater courage than Bentinck did. He tried to reform Hindu society by abolition of the cruel rite of *sati* and suppression of infanticide. He crushed the gangs of assassins called *thugs* and made peaceful living possible.

The term *sati* literally means 'a pure and virtuous woman'. It is used in the case of a devoted wife who contemplates perpetual and uninterrupted conjugal union with her husband after life and as a proof thereof burns herself with the dead body of her husband. The belief that the dead need company and victuals in their journey to far off Paradise was prevalent among many primitive peoples, and it

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was customary to bury, with the body of a chief, his drinking bowls horses, dogs and even his favorite wives and concubines. Probably this practice was brought to India by the Indo-Scythian invadors. In India its popularity was due to a false sense of conjugal duty sanctioned by society and religion, though the motivating urges were economic and moral.

Some enlightened Indian princes had taken steps to abolish this cruel practice in their dominions. Emperor Akbar had attempted to restrict it. The Marathas had forbidden it in their dominions. The portuguese at Goa and the French at Chandernagore had also taken some steps towards its abolition. The East India Company had however, adhered to its declared policy of non-interference into the social and religious customs of the people of India. Early British Governors-General like Cornwallis, Minto and Lord Hastings had taken some steps to restrict the practice of *sati* by discouraging compulsion, forbidding administration of intoxicating drugs to the sorrow-stricken widows, putting a ban on the burning of pregnant women or widows below 16 years of age and, above all, making compulsory the presence of police officials at the time of sacrifice, who were to see that no compulsion was used. These restrictions, however, proved inadequate and unsuccessful.

Enlightened Indian reformers led by Raja Rammohan Roy urged William Bentinck to take necessary steps and declare the practice of *sati* illegal. The loss of his sister-in-law by *sati* had stirred Rammohan Roy to action and he had published a number of pamphlets condemning the practice. His arguments were supported by many of the progressive Indian newspapers and the conscience of the nation had been awakened. William Bentinck provided the necessary legislative corrective. He collected relevant facts and figures about *sati* cases, obtained the views of army officers, of the Judges of Nizamat Adalat, of the Superintendents of Police of the Lower and Upper Provinces and came to the conclusion that there was no danger of mutiny or civil commotion. Regulation No. XVII of December 1829 declared the practice of *sati* or of burning or burying alive of widows illegal and punishable by the criminal courts as culpable homicide. The Regulation of 1829 was applicable in the first place to Bengal Presidency alone, but in 1830 was extended in different forms to Madras and Bombay Presidencies.

No public disorders followed the enactment. A few orthodox Bengalis vainly made an appeal to the Privy Council against Government's interference in their religious customs. Counter-petitions were sent to the King by Rammohan Roy and Devendranath Tagore and William Bentinck was thanked for what he had done.

Suppression of Infanticide and Child-sacrifices: The practice of killing infant girls prevailed among some Rajput tribes. Many dubious methods were used to destroy female children; some neglected to suckle the child, others administered poisonous drugs (mostly opium) through the nipple of the mother's breast, still some dare-devils put the girl in a sack and threw it into a river. Infanticide was found to be prevalent among some Rajput tribes in the province of Banaras, among the Jharija Rajputs of Cutch and Gujarat and cases were also reported among the Rathors of Jaipur and Jodhpur and even the Jats and Mewatis were not immune from this evil practice. Although infanticide had been declared illegal by Bengal Regulation XXI of 1795 and Regulation III of 1804, the inhuman practice still continued. William Bentinck took vigorous steps to suppress this immoral and in human practice.

William Bentinck's attention was also drawn to the ritual of offering child sacrifices at special occasions in Saugar island in Bengal. Bentinck issued prompt orders to stop this evil practice.

Suppression of Thugi: Another great reform to the credit of William Bentinck is the suppression of thugs. The thugs, i.e., cheats were a sect of hereditary assassins and robbers who lived by preying upon innocent and defenseless travellers. A more appropriate name for thugs was *pansigar*, derived from the scarf and noose used by the thugs to strangle their victims.

However remote the origin of *thugi* the organisation found a very congenial atmosphere for growth during the period of decay and downfall of the Mughal Empire when all police arrangements broke down and public roads became insecure. Petty officials of small states in Central India, unable to effectively deal with thugs, made common cause with them and gave them protection in return for a share in the spoils. The thugs were particularly active in the entire area from Oudh to Hyderabad and in Rajputana and Budelkhand.

The thugs belonged to both the Hindu and Muslim religions and worshipped the Hindu goddeses like Kali, Durga or Bhawani, to whom they offered the heads of their victim as sacrifices. The thugs

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there hardened criminals who subordinates their conscience by their perverse reasoning. They believed that *thugi* was a preordained means of livelihood for them and their victims were ordained to die at their hands. They had a very disciplined organisation. If some were expert stranglers, others were adept-in quick disposal of the dead bodies, still others good spies and informants. They had their own code of words and signs. For the beginners a course of apprenticeship was provided and initiation as a master thug was done amidst religious ceremonies. So efficient was the organisation of the thugs that not even a single case of failure ever came to the notice of the Government.

The strength of a thug gang varied from a single thug to as many as 400 thugs. Usually the victim was a single individual, but sometimes a dozen men were murdered at the same time.

While there could be some difference of opinion about the abolition of *sati*, the public opinion solidly supported the Government measures to suppress *thugi* in 1830. The operations against the thugs were put in the charge of Colonel William Sleeman. The rulers of Indian states were invited to co-operate in this task. Colonel Sleeman arrested as many as 1,500 thugs and sentenced them to death or imprisonment for life. *Thugi* on an organised scale ceased to exist after 1837, although individual bad characters continued their nefarious activities.

Removal of Humiliating Distinctions in Recruitment to Public Service: In matters of recruitment to public services, William Bentinck sought to efface the humiliating distinctions between Europeans and Indians introduced by Cornwallis and upheld by subsequent Governors-General. Fitness was now laid down as the criterion for eligibility. Section 87 of the Charter Act of 1833 provided that no Indian subject of the Company in India was to be debarred from holding any office under the Company "by reason of his religion, place of birth, descent and colour". It is believed that this Charter clause was inserted at the instance of Bentinck. Though the immediate effect of this clause was very little, it laid down a very important and healthy principle.

Liberal Policy towards the Press: Bentinck's policy towards the press was characterised by a liberal attitude. He believed the press to be a safety-value for discontent. The reduction of *bhatta* and other financial measures were subjects of severe criticism and even abuse in the press. His minute embodying the decision to impose some restrictions on the press contain his views. It runs thus: "The Adjutant General of the Madras Army, who was at that time at Calcutta, described the angry feelings and language so loudly expressed here, and all the signs of the times, to be precisely similar to those which prevailed before the Madras mutiny, and he anticipated a similar explosion. The Mutiny did take place at Madras though there was not a shadow of liberty belonging to the press there. My firm belief is that more good than harm was produced by the open and public declaration of the sentiments of the army. There was vent to public feeling and the mischief was open to public view; and the result is so far confirmatory of the opinion here given that no overt act took place." He, however, drew a distinction between discussion of a proposal and clamour against and censure of a final decision given by the Supreme Authority. Nor could he tolerate Government officials making use of official information to criticise the act of Government. He therefore, favoured a prohibitory order banning all further discussion on the question of *bhatta*. In reply to a joint petition of the Indian and European journalists of Calcutta seeking the abolition of all restrictions on the press, Lord William Bentinck's Government assured the petitioners that "the unsatisfactory state of laws relating to the press had already attracted the notice of His Lordship in Council and he trusts that in no long time a system will be established which, while it gives security to every person engaged in the fair discussion of public measures, will effectively secure the Government against sedition and individuals against calumny." In March 1835 William Bentinck was compelled to resign owing to ill health and its was left to his devoted lieutenant and successor Charles Metcalfe to remove the restrictions from the Indian press.

5.2 Educational Reforms

Attempts to Elevate the Moral and Intellectual Character of Indians

perhaps the most significant and of far-reaching consequences were Bentinck's decisions about education in India. As early as 1825 Elphinstone had wirtten that the only effective path to social

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reform and the only remedy for social abuses was education. The 'Macaulayian System' of education has profoundly affected the moral and intellectual character of the people of India.

Bentinck's Government defined the aim of education in India and the medium of instruction to be employed. How were the govenment grants for education to be spent? Were government subsidies to be spent for the encouragement of Oriental languages and Indian literature or for instruction of Indians Western sciences and literature and through the medium of English? The members of the committee of Public Instruction were divided into two groups of equal strength: the Orientalists led by Hayman Wilson and Princep Brothers and the Occidentalists or Anglicists led by Sir Chrles trevelyan and supported by Indian liberals like Raja Rammohan Roy. Bentinck appointed Macaulay as the President of the Committee. Macaulay gave a definite turn to the controversy. He set forth his yiews in the famous minute dated 2 February 1835 in which he ridiculed Indian literature. Were public funds to be spent, wrote Macaulay, to teach 'medical doctrines which would disgrace an English farrier, astronomy which would move laughter in girls at an English Boarding school, history abounding with kings thirty feet high and reigns 30,000 years long, geography made up of seas of treacle and seas of butter. Are we to teach false history, false astronomy, false medicine, because we find them in company with a false religion." He, contended that the vernacular languages contained neither literary value nor scientific information and that "a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia." He further wrote, "What the Greek and Latin were to the contemporaries of More and Ascham our tongue is to the people of India." In making his recommendations Macaulay had planned to produce a class of persons who would be "Indian in blood, and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and intellect" and expressed the hope in one of the letters to his father that "if our plans of education are followed up, there will not be a single idolater among the respectable classes in Bengal 30 years hence."

Macaulay's views were accepted and embodied in a Resolution of March 7, 1835, which decreed that English would be the official language of India in the higher branches of adrmnistration.

Since then English language, English literature, English political literature and English natural sciences have formed the basis of higher education in India.

5.3 Financial Reforms

The heavy drain of Burmese War had depleted the treasury of the Company. In 1828 public expenditure far exceeded the revenue. In the words of Charles Metcalfe, "The Government which allows this to go on in time of peace deserves any punishment." With an eye on the Charter debates, the Home authorities had enjoined on Bentinck the policy of peace and economies in public expenditure.

Bentinck appointed two committees, one military and one civil, to make recommendations for effecting economy in expenditure. Under special instructions from the Court of Directors, Bentinck reduced the *bhatta*, i.e. extra or additional allowance paid to military officer. The new rules decreed that in case of troops stationed within 400 miles of Calcutta one-half *bhatta* would be allowed. Thus, a saving of £ 20,000 a year was effected. The allowances of civil servants were also reduced.

The Government adopted better measures for the collection of land revenue in Bengal. The land revenue settlement of the North Western Provinces (modern U.P.) carried on under the supervision of Robert Merttins Bird yielded better revenues. Expenditure on the costly settlements in the Straits of malacca was reduced. Further, Bentinck employed Indians wherever possible in place of high-paid Europeans.

Opium trade was regularised and licensed. In future opium could be exported only through the port of Bombay, which gave the Company a share in the profits in the shape of duties.

The net result of these economies was that the deflicit of one crore per year that Bentinck inferited was converted into a surplus of 2 crores per year by 1835. He had also stimulated the economy by encouraging iron and coal production, tea and coffee plantations and irrigation schemes.

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5.4 Judicial Reforms

The Provincial Courts of Appeal and Circuit set up by Cornwallis were burdened with excessive duties and usually arrears accumulated. The judicial procedure followed in these courts was cumbersome and often resulted in delays and uncertainties. William Bentinck abolished these courts, transferring their duties to magistrates and collectors under the supervision of Commissioner of Revenue and Circuit. For the convenience of the public of Upper Provinces (present-day U.P.) and Delhi, a separate Sadr Nizamat Adalat and a Sadr Diwani Adalat were set up at Allahabad and the residents of these areas were no longer under the necessity of travelling a thousand miles to file their appeals at Calcutta.

Persian so far had been the court language. Bentinck gave the suitors the option to use Persian or vernanculars in filing their suits. In higher coruts Persian was replaced by English as the court language. Qualified Indians were appointed in junior judicial capacities of Munsiffs and could rise to the position of Sadr Amins.

Self-Assessment

1. Fill in the blanks:

(*i*) ..... took vigorous steps to suppress the infanticide and child sacrifice.

(*ii*) Regulation No. XVII of December ..... declared the practice of sati.

(*iii*) The appropriate name for thugs was ..... derived from the scarf and noose used by the thugs to strangle their victims.

(*iv*) ..... arrested as many as 1,500 thugs and sentenced them to death.

(*v*) Macaulay's views were accepted and embodied in a resolution of ..... which declared that English would be the official language of India in the higher branches of administration.

5.5 Summary

- Undoubtedly, Bentinck took effective steps to root out social evils like *sati* and infanticide, established law and order in the country by suppressing the *thugs*, gave a larger share to the Indians in the subordinate services, expressed noble sentiments regarding the liberty of the press and took vital decisions regarding the educational system in India. He, however, did nothing to liberalize the administration or extend the blessings of political liberty to India to deserve the great praise Macaulay has showered on him. The Company's government remained as despotic as ever. P.E. Roberts is very correct when he remarks that "the famous statement represents rather the pious aspirations of the Governor-General and the ultimate tendency of his policy, than anything actually achieved".
- Early British Governors-General like Cornwallis, Minto and Lord Hastings had taken some steps to restrict the practice of *sati* by discouraging compulsion, forbidding administration of intoxicating drugs to the sorrow-stricken widows, putting a ban on the burning of pregnant women or widows below 16 years of age and, above all, making compulsory the presence of police officials at the time of sacrifice, who were to see that no compulsion was used. These restrictions, however, proved inadequate and unsuccessful.
- Another great reform to the credit of William Bentinck is the suppression of thugs. The thugs, i.e., cheats were a sect of hereditary assassins and robbers who lived by preying upon innocent and defenseless travellers. A more appropriate name for thugs was *pansigar*, derived from the scarf and noose used by the thugs to strangle their victims.
- The strength of a thug gang varied from a single thug to as many as 400 thugs. Usually the victim was a single individual, but sometimes a dozen men were murdered at the same time.
- While there could be some difference of opinion about the abolition of *sati*, the public opinion solidly supported the Government measures to suppress *thugi* in 1830. The operations against the thugs were put in the charge of Colonel William Sleeman. The rulers of Indian states were invited to co-operate in this task. Colonel Sleeman arrested as many as 1,500 thugs and sentenced them to death or imprisonment for life.

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- He, contended that the vernacular languages contained neither literary value nor scientific information and that "a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia." He further wrote, "What the Greek and Latin were to the contemporaries of More and Ascham our tongue is to the people of India."
- Macaulay's views were accepted and embodied in a Resolution of March 7, 1835, which decreed that English would be the official language of India in the higher branches of adrmnistration.
- Since then English language, English literature, English political literature and English natural sciences have formed the basis of higher education in India.
- The heavy drain of Burmese War had depleted the treasury of the Company. In 1828 public expenditure far exceeded the revenue. In the words of Charles Metcalfe, "The Government which allows this to go on in time of peace deserves any punishment." With an eye on the Charter debates, the Home authorities had enjoined on Bentinck the policy of peace and economies in public expenditure.
- Bentinck appointed two committees, one military and one civil, to make recommendations for effecting economy in expenditure. Under special instructions from the Court of Directors, Bentinck reduced the *bhatta*, i.e. extra or additional allowance paid to military officer. The new rules decreed that in case of troops stationed within 400 miles of Calcutta one-half *bhatta* would be allowed. Thus, a saving of £ 20,000 a year was effected. The allowances of civil servants were also reduced.
- William Bentinck abolished these courts, transferring their duties to magistrates and collectors under the supervision of Commissioner of Revenue and Circuit. For the convenience of the public of Upper Provinces (present-day U.P.) and Delhi, a separate Sadr Nizamat Adalat and a Sadr Diwani Adalat were set up at Allahabad and the residents of these areas were no longer under the necessity of travelling a thousand miles to file their appeals at Calcutta.

5.6 Key-Words

1. Thug : A cruel or vicious ruffian, robber
2. Sati : A Hindu customs in India in which the widow was burnt to ashes on her dead husband's pyre.
3. Infanticide : Intentional killing of infants within 24 hours of a child birth

5.7 Review Questions

1. Write a short note on the Judicial reforms of William Bentinck.
2. Discuss financial reforms of Bentinck.
3. Assess the administrative and educational reforms by William Bentinck.

Answers-Self Assessment

1. (*i*) William Bentinck (*ii*) 1829 (*iii*) Pansigar
   (*iv*) Colonel Sleeman (*v*) March 7, 1835

5.8 Further Readings

1. V.D. Mahajan, History of Modern India, S. Chand and Co. Ltd. New Delhi.
2. Chandra, Bipin, India's Struggle for Freedom (1857–1947) Penguin, Delhi, 1996.

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Unit 6: Reforms of Lord Dalhousie: Doctrine of Lapse and Administrative Reforms

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Introduction
6.1 The Doctrine of Lapse
6.2 Lord Dalhousie's Reforms
6.3 Summary
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Objectives

After studying this unit, students will be able to:

- Discuss the Doctrine of Lapse
- Comment on Lord Dalhousie's Reforms

Introduction

Eight years of Dalhousie's rule are full of important events in every field. He is regarded as one of the greatest Governors-General of India and his contribution to the building up of the British Empire in India is very great. If there occurred any possibility of annexing an Indian state, Dalhousie did not miss it. Innes says: "His predecessors had acted on the general principle of avoiding annexation if it could be avoided; Dalhousie acted on the principle of annexing if he could do so legitimately." His annexations were both of 'war' and 'peace'. His annexations of war based on 'the right of conquest' were those of the Punjab and Pegu and of 'peace' came by the application of the Doctrine of Lapse and included among others of Oudh, Satara, Jaitpur, Jhansi and Nagpur. In the field of social and public reforms Dalhousie's contributions are equally great, as by those he laid the foundations on which modern India has been built up.

6.1 The Doctrine of Lapse

No account of Dalhousie's work of imperial consolidation can be complete without a mention of the Doctrine of Lapse. Some important Indian states were annexed by the enforcement of the Doctrine. The Doctrine of Lapse can be better understood in the context of Dalhousie's declared conviction that the old system of ruling through "Sham royalties" and "artificial intermediate powers" resulted in the misery of the people. In fact, his logical and straight Scottish mentality wanted to tear the mask of Mughal sovereignty and dispossess Indian princes who pretended to be descendants of the Mughals.

According to Dalhousie, there were three categories of Hindu states in those days in India:

1. Those states which were not tributary and which were not and never had been subordinate to a paramount power.
2. Hindu princes and chieftains which were tributary and owed subordination to the British Government as their paramount power in place of the Emperor of Delhi or the Peshwa, etc.
3. Hindu sovereignties and states which had been created or revived by the *sanads* (grants) of the British Government.

Reviewing his policy in 1854, Lord Dalhousie explained that "in states covered by class I we have

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no right to their adoptions, In the class II the rulers have to require our assent to adoption which we have a right to refuse. But which policy would usually lead us to concede. In the principalities of the III class I hold that succession should never be allowed to go by adoption".

The East India Company had acquired the position of supreme power in India after the fall of the Maghal Empire and the defeat of the Maratha confederacy. Dalhousie maintained that "the British government in the exercise of a wise and sound policy is bound not to put aside or neglect such rightful opportunities of acquiring territory or revenue as may from time to time present themselves, whether they arise from the lapse of subordinate states by the failure of all heirs of every description whatsoever, or from the failure of heirs natural where the succession can be sustained only by the sanction of the government being given to the ceremony of adoption, according to Hindu law."

Dalhousie recognised the right of the adopted son to succeed to the personal property of the chieftain, but drew a distinction between succession to private property and succession to the royal *gaddi:* in the latter case, he held, that the sanction of the Paramount Power must be obtained. The Paramount Power could refuse 'adoption' in case of states covered by categories II and III and declare the states having passed back or 'lapsed' to the supreme authority. In such cases the 'Right of Adoption' was substituted by the Paramount Power's 'Right of Adoption' was substituted by the Paramount Power's 'Right of Lapse'. The power that gives, it was argued, could also rightfully take it away.

Dalhousie did not invent the doctrine. As early as 1834 the Court of Directors had laid down that in case of failure of lineal successors the permission 'to adopt' was an indulgence that "should be the exception, not the rule, and should not be granted but as a special mark of favour and approbation." Few years later in 1841, the Home authorities decided in favour of a uniform policy and directed the Governor-General "to persevere in the one clear and direct course of abandoning no just and honourable accession of territory or revenue while all existing claims of right are at the same time scrupulously respected". It was in pursuance of the policy thus laid down that Mandavi state was annexed in 1839, Kolaba and Jalaun in 1840 and the titular dignity of the Nawab of Surat abolished in 1842.

Dalhousie's contribution was that he uniformly applied this Doctrine of Lapse and did not ignore or neglect any opportunity in consolidating the territories of the East India Company. He steadily enforced the principles previously laid down. Mr. Innes has summed up the position thus: "His predecessors had acted on the general principle of avoiding annexation if it could be avoided; Dalhousie acted on the general principle of annexing if he could do so legitimately". It may be added that the' over-zealous Governor-General treated some states as 'depedent principalities' or 'subordinate states' which rightly were protected allies'. Dalhousie's decision, therefore, had to be reversed by the Court of Directors in case of the old Rajput state of Karauli.

The states actually annexed by the application of the Doctrine of Lapse under Lord Dalhousie were Satara (1848), Jaitpur and Samhbalpur (1849), Baghat (1850), Udaipur (1852), Jhansi (1853) and Nagpur(1854).

Satara: Satara was the first Indian state to be annexed. In 1848 the Raja of Satara, Appa Sahib died without leaving a natural son. He had, however, adopted a son some days before his death but without the consent of the East India Company. Lord Hastings after destroying the Maratha power in 1818 had conferred this principality of Satara on Pratap Singh, the representative of the house of Shivaji and in his 'sons and heirs and successors'. In 1839 the Prince had been deposed and replaced by his brother Appa Sahib. The Bombay Council headed by Sir George Clerk advised against the annexation. Lord Dalhousie decided to regard it as 'dependent principality' and declared the state annexed. The Court of Directors approved Dalhousie's decision; "We are fully satisfied that by the general law and custom of India, a dependent principality like that of Satara, cannot pass to an adopted heir without the consent of the Paramount Power; that we are under no pledge, direct or constructive, to give such consent; and that the general interests committed to our charge are best consulted by with holding it". In the House of Commons Joseph Hume described the annexation as a victory of 'might over right' but the House of Commons acquiesced in the annexation.

Sambhalpur: Raja Narayan Singh, the ruler of the state, died without adopting a son. The state

was annexed in 1849.

Jhansi: The Raja of Jhansi had been originally a vassal of the Peshwa. After the defeat of Baji Rao II, Lord Hastings in 1818 had concluded a treaty with Rao Ramchand, constituting "him, his heirs and successors" hereditary rulers of the territory on terms of 'subordinate co-operation'. After the death of the Raja in 1835, the East India Company recognised a grand-uncle, Raghunath Rao, to succeed to the principality. The old Raja died a few years later. Another successor Gangadhar Rao, from the royal family, was recognised in 1838. In November 1853 the ruler died without leaving a male heir and the state was declared escheat. The claims of the adopted son were disregarded.

Nagpur: This large Maratha state comprised an area of 80,000 square miles. In 1817 Lord Hastings had recognised an infant descendant of the Bhonsle family, Raghuji III as the Raja. The British Resident, Sir Richard Jenkins, acted as the Regent for ten years till 1830, when the boy came of age and the administration was transferred to him. The Raja died in 1853 without adopting an heir to the throne. The claims of the Rani to adopt a son were set aside and the state was annexed. The personal possessions of the late Raja were declared to be 'fairly at the disposal of the Government' on the plea that those were purchased out of state revenues. Then followed the spoliations of the Nagpur Palace, the sale by auction of the jewels and furniture of the Bhonsle's palace, a sum of £ 200,000 being realised by the ignominious sale.

Observations on the Doctrine of Lapse:

1. During the rise and expansion of the British domination in India, the East India Company from time to time had given assurances that not only the rights and privileges of the Indians but their laws, habits, customs and prejudices would be respected. The right of adoption has always been a great religious ceremony and greatly prized by the Hindus. Under the Mughals and the Peshwas the recognition of the supreme power was usually obtained by the payment of a *nazrana* or succession duty. Lord Dalhousie revived an obsolete custom and used it for imperial purposes. The Doctrine of Lapse, like the taxation during the personal rule' of Charles I, was the revival of a feudal law and looked like an 'act of spoliation under the garb of legality'.
2. The line of demarcation between 'dependent states' and 'protected allies' was very thin and amounted to hair splitting. In any case of disputed interpretation the decision of the East India Company was binding and that of the Court of Directors final. There was no supreme court to give impartial verdict on the questions of right and wrong.
3. Lord Dalhousie broke with precedent and was on many occasions guided by imperial considerations. Even Lee-Warner admits that with regard to Satara and Nagpur "imperial considerations weighed with him... they were placed right across the main lines of communication between Bombay and Madras and Bombay and Calcutta."
4. The Court of Directors withheld their sanction to the annexation of Karauli on the ground that the state was a 'protected ally' and not a 'dependent state.' Similarly, Baghat and Udaipur were returned to their respective rulers by Lord Canning.

Dalhousie was an annexationist. He applied the Doctrine of Lapse to achieve his aggressive ends. Where the 'doctrine of lapse' could not be applied, as in the case of Oudh, he annexed it on the pretext of 'good of the governed'. Rulers of Indian states believed that their states were annexed not by the applicaton of the Doctrine of Lapse, but due to the 'lapse of all morals' on the part of the East India Company. " Whatever might have been the facts", writes P. E. Roberts, "the natives did undoubtely believe that the existence of all native principalities was threatened" and the extinction of all states was regarded to be a question of time only. Actions were conclusive proof of Dalhousie's intentions. In fact, Dalhousie's Doctrine of Lapse was a part of his imperialist policy and was based on the old doctrine of 'Might is Right'.

Abolition of Titles and Pensions: Some titular sovereignties were swept away. After the death of the Nawab ofCarnatic in 1853, Dalhousie concurred with the Madras authorities in not recognising anyone as his successor. This decision of the Governor-General was partially reversed in 1867. The Raja of Tanjore died in 1855, survived by two daughters and sixteen widows. The regal title was

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abolished. Dalhousie's plan to abolish the regal title of the Mughal Emperor after the death of Bahadur Shah II (then 70 years of age) and stoppage of the pension of twelve million rupees per annum was not approved by the Court of Directors. The annual pension of eight lakhs of rupees paid to the ex Peshwa Baji Rao II was not transferred to his adopted son after the former's death in 1853. It was contended that the pension had been allowed to Peshwa Baji Rao II for his lifetime only, and so could not pass on to his adopted son, Nana Sahib.

The Annexation of Berar, 1853: The Nizam of Hyderabad had failed to pay to the East India Company the stipulated sum for maintaining an auxiliary force in Hyderabad. His debts had greatly accumulated.

In 1853 the Nizam was compelled to code to the East India Company the cotton-producing area of Berar and certain adjoining districts calculated to yield a revenue of about fifty lakhs for the maintenance of the Hyderabad contingent.

The Annexation of Oudh, 1856: Oudh was another important Indian state annexed by Lord Dalhousie. This state first came into contact with the British as early as 1765, when its Nawab was defeated at Buxar. Oudh lay then at the mercy of the British but Clive decided not to annex it. He restored Oudh to the Nawab but made him part with the districts of Kora and Allahabad. When Wellesley came to India, he forced a new treaty (1801) on the Nawab and made him part with half of his dominions comprising Rohilkhand and the Lower Doab. After that, the Nawab became increasingly dependent on the Company for external defence and maintenance of internal law and order and shut his eyes to the welfare of the people, who groaned under the misrule of the Nawab's officers and the Company's trade agents.

William Bentinck, least ambitious and most humane of Governor-General, sent a warning to the Nawab asking him to improve his administration. Even when authorized by the Court of Directors to assume the administration of the state, William Bentinck decided against annexation. Lord Auckland in 1837 signed a fresh treaty with Nawab Muhammed Ali Shah by which he reserved for the East India Company "the right to intervene in the internal affairs of Oudh if gross and systematic oppression, anarchy and misrule should hereafter at any time prevail within the Oudh dominions, such as seriously to endanger the public tranquillity." This treaty, however, was disallowed by the Court of Directors and was, therefore, regarded as a 'dead letter'. In 1847 Lord Hardinge sent another warning to the Nawab.

By the middle of the nineteenth century the British opinion in India was ripe for the annexation of Oudh. In fact, mid-Victorian imperialists believed that Britain alone had the capacity for good government, that Indians had to be governed, that Oudh had, therefore, to be annexed. *The London Times* had given expression to the same sentiment when it referred to the Indians "as the very small people" which "a very great people has gone across the earth and taken possession of." In the accomplishment of this task Dalhousie was not to be deterred by sentimental respect for Indian loyalty or even respect for earlier treaties.

The main excuse for annexation of Oudh was the continuation of misrule there. The fundamental fact that British intervention had been greatly instrumental for misrule was ignored. Sir Henry Lawrence summed up the situation: "The facts furnished by every writer on Oudh affairs all testify to the same point, the British interference with that province has been so prejudicial to its court and people as it has been disgraceful to the British name." The charge of misgovernment was a convenient pretext to annex Oudh. According to Prof. K. K. Datta, "The existence of the ill-governed state of Oudh, almost in the centre of the rapidly expanding British Empire in India, could not but appear to the architects of the latter as a gross anachronism, which should be removed as quickly as possible to facilitate their own task".

Dalhousie skillfully planned the annexation of Oudh. He sent special officers to investigate the charges of misrule in Oudh, wrote lengthy reports about the rottenness of government there and won over the Home authorities to his viewpoint. Thus fortified by the approval of the Home authorities and having won the tacit approval of the public opinion in England, Dalhousie acted with promptitude.

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In 1848 Colonel Sleeman was sent as Resident to Lucknow: Sleeman wrote lengthy reports about the prevalence of misgovernment in Oudh. Colonel Sleeman, however, did not favour annexation but favoured increasing control of the administration through European agency. He wrote: "Were we...to annex or confiscate Oudh or any part of it, our good name in India would undoubtedly suffer; and that good name is more valuable to us than a dozen Oudhs... Here the giant's strength is manifest, and we cannot 'use it like a giant' without suffering in the estimation of all India". In 1854 Sleeman was replaced by Outram. Outram also reported that the administration in Oudh was rotten and the lot of the people was miserable. Three possible courses were debated in the Governor-General's Council, viz.,

1. To force the Nawab to abdicate and annex the state;
2. To retain the Nawab and his dignity, but to take all actual administration of the state into the hands of the Company for ever; and
3. The British Resident at Lucknow to assume charge of actual administration for a limited time.

The general opinion in the Governor-General's Council was in favour of annexation. Properly tutored by the exaggerated reports of Dalhousie, the Court of Directors gave their verdict in favour of annexation and ordered Lord Dalhousie to accomplish the task before laying down his office. Dalhousie acted with promptitude. He asked Nawab Wajid Ali Shah to sign the abdication. On his refusal, the state was annexed by a proclamation on February 13,1856. Dalhousie's justification was: "The British Government would be guilty in the sight of God and man. If it were any longer to aid in sustaining by its countenance an administration fraught with suffering to millions". Some Conservative Direetors of the Company had serious misgivings about the wisdom of this policy. A censure motion was brought in the General Court of the East India Company which described the annexation of Oudh as one of the worst example of Indian spoliation in the history of British rule in India. John Shepherd, a Director of the Company, commented that the annexation would be 'as liable to destroy the liberties of Indians so as to promote their rights and welfare. Indian opinion regarded the annexation of Oudh as a gross violation of material faith' and unwarranted by international law. Some writers have described this annexation as *Dacoitee in Excelsis*.

6.2 Lord Dalhousie's Reforms

Administrative Reforms: Several reforms touching almost every department of administration were introducted by Lord Dalhousie. This great imperialist took care to consolidate the gains of the East India Company. To relieve the Governor-General for his wider responsibilities, Bengal was placed under the charge of a Lieutenant-Governor. For the newly acquired territories, he introduced the system of centralised control. This was known as 'Non Regulation' system. Under this system he appointed a Commissioner over a newly acquired territory who was made directly responsible to the Governor-General.

Military Reforms: Dalhousie's annexations had extended British India from Bengal in the east to the Panjab and Sind in the west. The dreams of an Asiatic Kingdom had been realised. A strategic control of these extensive areas necessitated better distribution of the troops. Thus the headquarters of the Bengal Artillery were shifted from Calcutta to Meerut, the permanent headquarters of the army were gradually shifted to Simla and this process was completed in 1865. The hill station of Simla grew increasingly important and became the seat of the Government of India for a major part of the year.

Dalhousie foresaw danger in the great numerical increase of the Indian army particularly during the Second Anglo-Sikh War. He proposed reduction in the strength of the Indian element in the army which despite some reduction stood at 2,23,000 men in 1856, as against 45,000 Europeans. He impressed upon the Home authorities the necessity of increasing the strength of European soldiers in India so that an equipoise could be kept between the British and Indian troops. He described the European force in India "as the essential element of our strength." Three regiments were added to the army. He protested against the despatch of two European regiments for service to China and Persia.

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A new 'Irregular Force' was created in the Panjab under the direct control of the Panjab administration and with a separate system and discipline. Gorkha regiments were raised and their strength continually added to. These regiments proved of great value to the British during the crisis of 1857-58.

Educational Reforms: In Lord Dalhousie's time a number of important reforms were introduced in the field of education. In 1853 the Thomasonian system of vernacular education was recommended for the whole of the North-Westen Provinces, Lower Bengal and the Panjab with such modifications as their various circumstances might be found to require. Similar instructions were sent to the Bombay and Madras authorities.

In July 1854 Charles Wood, the President of the Board of Control, addressed to the Government of India his famous education despatch known as "Wood's Despatch" which provided for the creation of "a properly articulated scheme of education from the primary school to the university." Wood's despatch was very comprehensive and in the words of Lord Dalhousie "left nothing to be desired". It laid the foundations on which the modern education system has been built up. It recommended Anglo-Vernacular schools throughout the districts, Government colleges of higher grade in important towns and a University in each of the three presidencies of India. The 'infiltration theory' was abandoned. Voluntary efforts in the field of education were to be aided by grants-in-aids from the state; such grants were to be sanctioned subject to certain rules and on condition of proper government inspection. A Director of Public Instruction was to be appointed in each province who aided by inspectors was to organise and control education at the level lower than the University.

Examining universities on the model of the London University were to be set up at Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. These universities were to award degrees in token of acquirement of knowledge. Chairs were to be created for the instruction in Law and Civil Engineering. The first three universities in India were esiablished in 1857.

Teaching of both the Vernaculars and English was to be encouraged, but English was thought to be the best vehicle for instruction of Western philosophy and sciences. An Engineering college was established at Roorkee.

Railway Development: Under Dalhousie British dominion In India was bound together by iron lines. Strategic railway lines were planned to facilitate internal communication for the defence of India. The broad outlines of the scheme were laid down by Lord Dalhousie in his famous Railway Minute of 1853 which formed the basis for the future railway extension in India. The first railway line connecting Bombay with Thane was laid down in 1853. The following year a railway line was built from Calcutta to the Raniganj coal-fields. A few miles of railway line were also built in the Madras Presidency. By 1856 various routes were being surveyed and constructed.

The railway lines were not built out of the Indian exchequer but by private enterprise. Besides relieving the Indian exchequer of the expense it could not have borne, it gave the English capital and enterprise a chance of investment. Subsequently railway lines in India were mostly built by public companies under a system of 'Government guarantee' on the lines indicated by Lord Dalhousie.

Besides encouraging trade and facilitating commerce and annihilating distances the railways have gone a long way in uniting India. As early as 1865 Sir Edwin Arnold wrote: "Railways may do for India what dynasties have never done—what the genius of Akbar the Magnificent could not effect by Government, nor the cruelty of Tipu Sahib by violence—they may make India a nation".

The Electric Telegraph: Dalhousie may be regarded as the Father of Electric Telegraph in India. O'Shanghnessy was appointed the Superintendent of the Electric Telegraph Department in 1852. Obstacles seemed insurmountable, but were overcome by the untiring zeal and energy of O'Shanghnessy. Nearly 4,000 miles of electric telegraph lines were constructed connecting Calcutta with Peshawar, Bombay and Madras and other parts of the country. In Burma a line was laid down from Rangoon to Mandalay. The Telegraph Department proved of great assistance during the great Rebellion of 1857-58. "It is that accursed string (the telegraph), that strangled us", acclaimed a rebel at the time of his execution.

Postal Reforms: The basis of the modern postal system also was laid down under Lord Dalhousie.

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As a result of the findings of an expert commission, a new Post Office Act was passed in 1854. Under the new system a Director-General was appointed to superintend the work of Post Offices in all the Presidencies; a uniform rate of half an anna per letter, irrespective of the distance over which it might be sent, was introduced; postage stamps were issued for the first time. As a result of these reforms the Post Office which had so far been a drain on the treasury became a source of revenue. The social, administrative, financial and educational developments resultant from the extension and improvement of this system speak volumes for Dalhousie's desire for promoting the material progress of India.

Public Works Department: Before Lord Dalhousie the construction of Public Works had been a part of the job of the Military Board. A separate Public Works Department was set up for the first time and large amount of funds began to be spent on works of public utility. Irrigational works were undertaken on an extensive scale. The main stream of the Ganges Canal was completed and declared open on April 8,1854; the Ganges Canal was described 'as a work which stands unequalled in its class and character among the efforts of civilised nations'. Construction work connected with the Bari Doab Canal in the Panjab was taken in hand. Many bridges were constructed and the work on the Grand Trunk Road was taken up with more enthusiasm.

Commercial Reforms: Ports of India were thrown open to the commerce of the world. Free-trade principles were becoming a passion with Englishmen of the mid-nineteeth century. The harbours of Karachi, Bombay and Calcutta were developed and a large number of light-houses were constructed.

Indian agriculture received special attention. The digging of canals, the development of railway facilities and construction of works of public utility ushered in a new commercial era. Indian resources particularly of cotton, flax and tea were developed to supply raw material for the mills of Lancashire and Manchester, importing in return cheap manufactured goods from England. Indian trade began to be more and more dominated by Englishmen.

Dalhousie's Responsibility for the Revolt of 1857: A storm had been gathering in India for a number of years. It burst out in 1857, a year after Lord Dalhousie left India. Dalhousie's policy, however, justified and legitimate it might have been, had caused great disquietude among the Indian Princes. The Ruling Princes, in the words of V. A. Smith, "knew nothing about subtle distinctions of 'dependent' and 'subordinate' states.....They simply saw that principality after principality was escheated and annexed for one reason or another, so that no ruler of a native state felt safe.....the pace was too fast and the cumulative effect of the transactions was profoundly unsettling". The Doctrine of Lapse disregarded the customs and prejudices of the Indian people. It broke away from precedents and gave new interpretations to outdated and outmoded doctrines.

V. A. Smith blames Lord Dalhousie for lack of foresight. Smith writes: "The outgoing Governor-General certainly had not the slightest prevision of the storm that was to break the next year in May, and had not made any arrangements to meet it... he must share with his predecessors the censure due for permitting the continuance of a most dangerous military situation in India. He had not taken any precautions to protect the enormous store of munitions at Delhi, which was left in the hands of the native army, or to secure the essential strategical position of Allahabad. Whatever thought was devoted to military preparation in India was directed to the Panjab. Everywhere else the old haphazard distribution of the troops continued and nobody in authority, military or civil, seems to have realized the obvious perils incurred". T. R. Holmes absolves Dalhousie of reponsibility for the weak military condition of the East India Company and blames the Commander-in-Chief for his failure to remedy the indiscipline in the army and for his neglect to safeguard Delhi and Allahabad. T. R. Holmes, on the other hand, believes that the rebellion that broke out in Oudh was "due not to annexation, but to the harshness with which the Talukdars were treated"; the excesses committed in Jhansi are attributed "to the failure of Havelock's earlier attempts to relieve the Residency." Holmes credits Dalhousie for his wise policy and constructive administrative work and says: "By the construction of roads and telegraphs, and by the administration which he bestowed upon the Panjab, he contributed much to the power by which the Mutiny was quelled."

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It must, however, be stated that Dalhousie's annexations and escheats worsened the situation. He went too far and too fast. His ruthless and injudicious policy provided leaders like the Rani of Jhansi, Nana Sahib, Tantia Tope, etc., who channelised the prevalent discontent and proved the brain behind the movement once the soldiers had mutinied. Responsibility for the Rebellion of 1857-58 partly rests on the shoulders of Lord Dalhousie.

Estimate of Dalhousie: Sir Richard Temple says: " As an imperial administrator, Dalhousie has never been surpassed and seldom equalled by any of the illustrious men whom England has sent forth to govern India." Marshman writes: "He exhibited perhaps the finest example which ancient or modern history affords, of what can be accomplished for the benefit of mankind by an enlightened despot acting upon a large theatre."

Sir William Wilson Hunter has summed up Dalhousie's work in three words— conquest, consolidation and development. His annexations gave the map of modern India. Annexation of the Panjab pushed the dominion of the East India Company to the hills in the North-West and British officers became the Warden of the Passes; the annexation of Sikkim territory brought Indian boundaries contiguous to Tibet and the Chinese empire and the acquisition of Lower Burma extended British authority along the coast from Chittagong to Rangoon. The work of internal territorial consolidation was achieved by annexation of a number of Indian states. Dalhousie's conquests and annexations added nearly a quarter million square miles to the East India Company's dominions, adding between a third and a half to the territorial size of British India of 1848. His reforming activities extended to every branch of administrative development. By his far reaching schemes of railways, roads, canals and public works he launched India on the road to become a manufacturing and mercantile India. Dalhousie also proved an active modernizes. He laid the foundations of and indicated the lines on which modern India was to be built.

Dalhousie, however, had the defects of his qualities. He cared very little for moral values and plighted word. While dealing with the Panjab, he cared more for the end than for the means. He also paid no need to the feelings and prejudices of Indians while dealing with the Indian states. Thus Dalhousie proved to be a ruthless imperialist and was greatly responsible for creating unrest all round and the Rebellion of 1857 too.

Self-Assessment

Choose the correct options

1. The first three universities in India were established in

(*i*) 1857 (*ii*) 1758 (*iii*) 1855 (*iv*) 1859

2. In ..... the Nizam was compelled to code to the East India Company the cotton-producing area of Berar.

(*i*) 1855 (*ii*) 1853 (*iii*) 1850 (*iv*) 1854

3. In 1817 ..... had recognised an Infant descendant of the Bhonsle family, Raghuji-III as the Raja.

(*i*) Lord Cornwallis (*ii*) Lord Hastings (*iii*) Lord Dalhousie (*iv*) None of these

4. The Raja of Jhansi had been originally a vassal of the ..... .

(*i*) Raj Narayan Singh (*ii*) Dalhousie

(*iii*) Peshwa (*iv*) None of these

5. After the death of the Nawab of Carnatic 1853, ... concurred with the Madras authorities in not recognising anyone of his successor.

(*i*) Lord Cornwallis (*ii*) Peshwa (*iii*) Dalhousie (*iv*) Lord Canning.

6.3 Summary

- No account of Dalhousie's work of imperial consolidation can be complete without a mention of the Doctrine of Lapse. Some important Indian states were annexed by the enforcement of the Doctrine. The Doctrine of Lapse can be better understood in the context of Dalhousie's

declared conviction that the old system of ruling through "Sham royalties" and "artificial intermediate powers" resulted in the misery of the people.

- Dalhousie recognised the right of the adopted son to succeed to the personal property of the chieftain, but drew a distinction between succession to private property and succession to the royal *gaddi:* in the latter case, he held, that the sanction of the Paramount Power must be obtained. The Paramount Power could refuse 'adoption' in case of states covered by categories II and III and declare the states having passed back or 'lapsed' to the supreme authority. In such cases the 'Right of Adoption' was substituted by the Paramount Power's 'Right of Adoption' was substituted by the Paramount Power's 'Right of Lapse'. The power that gives, it was argued, could also rightfully take it away.
- It was in pursuance of the policy thus laid down that Mandavi state was annexed in 1839, Kolaba and Jalaun in 1840 and the titular dignity of the Nawab of Surat abolished in 1842.
- The states actually annexed by the application of the Doctrine of Lapse under Lord Dalhousie were Satara (1848), Jaitpur and Samhbalpur (1849), Baghat (1850), Udaipur (1852), Jhansi (1853) and Nagpur(1854).
- The Raja of Jhansi had been originally a vassal of the Peshwa. After the defeat of Baji Rao II, Lord Hastings in 1818 had concluded a treaty with Rao Ramchand, constituting "him, his heirs and successors" hereditary rulers of the territory on terms of 'subordinate co-operation'. After the death of the Raja in 1835, the East India Company recognised a grand-uncle, Raghunath Rao, to succeed to the principality. The old Raja died a few years later. Another successor Gangadhar Rao, from the royal family, was recognised in 1838. In November 1853 the ruler died without leaving a male heir and the state was declared escheat. The claims of the adopted son were disregarded.
- **Administrative Reforms:** Several reforms touching almost every department of administration were introducted by Lord Dalhousie. This great imperialist took care to consolidate the gains of the East India Company. To relieve the Governor-General for his wider responsibilities, Bengal was placed under the charge of a Lieutenant-Governor. For the newly acquired territories, he introduced the system of centralised control. This was known as 'Non Regulation' system. Under this system he appointed a Commissioner over a newly acquired territory who was made directly responsible to the Governor-General.
- Under Dalhousie British dominion In India was bound together by iron lines. Strategic railway lines were planned to facilitate internal communication for the defence of India. The broad outlines of the scheme were laid down by Lord Dalhousie in his famous Railway Minute of 1853 which formed the basis for the future railway extension in India.
- As early as 1865 Sir Edwin Arnold wrote: "Railways may do for India what dynasties have never done—what the genius of Akbar the Magnificent could not effect by Government, nor the cruelty of Tipu Sahib by violence—they may make India a nation".
- **The Electric Telegraph:** Dalhousie may be regarded as the Father of Electric Telegraph in India. O'Shanghnessy was appointed the Superintendent of the Electric Telegraph Department in 1852.
- The basis of the modern postal system also was laid down under Lord Dalhousie. As a result of the findings of an expert commission, a new Post Office Act was passed in 1854. Under the new system a Director-General was appointed to superintend the work of Post Offices in all the Presidencies; a uniform rate of half an anna per letter, irrespective of the distance over which it might be sent, was introduced; postage stamps were issued for the first time.
- Ports of India were thrown open to the commerce of the world. Free-trade principles were becoming a passion with Englishmen of the mid-nineteeth century. The harbours of Karachi, Bombay and Calcutta were developed and a large number of light-houses were constructed.
- A storm had been gathering in India for a number of years. It burst out in 1857, a year after Lord Dalhousie left India. Dalhousie's policy, however, justified and legitimate it might have been, had caused great disquietude among the Indian Princes.

Notes

- T. R. Holmes absolves Dalhousie of reponsibility for the weak military condition of the East India Company and blames the Commander-in-Chief for his failure to remedy the indiscipline in the army and for his neglect to safeguard Delhi and Allahabad. T. R. Holmes, on the other hand, believes that the rebellion that broke out in Oudh was "due not to annexation, but to the harshness with which the Talukdars were treated"; the excesses committed in Jhansi are attributed "to the failure of Havelock's earlier attempts to relieve the Residency."

6.4 Key-Words

1. Sanads : Grants
2. Annexation : To append, to incorporate (territory) into on testing fetitical such as a country and state.

6.5 Review Questions

1. Explain the Doctrine of Lapse and administrative reforms of Lord Dalhousie.
2. The policies made by Dalhousie were responsible for the revolt of 1857. Discuss.

Answers: Self-Assessment

1. (*i*) 2. (*ii*) 3. (*ii*) 4. (*iii*) 5. (*iii*)

6.6 Further Readings

1. V.D. Mahajan, History of Modern India, S. Chand and Co. Ltd. New Delhi.
2. Chandra, Bipin, India's Struggle for Freedom (1857–1947) Penguin, Delhi, 1996.

Notes

Unit 7: The First Major Challenge

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Objectives

After studying this unit, students will be able to:

- Discuss the Doctrine of Lapse
- Comment on Lord Dalhousie's reforms

Introduction

There is a broad general consensus among historians that in the middle of the 19th century conception of nationality—if nationalism is taken in the modern sense—was in embryo, Prof. S. N. Sen remarks that Indian in 1857 was "a geographical expression" and the Bengalees, the Punjabis, the Hindustanis, the Maharastrians and the people in the south did not realise that they belonged to the same nation.

Was the Mutiny and Revolt of 1857 a War of Independence? Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru wrote: "Essentially it was a feudal outburst headed by feudal chiefs and their followers and aided by the widespread anti-foreign sentiment." Nehru refers to the rural base of the Revolt and points out that even the feudal chiefs were unorganised and had no constructive ideal or community of interests. The rulers of princely States as a whole kept aloof or helped the British, fearing to risk what they had acquired or managed to retain. Prof. R. C. Majumdar argues that some segments of Indian society in many parts of India fought against the British, but their motives seems to have material interest and religious considerations and in very few individual cases the rulers were moved by the disinterested and patriotic motive of freeing the country from the yoke of imperial British rule. Majumdar concludes: "It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the so-called First National War of Independence of 1857 is neither First, nor National nor War of Independence".

Prof. S.N. Sen looks upon the events of 1857 in the broader perspective and argues that revolts and revolutions are mostly the work of minority, with or without the active sympathy of the masses as it happened during the American War of Independence or even the French Revolution. Following this logic, Sen concludes: "What began as a fight for religion ended as a War of Independence for there is not the slightest doubt that the rebels wanted to get rid of the alien government and restore the old of which the King of Delhi was the rightful representative.

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7.1 Causes of the Revolt 1857

The Anglo-Indian historians have greatly emphasised the importance of military grievances and the greased cartridges affair as the most potent causes which led to the great rising of 1857. But modern Indian historians have established beyond that 'the greased cartridge' was not the only cause, nor even the most important of them.

The greased cartridge and the Mutiny of soldiers was merely the match-stick which exploded the inflammable material which had gathered in heap on account of a variety of causes political, social, religious and economic.

Political Causes: The East India Company's policy of 'effective control' and gradual extinction of the Indian native states took a definite shape with the perfection of the Subsidiary Alliance System under Lord Wellesley. Its logical culmination was reached under Dalhousie who threw all codes of morality and political conduct to the winds and perfected the infamous Doctrine of Lapse. Dalhousie's annexations and the Doctrine of lapse had caused suspicion and uneasiness in the minds of almost all ruling princes in India. The right of succession was denied to the Hindu Princes. The guarantee of adoption to the throne "did not extent to any person in whose veins the blood of the founder of the dynasty did not run". The distinction between 'dependent states' and "protected allies' was very thin and looked more alike hair-splitting. In case of disputed interpretation, the decision of the East India Company was binding and that of the Court of Directions final. There was no Supreme Court to give an impartial verdict on questions of right and wrong. While the Panjab, Pegu, Sikkim had been annexed by the 'Right of Conquest', Satara, Jaipur, Sambhalpur, Baghat, Udaipur, Jhansi and Nagpur were annexed by the application of the Doctrine of Lapse. Oudh was annexed on the pretext of " the good of the governed". Regal titles of the Nawabs of Carnatic and Tanjore were abolished and the pension of Peshwa Baji Rao II's adopted son was stopped. The Indians held that the existence of all states was threatened and absorption of all states was a question of time. The common belief current was that annexations were not because of the Doctrine of Lapse, but due to the 'Lapse of all Morals' on the part of the East India Company. That the fears of the people were not without foundation is clear from the correspondence of one of the architects of British India, Sir Charles Napier, who wrote: "Were I Emperor of India for twelve years.... no India prince should exist. The Nizam should no more be heard of... Nepal would be ours..." Malleson has rightly stated that the policy of Dalhousie and the utterances and writings of other high officials had created 'bad faith and Indians got the feeling that the British were 'playing the wolf in the garb of the lamb'.

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> The causes of the Rebellion lay deeper and are to be found in the history of the hundred years of British rule from the Battle of Plassey (June 1757) to the rebellion of Mangal Pandey when on March 29,1857, he murdered an English Adjutant.

The Muslim feelings had been grievously hurt. Bahadur Shah II, the Mughal Emperor, was an old man and might die any moment. Lord Dalhousie who was not in favour of retaining an *imperium in imperio* had recognised the succession of Prince Faqir-ul-Din, but imposed many strict conditions on him. After Faqir-ud-Din's death in 1856, Lord Canning announced that the prince next in succession would have to renounce the regal title and the ancestral Mughal palaces in addition to the renunciations agreed upon by Prince Faqir-ul-Din. These acts greatly unnerved the Indian Muslims who thought that the English wanted to humble the House of Timur. In the words of Alexander Duff: "The Mohammadans have for the last hundred years not ceased to pray, like privately in their house and publicly in their mosques throughout India for the prosperity of the House of Timur or Taimurlane, whose lineal representative is the titular emperor of Delhi. But the prosperity of the House of Timur, is their estimation, undoubtedly implies neither more nor less than downfall of the British power, and the re-establishment of their own instead. In their case,

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therefore, disaffection towards the British Government with an intense longing for its speedy overthrow is sedulously nurtured as a sort of sacred duty which they owe alike to their faiths and the memory of their ancestors."

The 'absentee soverieigntyship' of the British rule in India was an equally important political factor which worked on the minds of the Indian people against the British. The Pathans and the Mughals who had conquered India had, in course of time, settled in India and become Indians. The revenues collected from the people were spent this very country. In the case of the British, the Indians felt that they were being ruled from England from a distance of thousands of miles and the country was being drained of her wealth.

Besides, the policy of *Pax-Britanncia* pursued by the British during the past four decades had led to the disbanding of Pindaris, Thugs, and irregular soldiers who formed the bulk of the native armies. These people had lived mostly on plunder, and when deprived of the means of livelihood by the British, they formed the nucleus of antisocial elements in different areas. When in 1857, there occurred some disturbances they swelled the ranks of the rebels.

Administrative and Economic Causes: The annexation of Indian states produced startting economic and social effects. The Indian aristocracy was deprived of power and position. It found little chance to gain the same old position in the new administrative set-up, as under the British rule all high posts, civil and military, were reserved for the Europeans.

In the military services, the highest post attainable by an Indian was that of a Subedar on a salary of Rs. 60 or Rs. 70 and in the civil services that of Sadr Amin on a salary of Rs. 500 per month. The chances of promotion were very few. The Indians thought that British were out to reduce them to 'hewers of wood and drawers of water."

Sir Thomas Munro, pleading for the employment of Indians, wrote in 1817, "Foreign conquerors have treated the natives with violence, and often with cruelty, but none has treated them with so much scorn as we; none has stigmatized the whole people as unworthly of trust, as incapable of honestly and as fit to be employed only where we cannot do without them. It seems to be not only ungenerous, but impolite, to debase the character of the people fallen under our dominion..." Despite the recommendations contained in the Charter Act of 1833, the policy had remained more or less the same.

The administrative machinery of the East India Company was 'inefficient and insufficient'. The land revenue police was most unpopular. Many districts in the newly-annexed states were in permanent revolt and military had to be sent to collect the land revenue. In the district of Panipat, for example, 136 horsemen were maintained for the collection of land revenue, while only 22 were employed for the performance of police duties. At the out-break of the Rebellion, Sir Henry Lawrence is reported to have remarked: "It was the Jackson, the John Lawrence, the Thomason, the Edmonstones who brought India to this." In the land revenue settlement newly acquired territories, the English administration had eliminated the middleman by establishing direct contact with the peasants. The land revenue settlement of North-Western Provinces was described as "a fearful experiment... calculated so as to flatten the whole surface of society." Many talukdars, the hereditary landlords (and tax-collectors for the Government) were deprived of their positions and gains. Many holders of rent-free tenures were dispossessed by the use of a *quo-warranto*—requiring the holders of such lands to produce evidence like title-deeds by which they held that land. Large estates were confiscated and sold by public auction to the highest bidders. Such estates were usually purchased by speculators who did not understand the tenants and fully exploited them. It was Coverly Jackson's policy of disbanding the native soldiers and of strict inquiry into the titles of the talukdars of Oudh that made Oudh the chief centre of the Rebellion. The Inam Commission appointed in 1852 in Bombay confiscated as many as 20,000 estates. Thus, the new land revenue settlements made by the East India Company in the newly-annexed states drove poverty in the ranks of the aristocracy without benefiting the peasantry which groaned under the weight of heavy assessments and excessive duties. The peasants whose welfare was the chief motive of the new revenue policy did not like the passing of the old ways. They fell in the clutches of unprincipled moneylenders; they often visited their dispossessed landlords and with tears in their eyes expressed

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their sympathy for them. The taluqdars of Oudh were the hardest hit. In the words of Asoka Mehta:" Out of the 25,543 villages included in their estates at the time of the annexation of the kingdom, 13,640 paying a revenue of Rs. 35,06,519 were settled with taluqdars, while 11,903 villages paying Rs 32,08,319 were settled with persons other than taluqdars... the taluqdars had lost half their villages, some had lost their all." The ruthless manner in which the Thomasonian system was carried into effect may be clear from the resumption of the revenue of free villages granted for the temple Lakshmi in Jhansi.

British economic policies in India worked against the interests of Indian trade and industry. The East India Company used its political power to destroy Indian handicrafts and industry and developed it into an appendage of a foreign exploitative system.

The ruination of Indian industry increased the pressure on agriculture and land, which lopsided development in turn resulted in the pauperization of the country in general.

Did u know? Writing in 1853 Karl Marx, a very shrewd observer, very aptly remarked: "It was the British intruder who broke up the Indian hand-loom and destroyed the spinning-wheel. England began with depriving the Indian cottons from the European market; it then introduced twist into Hindustan and in the end inundated the very mother country of cotton with cottons".

Social and Religious Causes: Like all conquering people the English rulers of India were rude and arrogant towards the subject people. However, the English were infected with a spirit of racialism. The rulers followed a policy of contempt towards the Indians and described the Hindus as barbarians with hardly any trace of culture and civilisation, while the Muslims were dubbed as bigots, cruel and faithless.

The European officers in India were very exacting and over-bearing in their social behaviour. The Indian was spoken as *nigger* and addressed as a *suar* or pig, an epithet most resented by the Muslims. Even the best among them like Bird and Thomason insulted " the native gentry whenever they had the opportunity of doing so".

European officers and European soldiers on their hunting sprees were often guilty of indiscriminate criminal assaults on Indians. The European juries, which alone could try such cases, acquitted European criminals with light or no punishment. Such discrimination rankled in the Indian mind like a festering sore.

It may be easy to withstand physical and political injustices but religious persecution touches tender conscience and forms complexes that are not easy to eradicate. That one of the aims of the English in Indian was to convert the Indians to Christianity is clear from the speech of Mr. Mangles, the Chairman of the Directors of the East India Company, in the House of Commons: "Providence has entrusted the extensive empire of Hindustan to England in order that the banner of Christ should wave triumphant from one end of India to the other. Everyone must exert all his strength that there may be no dilatoriness on any account in continuing in the country the grand work of making all Indians Christians," Major Edwards had openly declared that "the Christianization of India was to be the ultimate end of our continued possession of it." Vir Savarkar has pointed that the superior military and civil officers used to abuse the very names of Ram and Mohammad and prevail upon the sepoys and the civilians to embrace the Christian faith. Sepoys were promised promotions if they accepted the True Faith. The missionaries were Given ample facilities and the American Missionary Society at Agra had set up an extensive printing press. Idolatry was denounced, Hindu gods and goddesses ridiculed, Hindu superstitions dubbed as ignorance. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan mentions that "it has been commonly believed that government appointed missionaries and maintained them at its own cost." The Evangelical opinion was voiced by Lord Shaftesbury who believed that the failure to Christianize India was the cause of the whole trouble.

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The Religious Disabilities Act of 1850 modified Hindu customs; a change of religion did not old debar a son from inheriting the property of his heathen father. Stranger rumours were current in India that Lord Canning had been specially Selected and charged with the duty of converting the Indians to Christianity. In this surcharged atmosphere even the railways and steamships began to be looked upon as indirect instruments for changing their faith. The telegraph was regarded as 'the accursed string' and the rebels once said that 'it was this accursed string that strangled them". In the words of Benjamin Disraeli: "The Legislative Council of India under the new principle had been constantly nibbling at the religious system of the native. In its theoretical system of national education the sacred scriptures had suddenly appeared in the schools". The Indian mind was getting increasingly convinced that the English were conspiring to convert them to Christianity. The activities of Christian *padris* and efforts of Dalhousie and Bethune towards woman education made Indians feel that through education the British were going to conquer their civilisation. Even 'education offices' set up by the British were styled as *shaitani daftars*.

Military Causes: Since the Afghan adventure of Lord Auckland, the discipline in the army had suffered a serious set back Lord Dalhousie had written to the Home authorities that "the discipline of the army from top to bottom officers and men alike, is scandalous". The Bengal Army was " a great brotherhood in which all the members felt and acted in union", and service in the army was hereditary. Three-fifth of the recruits of the Bengal Army were drawn from Oudh and the North-Western Provinces and most of them came from high caste Brahmin and Rajput families who were averse to accepting that part of the army discipline which treated them on par with the low caste recruits. Sir Charles Napier had no confidence in the allegiance of 'high caste mercenaries'. During the Governor- Generalship of Lord Dalhousie three mutinies had occurred in the army—the mutiny of the 22nd N. I. in 1849, of the 66th N. I. in 1850, and the 38th N. I. in 1852.

The Bengal Army sepoys reflected all the feelings of the civil population of Oudh. In the opinion of Maulana Azad, the annexation of Oudh "marked the beginning of a rebellious mood in the army generally and in the Bengal army in particular... it gave a rude shock to the people... they suddenly realised that the power which the Company had acquired through their service and sacrifice was utilised to liquidate their own king".

The extension of British dominion in India had adversely affected the service condition of the sepoys. They were required to serve in area away from their homes without the payment of extra *bhatta*. The sepoys yearned for the good old days when the Indian rulers used to crown their meritorious deeds by bestowing jagirs and other prizes upon them whereas their victories in Sind and the Panjab had brought worse days for them. In 1844 four Bengal regiments had refused to moved to Sind till extra *bhatta* was sanctioned.

Did u know? In 1824 the sepoys at Barrackpore had refused to serve across the seas in Burma and the 47th regiment had been disbanded.

In 1856 Canning's government passed the General Service Enlistment Act which decreed that all future recruits for the Bengal army would have to give an undertaking to serve anywhere their service might be required by the Government. The Act did not affect old incumbent, but was unpopular because service in the Bengal army was usually hereditary. Moreover, those soldiers who had been sent in the army of invasion of Afghanistan during 1839-42 had been sent in the army of invasion of Afghanistan during 1839–42 had not been taken back in the folds of the caste. Sepoys declared unfit for foreign service were not allowed to retired with pension, but were to be posted for duty at cantonments.

The privilege of free postage so long enjoyed by the sepoys was withdrawn with the passing of the Post Office Act of 1854 Besides, the disparity in numbers between European and Indian troops had lately been growing greater. In 1856, the Company's army consisted of 238,000 native and 45,322 British soldiers. This disproportion was rendered more serious by the deficiency of good

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officers in the army, most of whom were employed in administrative posts in the newly annexed states and the frontier. The distribution of the troops was also faulty, Moreover, disasters in the Crimean war had lowered the general moral of the British soldiers. All these factors made the Indian soldiers feel that if they had struck at that hour, they had reasonable chances of success. So they were waiting only for an occasion which was provided by the 'greased cartridge' incident. The greased cartridges did not create a new causes of discontent in the army, but supplied the occasion when the underground discontent came out in the open. In 1856 the Government decided to replace the old-fashioned musket, 'Brown Bess' by the 'Enfield rifle'. The training for the use of the new weapon was to be imparted at Dum Dum, Ambala and Sialkot. The loading process of the Enfield rifle involved bringing the cartridge to the mouth and biting off the top paper with mouth. In January 1857 a story got currency in the Bengal regiments that the greased cartridge contained the fat of pig and cow. At once a denial was issued by the military authorities without investigating into the matter. Subsequently enquiries proved that "the fat of cows or oxen really had been used at Woolwich arsenal" (V. A Smith). Assurances of superior officers and slight concessions proved of no avail. The sepoys become convinced that the introduction of greased cartridges was a deliberate move to defile their religion. It was argued that the East India Company was playing the part of Aurangzeb and it was but natural that sepoys should play the part of Shivaji.

7.2 The Beginning of Spread and Suppression on the Revolt

The refusal of the sepoys to use the greased cartridges was regarded by the authorities as an act of insubordination and punished accordingly. On 29 March 1857 the sepoys at Barrackpore refused to use the greased cartridge and one Brahmin sepoy, Mangal Pandey, attacked and fired at the Adjutant. The 34 N. I. regiment was disbanded and sepoys guilty of rebellion punished. At Meerut, in May 1857, 85 sepoys of the 3rd Cavalry regiment on their refusal to use the greased cartridge were court-martialled and sentenced to long terms of imprisonment. On 10th May the sepoys broke out in open rebellion, shot their officers, released their fellow sepoys and headed towards Delhi. General Hewitt, the Officer Commanding at Meerut, had 2,200 European soldiers at his disposal but did nothing to stem the rising tide.

Delhi was seized by the rebels on 12th May 1857. Lieutenant Willoughby, the officer-in-charge of the magazine at Delhi, offered some resistance, but was overcome. The palace and the city were occupied. Some European inhabitants of Delhi were shot dead. Bahadur Shah II was proclaimed the Emperor of India. The loss of Delhi was a serious loss of prestige to the English.

Very soon the rebellion spread throughout Northern and Central India at Lucknow, Allahabad, Kanpur, Bareilly, Banaras in parts of Bihar, Jhansi and other places. Fortunately for the English, the Indians rulers remained loyal and rendered valuable services in the suppression of the rebellion. India south of the Narbada remained practically undisturbed.

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Descriptive note on the Spread of Mutiny and Civil Rebellion during 1857-58.

2 February 1857	—	Mutiny of the 19th Native Infantry at Berhampur.
10 May 1857	—	Mutiny of Sepoys at Meerut.
11–30May 1857	—	Outbreaks in Delhi, Ferozepur, Bombay, Aligarh, Etawah, Bulandshahr, Nasirabad Bareilly, Moradabad, Shahjehanpur and other stations in U.P.
		The Mughal Emperor proclaimed as the Emperor of India.
June1857	—	Mutinies at Gwalior, Bharatpur, Jhansi Allahabad, Faizabad, Sultanpur, Lucknow etc.,
		The civil rebellion spreads through the Indo-Gangetic plain, Rajputana, Central India and some parts of Bengal.

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July 1857	—	Mutinies at Indore, Mhow, Saugar and certain places in the Panjab like Jhelum sialkot etc.
August 1857	—	Civil rebellion spreads throughout Saugor and Nerbudda districts.
September 1857	—	The English recapture Delhi: further outbreaks in Central India.
October 1857	—	Revolt spreads to Kotah State.
November 1857	—	The rebels defeat General Windham outside Kanpur.
December 1587	—	Sir Colin Campbell wins the battle of Kanpur.
	—	Tantia Tope escapes.
March l858	—	Lucknow recaptured by the English.
April 1858	—	Jhansi falls to the English. Fresh rising in Bihar led by Kunwar Singh.
May 1858	—	The English recapture Bareilly, Jagdishpur and Kalpi.
		Indian rebels begin guerilla warfare Rohilkhand.
July-December 1858	—	English authority re-established in India.

The recapture of Delhi could be of great psychological importance and English efforts were directed towards that end. Troops from the Punjab were rushed and took their position to the north of Delhi. Though resistance was offered by the Indian soldiers. In September 1857 Delhi was recaptured by the English, but John Nicholson, the hero of the siege, was badly wounded during the operations and succumbed to his injuries. The Emperor was arrested. Terrible vengeance was wrecked on the inhabitants of Delhi. Two sons and a grandson of the Emperor were publicly shot by Lieut. Hodson himself.

The rebellion broke our at Lucknow on 4th June. Henry Lawrence, the British Resident, the European inhabitants and a few hundred loyal sepoys took shelter in the Residency. The Residency was besieged by the Indian rebels and Sir Henry was killed during the siege. The command of the besieged garrison devolved on Brigadier Inglis who held out against heavy odds. The early attempts of Havelock and Outram to recover Lucknow met with no success. Some relief came in November 1857 when Sir Colin Campbell, the new Commander-in-Chief, sent from England entered the city with the help of Gorkha regiments and evacuated the Europeans. In March 1858 the city was finally reduced, but guerilla activity continued till September of the same year.

Kanpur was lost to the British on 5th June 1857. Nana Sahib was proclaimed the Peshwa. General Sir Hugh Wheeler, commanding the station, surrendered on June 27. Some Europeans, men women and children, were murdered. At Kanpur Nana Sahib was joined by his able and experienced Lieutenant, Tantia Tope. The military operations for the recapture of Kanpur were closely associated with the recovery of Lucknow. Sir Campbell occupied Kanpur on December 6. Tantia Tope escaped and joined the Rani of Jhansi.

In the beginning of June 1857 the troops at Jhansi mutinied Rani Lakshmi Bai, the widow of the late Raja Gangadhar Rao, was proclaimed the ruler of the state. After the loss of Kanpur, Tantia Tope joined the Rani. Sir Hugh Rose recaptured Jhansi by assault on 3rd April 1958.

The Rani of Jhansi and Tantia tope marched towards Gwalior where they were hailed by the Indian soldiers. The Sindhia however, decided to remain-loyal to the English and took shelter at Agra. Nana Sahib was proclaimed the Peshwa and plans were chalked our for a march into the South. Gwalior was recaptured by the English in June 1858, the Rani of Jhansi died fighting clad in soldier's uniform on the ramparts of the fort. Tantia Tope escaped southward; in April 1859 he was captured by one of Sindhia's feudatory who handed him over to the British to be hanged.

At Bareilly Khan Bahadur Khan had proclaimed himself the Nawab Nazim. In Bihar a local zamindar Kunwar Singh of Jagdishpur raised the banner of revolt. At Banaras a rebellion had

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been organised which was mercilessly suppressed by Colonel Neill who put to death all rebels, suspected and even disorderly boys. By July 1858 the rebellion had been almost completely suppressed.

7.3 Why the Revolt Failed

The Revolt of 1857 was localized, restricted and poorly organised: The Bombay and the Madras armies remained loyal. India south of the Narbada was very little disturbed. Sind and Rajasthan remained quiet and Nepal's help proved of great avail in the suppression of the Revolt. Dost Mohammad, the ruler of Afghanistan, remained friendly. The Punjab was effectively controlled by John Lawrence. The worst affected area were Western Bihar, Oudh, Rohilkhand, Delhi, and the territory between the Chambal and the Narbada.

The resources of the British Empire were far superior to those of the rebels. Luckily for the British the Crimean and the Chinese wars had been concluded by 1856, and British troops numbering 1,12,000 poured into India from all parts of the world. About 3,10,000 additional Indian soldiers were recruited in India. The Indian soldiers had very few guns and muskets and mostly fought with swords and spears. On the other hand, the European soldiers were equipped with the latest weapons of war like the Enfield rifle about which Nana Sahib said: "The blue cap kills before they fire". The electric telegraph kept the Commander-in-Chief informed about the movements of the Indian rebels and their strategy. A concerted plan was formed to suppress the Rebellion. Russell, the Correspondent of *The Times* of London, summed up the advantages of the electric telegraph thus: "Never since its discovery has the electric telegraph played so important and daring a role as it now does in India; without it the Commander-in-Chief would lose the effect of half his force. It has served him better than his right arm". Considering the vast resources of the British Empire and her naval superiority, it may be said that even if the English had been driven back to the coastal areas or into the sea, before long she would have reconquered India by her superior military strength.

The revolt of 1857 was mainly feudal in character carrying with it some nationalistic elements. The feudal elements of Oudh, Rohilkhand and some other parts of Northern India led the rebellion; other feudal prices like the Rajas of Patiala, Jhind, Gwalior, Hyderabad helped in its suppression. European historians have greatly praised Sir Dinkar Rao, the Minister of Gwalior, and Salar Jang, the Wazir of Hyderabad, for their loyalty. In the movement of crisis Canning said: "If the Sindhia joins the Mutiny, I shall have to pack off tomorrow,". Canning acted very wisely when he gave solemn assurances to the Indian princes and thus won over their support. The Indian princes were amply rewarded after the suppression of the Rebellion. The districts of Berar were restored to the Nizam and his debts remitted. Nepal was rewarded by the cession of some Oudh territory. The Sindhia, the Gaikwar and the Rajput princes also received some rewards or concessions.

The Revolt was poorly organised. The leader of the Revolt were not lacking in bravery, but were deficient in experience, organising ability and concerted operations. Surprise attacks and guerilla tactics could not win them their lost independence. The various commissions and boards appointed by the Government of India and provincial governments after the suppression of the rebellion could not find any plan behind the rebellion or any scheme on which the movement was launched. The trial of Bahadur Shah II proved that the rebellion was as much a surprise to him as to the British.

The rebels had no common ideal before them except the anti-foreign sentiments. Bahadur Shah II was declared the Emperor at Delhi, while at Kanpur and Gwalior Nana Sahib was proclaimed the Peshwa. Hindu-Muslim differences lay dormant against the common enemy, but were not dead. The peasants and the inferior castes showed no active sympathies; the soldiers in the Bombay and Madras armies were recruited from the lower castes and they remained loyal.

The East India Company was fortunate in having the services of men of exceptional abilities in the Lawrence brothers, Nicholson, Outram, Havelock, Edwards etc. They fought the toughest battles in the initial stages of the Revolt and controlled the situation till reinforcements were received from abroad.

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7.4 Aftermath of the Revolt

The Revolt of 1857 though completely suppressed had shaken the British rule in India from its very foundations. Lord Cromer once remarked: "I wish the Young generation of the English would read, mark, learn and inwardly digest the history of the Indian Mutiny: it abounds in lessons and warnings". The techniques of controlling India though well established by '1857 were confirmed and uniformly acted upon thereafter. The reactionary and vested interests were well protected and encouraged and became pillars of British rule in India: the policy of divide and rule was deliberately pursued and made the main prop of British control; tight European control over key positions both in the civil and military administration was maintained.

1. The control of Indian administration was transferred from the East India Company to the Crown by the Government of India Act 1858. In the words of Sir H.S. Cunningham the change was 'formal' rather than 'substantial'. Sir Henry Rawnnson director of the Company who favoured abolition of the Company correctly summed up the significance of the change: "The one great result will be a change of name, which may enable us to condone the past—the immediate past—and to set out from a fresh starting point into a fresh career of empire." In India the same sort of Governor-General and the same military and civil service continued as before. In Britain 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 to be nominated by the Crown and seven members at first to be selected by the Court of Directors and afterwards by co-option by the Council itself. Thus the former directors of the Company sat on the India Council. No new policy was inaugurated. Rather, in the proclamation of 1 November 1858 the Queen announced a continuation of the Company's policies.

   Ever since 1784 the Crown through the Board of Control had exercised considerable influence over Indian affairs and, in fact, had the deciding voice in all major issues. The Act of 1858 ended the dualism in the control of Indian affairs and made the Crown directly responsible for management of Indian affairs.

2. 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 as their own", while general amnesty was granted to "all offenders, save and except those who have been or shall be convicted of having directly taken part in the murder of British subjects". The Indian states had served as "breakwaters to the storm which would otherwise have swept over us in one great wave" and to preserve them as the bulwark of the Empire became a cardinal principle of British policy. The Taluqdars of Oudh who had joined in large numbers in the rebellion were reinstated and confirmed in their estates subject to promises of loyalty and future good behaviour. In the words of Pt. Nehru, these taluqdars took pride in calling themselves the 'Barons of Oudh' and became one of the pillars of British rule. Thus feudal and reactionary elements became the favourite children of imperialism.

3. The Proclamation of 1858 contained an assurance that "our subjects, of whatever race or creed, be freely, and impartially admitted to office in our service, the duties of which they may be qualified by their education, ability and integrity duly to discharge". To give expression to this pledge the Indian Civil Service Act of 1861 was passed, which provided for an annual competitive examination to be held in London for recruitment to the Covenanted Civil Service. Unfortunately, the detailed rules framed for the conduct of this examination had the effect of keeping the higher services a close preserve of the Englishman.

4. The Indian Army had been mainly responsible for the crisis of 1857. It was thoroughly reorganised and built up on the policy of 'division and counterpoise'. The Army Amalgamation Scheme of 1861 transferred the Company's European troops to the services of the Crown. The European troops in India were constantly renovated by periodical visits to England in what came to be known as the 'linked-battalion' scheme. The strength of European troops in India 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 Indian artillery units (with the exception of a few mountain batteries) were disbanded. The general formula followed was that in Bengal

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Presidency the proportion between the European and Indian troops should be 1:2. while for Bombay and Madras Presidencies it should be 1:3. Besides the policy of counterpoise of natives against natives was to be followed which was explained by the Report of the Panjab Committee on Army Organisation, 1858, in these words: "To preserve that distinctiveness which is valuable, and which while it lasts makes the Mohammedan of one country fear and dislike the Mohammedan of another, Corps should in future be provincial, and adhere to the geographical limits within which differences and rivalries are strongly marked". All big posts in the army and the artillery departments were reserved for the Europeans. In the fifty years following the Rebellion of 1857 no Indian soldier was thought fit to deserve the King's commission and a raw English recruit was considered superior to an Indian officer holding the Viceroy's commission.

Task Who was the first Indian soldier to refuse to use the greased cartridge?

5. It was increasingly realised that one basic cause for the Revolt of 1857 was the lack of contact between the ruler and the ruled. Sir Bartle Frere, in his famous Minute of 1860, urged 'the addition of the native element' to the Legislative Councils. The association of Indians in the task of legislation, it was believed, would at least acquaint the rulers with the sentiments and feelings of the Indians and thus provide an opportunity for avoidance of misunderstandings. Thus, a humble beginning towards the development of representative institutions in India was made by the Indian Councils Act of 1861.
6. The emotional after-effects of the Revolts were perhaps the most unfortunate. Racial bitterness was perhaps the worst legacy of the struggle. *The Punch* cartooned the Indian as a subhuman creature, half gorilla, half-negro who could be kept in check by superior force only. The agents of imperialism in India dubbed the entire Indian people as unworthy of trust and subjected them to insults, humiliation and contemptuous treatment. In the words of Jawaharlal Nehru: "Imperialism and the domination of one people over another is bad, and so is racialism. But imperialism plus racialism can lead only to horror and ultimately to the degradation of all concerned with them". The entire structure of the Indian government was remodelled and based on the idea of a master race. This neo-Imperialism was justified by the philosophy of the Whiteman's-burden and the civilising role of England in India. The gulf between the rulers and the ruled widened and erupted occasionally in political controversies, demonstrations and acts of violence.
7. The Revolt of 1857 ended an era and sowed the seeds of new era. The era of territorial aggrandisement gave place to the era of economic exploitation. For the British, the danger from the feudal India ended for ever; the new challenge to British Imperialism came from progressive India fed on the philosophy of John Stuart Mill and British liberals of the nineteenth century.

7.5 Selected Opinions of the Revolt of 1857

R. C. Majumdar: It would thus appear that the outbreak of the civil population in 1857 may be regarded as a war of independence only if we take that term to mean any sort of fight against the British. But, then, the fight of the Pindaris against the English and the fight of the Wahabis against the Sikhs in the Panjab should also be regarded as such. Those who demur to it should try to find out how much the rebels in 1857 were prompted by motives of material interest and religious considerations which animated, respectively, the Pindaris and the Wahabis, and how much by the disinterested and patriotic motive of freeing the country from the yoke of foreigners. Apart from individual cases, here and there, no evidence has yet been brought to light which would support the view that the patriotic motive' of freeing the country formed the chief incentive to the general outbreak of the people... It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the so-called First National War of Independence of 1857 is neither First, nor National, nor War of Independence.

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S. N. Sen: The Mutiny was inevitable. No dependent nation can for ever reconcile itself to foreign domination. A despotic government must ultimately rule by the sword though it might be sheathed in velvet. In India the sword was apparently in the custody of the Sepoy Army. Between the Sepoy and his foreign masters there was no common tie of race, language and religion...The Mutiny was not inevitable in 1857 but it was inherent in the constitution of the empire.

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad: The question naturally arises if the uprising was a result of a nationalist upsurge alone. The answer cannot be an unqualified affirmative if nationalism is understood in its modern sense. There is no doubt that the participants were moved by patriotic considerations, but these were not strong enough to provoke a revolt. Patriotism had to be reinforced by an appeal to religious passion before the People arose.... As I read about the events of 1857 I am forced to the sad conclusion that Indian national character had sunk very low. The leaders of the revolt could never agree. They were mutually jealous and continually intrigued against one another. They seemed to have little regard for the effects of such disagreement on the common cause. In fact, these personal jealousies and intrigues were largely responsible for the Indian defeat.

S. B. Chaudhuri: First War of Independence it certainly was, as in the whole canvas of the recorded history of India it would be difficult to find a parallel to this gigantic anti-foreign combine of all classes of people and of many provinces of India. There was never a war in India lasting continuously for more than a year and simultaneously in all the regions which had for its objective the abasement and ejectment of the alien rulling power.

Eric Stokes: 1857 stands firmly in a historical continuum. Not of course that it was the direct product of social forces blowing off the political crust but rather fortuitous conjuncture that laid these forces bare. Like 1848 in Europe—despite obvious disparities—it was an uprising *sans issue* that could catch a society moving into the early stages of modernisation.

Self-Assessment

1. Fill in the blanks:

(*i*) ..... remarks that Indian in 1857 was a geographical expression and the Bengalees, the Punjabis, the Hindustanis, the Maharashtrians and the people in the south did not realise that they belonged to the same nation.

(*ii*) ..... was in not favour of retaining an imperium in imperia had recognised the succession of prince Faquir-ul-Din.

(*iii*) The New land revenue settlements made by the East India Company in ..... .

(*iv*) The Religious Disabilities Act of ..... modified Hindu customs.

(*v*) In ..... the sepoys at Berrackpur had refused to serve across the seas in Burma and the 47th regiment had been disbanded.

7.6 Summary

- Dalhousie's annexations and the Doctrine of lapse had caused suspicion and uneasiness in the minds of almost all ruling princes in India. The right of succession was denied to the Hindu Princes. The guarantee of adoption to the throne "did not extent to any person in whose veins the blood of the founder of the dynasty did not run"
- While the Panjab, Pegu, Sikkim had been annexed by the 'Right of Conquest', Satara, Jaipur, Sambhalpur, Baghat, Udaipur, Jhansi and Nagpur were annexed by the application of the Doctrine of Lapse. Oudh was annexed on the pretext of " the good of the governed". Regal titles of the Nawabs of Carnatic and Tanjore were abolished and the pension of Peshwa Baji Rao II's adopted son was stopped. The Indians held that the existence of all states was threatened and absorption of all states was a question of time. The common belief current was that annexations were not because of the Doctrine of Lapse, but due to the 'Lapse of all Morals' on the part of the East India Company. That the fears of the people were not without foundation is clear from the correspondence of one of the architects of British India, Sir Charles Napier, who wrote: "Were I Emperor of India for twelve years.... no India prince should exist. The Nizam should no more be heard of... Nepal would be ours..."

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- Dalhousie who was not in favour of retaining an *imperium in imperio* had recognised the succession of Prince Faqir-ul-Din, but imposed many strict conditions on him. After Faqir-ud-Din's death in 1856, Lord Canning announced that the prince next in succession would have to renounce the regal title and the ancestral Mughal palaces in addition to the renunciations agreed upon by Prince Faqir-ul-Din.
- The 'absentee soverieigntyship' of the British rule in India was an equally important political factor which worked on the minds of the Indian people against the British. The Pathans and the Mughals who had conquered India had, in course of time, settled in India and become Indians.
- In the military services, the highest post attainable by an Indian was that of a Subedar on a salary of Rs. 60 or Rs. 70 and in the civil services that of Sadr Amin on a salary of Rs. 500 per month. The chances of promotion were very few. The Indians thought that British were out to reduce them to 'hewers of wood and drawers of water."
- The administrative machinery of the East India Company was 'inefficient and insufficient'. The land revenue police was most unpopular. Many districts in the newly-annexed states were in permanent revolt and military had to be sent to collect the land revenue. In the district of Panipat, for example, 136 horsemen were maintained for the collection of land revenue, while only 22 were employed for the performance of police duties.
- The Inam Commission appointed in 1852 in Bombay confiscated as many as 20,000 estates. Thus, the new land revenue settlements made by the East India Company in the newly-annexed states drove poverty in the ranks of the aristocracy without benefiting the peasantry which groaned under the weight of heavy assessments and excessive duties.
- British economic policies in India worked against the interests of Indian trade and industry. The East India Company used its political power to destroy Indian handicrafts and industry and developed it into an appendage of a foreign exploitative system.
- Like all conquering people the English rulers of India were rude and arrogant towards the subject people. However, the English were infected with a spirit of racialism. The rulers followed a policy of contempt towards the Indians and described the Hindus as barbarians with hardly any trace of culture and civilisation, while the Muslims were dubbed as bigots, cruel and faithless.
- It may be easy to withstand physical and political injustices but religious persecution touches tender conscience and forms complexes that are not easy to eradicate. That one of the aims of the English in Indian was to convert the Indians to Christianity is clear from the speech of Mr. Mangles, the Chairman of the Directors of the East India Company, in the House of Commons: "Providence has entrusted the extensive empire of Hindustan to England in order that the banner of Christ should wave triumphant from one end of India to the other. Everyone must exert all his strength that there may be no dilatoriness on any account in continuing in the country the grand work of making all Indians Christians," Major Edwards had openly declared that "the Christianization of India was to be the ultimate end of our continued possession of it."
- The activities of Christian *padris* and efforts of Dalhousie and Bethune towards woman education made Indians feel that through education the British were going to conquer their civilisation. Even 'education offices' set up by the British were styled as *shaitani daftars*.
- During the Governor- Generalship of Lord Dalhousie three mutinies had occurred in the army—the mutiny of the 22nd N. I. in 1849, of the 66th N. I. in 1850, and the 38th N. I. in 1852.
- In the opinion of Maulana Azad, the annexation of Oudh "marked the beginning of a rebellious mood in the army generally and in the Bengal army in particular... it gave a rude shock to the people... they suddenly realised that the power which the Company had acquired through their service and sacrifice was utilised to liquidate their own king".

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- In 1856, the Company's army consisted of 238,000 native and 45,322 British soldiers. This disproportion was rendered more serious by the deficiency of good officers in the army, most of whom were employed in administrative posts in the newly annexed states and the frontier.
- In 1856 the Government decided to replace the old-fashioned musket, 'Brown Bess' by the 'Enfield rifle'. The training for the use of the new weapon was to be imparted at Dum Dum, Ambala and Sialkot. The loading process of the Enfield rifle involved bringing the cartridge to the mouth and biting off the top paper with mouth. In January 1857 a story got currency in the Bengal regiments that the greased cartridge contained the fat of pig and cow. At once a denial was issued by the military authorities without investigating into the matter. Subsequently enquiries proved that "the fat of cows or oxen really had been used at Woolwich arsenal" (V. A Smith).
- On 29 March 1857 the sepoys at Barrackpore refused to use the greased cartridge and one Brahmin sepoy, Mangal Pandey, attacked and fired at the Adjutant. The 34 N. I. regiment was disbanded and sepoys guilty of rebellion punished. At Meerut, in May 1857, 85 sepoys of the 3rd Cavalry regiment on their refusal to use the greased cartridge were court-martialled and sentenced to long terms of imprisonment. On 10th May the sepoys broke out in open rebellion, shot their officers, released their fellow sepoys and headed towards Delhi. General Hewitt, the Officer Commanding at Meerut, had 2,200 European soldiers at his disposal but did nothing to stem the rising tide.
- Delhi was seized by the rebels on 12th May 1857. Lieutenant Willoughby, the officer-in-charge of the magazine at Delhi, offered some resistance, but was overcome. The palace and the city were occupied.
- The rebellion broke our at Lucknow on 4th June. Henry Lawrence, the British Resident, the European inhabitants and a few hundred loyal sepoys took shelter in the Residency. The Residency was besieged by the Indian rebels and Sir Henry was killed during the siege.
- Kanpur was lost to the British on 5th June 1857. Nana Sahib was proclaimed the Peshwa. General Sir Hugh Wheeler, commanding the station, surrendered on June 27. Some Europeans, men women and children, were murdered.
- In the beginning of June 1857 the troops at Jhansi mutinied Rani Lakshmi Bai, the widow of the late Raja Gangadhar Rao, was proclaimed the ruler of the state. After the loss of Kanpur, Tantia Tope joined the Rani. Sir Hugh Rose recaptured Jhansi by assault on 3rd April 1958.
- The Revolt of 1857 was localized, restricted and poorly organised: The Bombay and the Madras armies remained loyal. India south of the Narbada was very little disturbed. Sind and Rajasthan remained quiet and Nepal's help proved of great avail in the suppression of the Revolt. Dost Mohammad, the ruler of Afghanistan, remained friendly. The Punjab was effectively controlled by John Lawrence.
- The Indian soldiers had very few guns and muskets and mostly fought with swords and spears. On the other hand, the European soldiers were equipped with the latest weapons of war like the Enfield rifle about which Nana Sahib said: "The blue cap kills before they fire".
- The revolt of 1857 was mainly feudal in character carrying with it some nationalistic elements. The feudal elements of Oudh, Rohilkhand and some other parts of Northern India led the rebellion; other feudal prices like the Rajas of Patiala, Jhind, Gwalior, Hyderabad helped in its suppression. European historians have greatly praised Sir Dinkar Rao, the Minister of Gwalior, and Salar Jang, the Wazir of Hyderabad, for their loyalty.
- The Revolt was poorly organised. The leader of the Revolt were not lacking in bravery, but were deficient in experience, organising ability and concerted operations. Surprise attacks and guerilla tactics could not win them their lost independence.
- The rebels had no common ideal before them except the anti-foreign sentiments. Bahadur Shah II was declared the Emperor at Delhi, while at Kanpur and Gwalior Nana Sahib was proclaimed the Peshwa.

Notes

- The control of Indian administration was transferred from the East India Company to the Crown by the Government of India Act 1858. In the words of Sir H.S. Cunningham the change was 'formal' rather than 'substantial'.
- 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 as their own", while general amnesty was granted to "all offenders, save and except those who have been or shall be convicted of having directly taken part in the murder of British subjects".
- The European troops in India were constantly renovated by periodical visits to England in what came to be known as the 'linked-battalion' scheme. The strength of European troops in India 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 Indian artillery units (with the exception of a few mountain batteries) were disbanded. The general formula followed was that in Bengal Presidency the proportion between the European and Indian troops should be 1:2. while for Bombay and Madras Presidencies it should be 1:3.
- It was increasingly realised that one basic cause for the Revolt of 1857 was the lack of contact between the ruler and the ruled. Sir Bartle Frere, in his famous Minute of 1860, urged 'the addition of the native element' to the Legislative Councils.
- The Revolt of 1857 ended an era and sowed the seeds of new era. The era of territorial aggrandisement gave place to the era of economic exploitation. For the British, the danger from the feudal India ended for ever; the new challenge to British Imperialism came from progressive India fed on the philosophy of John Stuart Mill and British liberals of the nineteenth century.

7.7 Key-Words

1. Cartridge	:	A cartridge is relatively easily replaceable container or subsystem, designed to hold a depleteable, essential material or component for a larger system.
2. Greased Cartridge	:	The British had issued new gun powder cartridges that were widely believed to be greased with cow or pig fat, which insulted both Hindus and Muslims.

7.8 Review Questions

1. Explain the Political causes for the revolt of 1857.
2. Discuss the administrative and economic causes of 1857 Revolt.
3. Why the 1857 Revolt failed ? Discuss.
4. Briefly describe the aftermath of the 1857 Revolt.
5. Give a analytical view of the revolt 1857.

Answers: Self-Assessment

1. Prof. S.N. Mark
2. Lord Dal Housie
3. 1852
4. 1850
5. 1824

7.9 Further Readings

1. V.D. Mahajan, History of Modern India, S. Chand and Co. Ltd. New Delhi.
2. Chandra, Bipin, India's Struggle for Freedom (1857–1947) Penguin, Delhi, 1996.

Notes

Unit 8: Peasant Movements

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Objectives

After studying this unit, students will be able to:

- Explain the peasant movements in the first half of the 20th century.
- Understand peasant movements in the 1930's and 1940's.
- Discuss Trade Union.

Introduction

Peasant discontent against established authority was a familiar feature of the nineteenth century. But in the twentieth century, the movements that emerged out of this discontent were marked by a new feature: they were deeply influenced by and in their turn had a marked impact on the ongoing struggle for national freedom. To illustrate the complex nature of this relationship, we will recount the story of three important peasant struggles that emerged in the second and third decade of the country: The *Kisan Sabha* and Eka movements in Avadh in U.P., the Mappila rebellion, in Malabar and the Bardoli *Satyagraha* in Gujarat.

The foundation of modern industries in India was laid between 1850 and 1870. Lord Dalhousie's Railway Minute of 1853 started the process of the introduction of machinery into the locomotion of India. The thousands of hands employed in construction of railways were harbingers of modern Indian working class. The development of ancillary industries directly or indirectly connected with railways became inevitable. The coal industry developed fast the employed a large working force. The first cotton mill was set up in Bombay in 1854 and the first jute mill started working at Calcutta the same year. The tea industry also greatly developed. The number of working hands employed in textile mills increased from 74,000 in 1886 to 195,000 in 1905, the working force in jute industry multiplied from 27,494 hands in 1879-80 to 154,962 in 1906, while the coal mines employed 75,749 in 1904.

The Indian working class suffered from all forms of exploitation—low wages, long working hours, unhygienic conditions in factories, employment of child labour and absence of all amenities—from which the labour force has suffered in the early stages of industrilisation and capitalism in England and the West *plus* the evils of a rapacious colonial rule.

The colonial situation, however, gave a distinctive touch to Indian working class movement. The Indian working class had to face two basic antagonistic forces—an imperialist political rule and economic exploitation at the hands of both foreign and native capitalist classes. Under these compulsive circumstances the Indian working class movement became intertwined with the political struggle for national emancipation.

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8.1 Peasant Movements in the First half of 20th Century

Following the annexation of Avadh in 1856, the second half of the nineteenth century had seen the strengthening of the hold of the *taluqdars* or big landlords over the agrarian society of the province. This had led to a situation in which exorbitant rents, illegal levies, renewal fees or *nazrana*, and arbitrary ejectments or *bedakhli* had made life miserable for the majority of the cultivators. The high price of food and other necessities that accompanied and followed World War I made the oppression all the more difficult to bear, and the tenants of Avadh were ripe for a message of resistance.

It was the more active members of the Home Rule League in U.P. who initiated the process of the organization of the peasants of the province on modern lines into *kisan sabhas*. The U.P. *Kisan Sabha* was set up in February 1918 through the efforts of Gauri Shankar Misra and Indra Narain Dwivedi, and with the support of Madan Mohan Malaviya. The U.P. *Kisan Sabha* demonstrated considerable activity, and by June 1919 had established at least 450 branches in 173 tehsils of the province.

Kisan Sabha in Avadh

A consequence of this activity was that a large number of *kisan* delegates from U.P. attended the Delhi and Amritsar sessions of the Indian National Congress in December 1918 and 1919.

Towards the end of 1919, the first signs of grass-roots peasant activity were evident in the reports of a *nai-dhobi* band (a form of social boycott) on an estate in Pratapgarh district. By the summer of 1920, in the villages of *taluqdari* Avadh, *kisan* meetings called by village panchayats became frequent. The names of Jhinguri Singh and Durgapal Singh were associated with this development. But soon another leader, who became famous by the name of Baba Ramchandra, emerged as the rallying point.

Baba Ramchandra, a Brahmin from Maharashtra, was a wanderer who had left home at the age of thirteen, done a stint as an indentured labourer in Fiji and finally turned up in Fyzabad in U.P. in 1909. Till 1920, he had wandered around as a *sadhu*, carrying a copy of Tulsidas' *Ramayan* on his back, from which he would often recite verses to rural audiences. In the middle of 1920, however, he emerged as a leader of the peasants of Avadh, and soon demonstrated considerable leadership and organizational capacities.

In June 1920, Baba Ramchandra led a few hundred tenants from the Jaunpur and Pratapgarh districts to Allahabad. There he met Gauri Shankar Misra and Jawaharlal Nehru and asked them to visit the villages to see for themselves the living conditions of the tenants. The result was that, between June and August, Jawaharlal Nehru made several visits to the rural areas and developed close contacts with the *Kisan Sabha* movement.

Meanwhile, the kisans found sympathy in Mehta, the Deputy Commissioner of Pratapgarh, who promised to investigate complaints forwarded to him. The *Kisan Sabha* at village Roor in Pratapgarh district became the centre of activity and about one lakh tenants were reported to have registered their complaints with this Sabha on the payment of one anna each. Gauri Shankar Misra was also very active in Pratapgarh during this period, and was in the process of working out an agreement with Mehta over some of the crucial tenant complaints such as *bedakhli* and *nazrana*.

But, in August 1920, Mehta went on leave and the *taluqdars* used the opportunity to strike at the growing *kisan* movement. They succeeded in getting Ramchandra and thirty-two kisans arrested on a trumped-up charge of theft on 28 August 1920. Incensed at this, 4,000 to 5,000 kisans collected at Pratapgarh to see their leaders in jail and were dispersed after a great deal of persuasion.

Ten days later, a rumour that Gandhiji was coming to secure the release of Baba Ramchandra brought ten to twenty thousand kisans to Pratapgarh, and this time they returned to their homes only after Baba Ramchandra gave them *darshan* from atop a tree in a sugar-cane field. By now their numbers had swelled to sixty thousand. Mehta was called back from leave to deal with the situation and he quickly withdrew the case of theft and attempted to bring pressure on the landlords to change their ways. This easy victory, however, gave a new confidence to the movement and it burgeoned forth.

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Meanwhile, the Congress at Calcutta had chosen the path of non-cooperation and many nationalists of U.P. had committed themselves to the new political path. But there were others, including Madan Mohan Malaviya, who preferred to stick to constitutional agitation. These differences were reflected in the U.P. *Kisan Sabha* as well, and soon the Non-cooperators set up an alternative Oudh *Kisan Sabha* at Pratapgarh on 17 October 1920. This new body succeeded in integrating under its banner all the grassroots *kisan sabhas* that had emerged in the districts of Avadh in the past few months; through the efforts of Misra, Jawaharlal Nehru, Mata Badal Pande, Baba Ramchandra, Deo Narayan Pande and Kedar Nath, the new organization-brought under its wing, by the end of October, over 330 *kisan sabhas*. The Oudh *Kisan Sabha* asked the kisans to refuse to till *bedakhli* land, not to offer *hari* and *begar* (forms of unpaid labour), to boycott those who did not accept these conditions and to solve their disputes through panchayats. The first big show of strength of the Sabha was the rally held at Ayodhya, near Fyzabad town, on 20 and 21 December which was attended by roughly 100,000 peasants. At this rally, Baba Ramchandra turned up bound in ropes to symbolize the oppression of the kisans. A marked feature of the *Kisan Sabha* movement was that kisans belonging to the high as well as the low castes were to be found in its ranks.

In January 1921, however, the nature of the peasant activity underwent a marked change. The centres of activity were primarily the districts of Rae Bareli, Fyzabad and, to a lesser extent, Sultanpur. The pattern of activity was the looting of bazaars, houses, granaries, and clashes with the police. A series of incidents, small and big, but similar in character, occurred. Some, such as the ones at Munshiganj and Karhaiya Bazaar in Rae Bareli, were sparked off by the arrests or rumours of arrest of leaders. The lead was often taken not by recognized *Kisan Sabha* activists, but by local figures—*sadhus*, holy men, and disinherited ex-proprietors.

The Government, however, had little difficulty in suppressing these outbreaks of violence. Crowds were fired upon and dispersed, leaders and activists arrested, cases launched and, except for a couple of incidents in February and March, the movement was over by the end of January itself. In March, the Seditious Meetings Act was brought in to cover the affected districts and all political activity came to a standstill. Nationalists continued to defend the cases of the tenants in the courts, but could do little else. The Government, meanwhile, pushed through the Oudh Rent (Amendment) Act, and though it brought little relief to the tenants, it helped to rouse hopes and in its own way assisted in the decline of the movement.

Towards the end of the year, peasant discontent surfaced again in Avadh, but this time the centres were the districts of Hardoi, Bahraich, and Sitapur in the northern part of the province.

The main grievances here related to the extraction of a rent that was generally fifty per cent higher than the recorded rent, the oppression of *thekedars* to whom the work of rent-collection was farmed out and the practice of share-rents.

The Eka meetings were marked by a religious ritual in which a hole that represented the river Ganges was dug in the ground and filled with water, a priest was brought in to preside and the assembled peasants vowed that they would pay only the recorded rent but pay it on time, would not leave when ejected, would refuse to do forced labour, would give no help to criminals and abide by the panchayat decisions.

The Eka Movement, however, soon developed its own grass-roots leadership in the form of Madari Pasi and other low-caste leaders who were not particularly inclined to accept the discipline of non-violence that the Congress and Khilafat leaders urged. As a result, the movement's contact with the nationalists diminished and it went its own way. However, unlike the earlier *Kisan Sabha* movement that was based almost solely on tenants, the Eka Movement included in its ranks many small zamindars who found themselves disenchanted with the Government because of its heavy land revenue demand. By March 1922, however, severe repression on the part of the authorities succeeded in bringing the Eka Movement to its end.

Did u know? The initial thrust here was provided by Congress and Khilafat leaders and the movement grew under the name of the Eka or unity movement.

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The Mappila Rebellion

In August 1921, peasant discontent erupted in the Malabar district of Kerala. Here Mappila (Muslim) tenants rebelled. Their grievances related to lack of any security of tenure, renewal fees, high rents, and other oppressive landlord exactions. In the nineteenth century as well, there had been cases of Mappila resistance to landlord oppression but what erupted in 1921 was on a different scale together.

The impetus for resistance had first come from the Malabar District Congress Conference held at Manjeri in April 1920. This conference supported the tenants' cause and demanded legislation to regulate landlord-tenant relations. The change was significant because earlier the landlords had successfully prevented the Congress from committing itself to the tenants' cause. The Manjeri conference was followed by the formation of a tenants' association at Kozhikode, and soon tenants' associations were set up in other parts of the district.

Simultaneously, the Khilafat Movement was also extending its sweep. In fact, there was hardly any way one could distinguish between Khilafat and tenants' meetings, the leaders and the audience were the same, and the two movements were inextricably merged into one. The social base of the movement was primarily among the Mappila tenants, and Hindus were quite conspicuous by their absence, though the movement could count on a number of Hindu leaders.

Disturbed by the growing popularity of the Khilafat-cum-tenant agitation, which had received considerable impetus from the visits of Gandhiji, Shaukat Ali, and Maulana Azad, the Government issued prohibitory notices on all Khilafat meetings on 5 February 1921. On 18 February, all the prominent Khilafat and Congress leaders, Yakub Hasan, U. Gopala Menon, P. Moideen Koya and K. Madhavan Nair, were arrested. This resulted in the leadership passing into the hands of the local Mappila leaders.

Angered by repression and encouraged by rumours that the British, weakened as a result of the World War, were no longer in a position to take strong military action, the Mappilas began to exhibit increasing signs of turbulence and defiance of authority. But the final break came only when the District Magistrate of Eranad *taluq*, E.F. Thomas, on 20 August 1921, accompanied by a contingent of police and troops, raided the mosque at Tirurangadi to arrest Ali Musahar, a Khilafat leader and a highly respected priest. They found only three fairly insignificant Khilafat volunteers and arrested them. However the news that spread was that the famous Mambrath mosque, of which Ali Musaliar was the priest, had been raided and destroyed by the British army. Soon Mappilas from Kottakkal, Tanur and Parappanagadi converged at Tirurangadi and their leaders met the British officers to secure the release of the arrested volunteers. The people were quiet and peaceful, but the police opened fire on the unarmed crowd and many were killed. A clash ensued, and Government offices were destroyed, records burnt and the treasury looted. The rebellion soon spread into the Eranad, Walluvanad and Ponnani *taluqs*, all Mappila strongholds.

In the first stage of the rebellion, the targets of attack were the unpopular *jenmies* (landlords), mostly Hindu, the symbols of Government authority such as *kutcheris* (courts), police stations, treasuries and offices, and British planters. Lenient landlords and poor Hindus were rarely touched. Rebels would travel many miles through territory populated by Hindus and attack only the landlords and burn their records.

Kunhammed Haji also did not discriminate in favour of Muslims: he ordered the execution and punishment of a number of pro-government Mappilas as well.

Some of the rebel leaders, like Kunhammed Haji, took special care to see that Hindus were not molested or looted and even punished those among the rebels who attacked the Hindus.

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But once the British declared martial law and repression began in earnest, the character of the rebellion underwent a definite change. Many Hindus were either pressurized into helping the authorities or voluntarily gave assistance and this helped to strengthen the already existing anti-Hindu sentiment among the poor illiterate Mappilas who in any case were motivated by a strong religious ideology. Forced conversions, attacks on and murders of Hindus increased as the sense of desperation mounted. What had been largely an anti-government and anti-landlord affair acquired strong communal overtones.

The Mappilas' recourse to violence had in any case driven a wedge between them and the Non-Cooperation Movement which was based on the principle of non-violence. The communalization of the rebellion completed the isolation of the Mappilas. British repression did the rest and by December 1921 all resistance had come to a stop. The toll was heavy indeed: 2,337 Mappilas had lost their lives. Unofficial estimates placed the number at above 10,000. A total of 45,404 rebels were captured or had surrendered. But the toll was in fact even heavier, though in a very different way. From then onwards, the militant Mappilas were so completely crushed and demoralized that till independence their participation in any form of politics was almost nil. They neither joined the national movement nor the peasant movement that was to grow in Kerala in later years under the Left leadership.

The peasant movements in U.P. and Malabar were thus closely linked with the politics at the national level. In U.P., the impetus had come from the Home Rule Leagues and, later, from the Non-Cooperation and Khilafat movement. In Avadh, in the early months of 1921 when peasant activity was at its peak, it was difficult to distinguish between a Non-cooperation meeting and a peasant rally. A similar situation arose in Malabar, where Khilafat and tenants' meetings merged into one. But in both places, the recourse to violence by the peasants created a distance between them and the national movement and led to appeals by the nationalist leaders to the peasants that they should not indulge in violence. Often, the national leaders, especially Gandhiji, also asked the peasants to desist from taking extreme action like stopping the payment of rent to landlords.

This divergence between the actions and perceptions of peasants and local leaders and the understanding of the national leaders had often been interpreted as a sign of the fear of the middle class or bourgeois leadership that the movement would go out of its own 'safe' hands into that of supposedly more radical and militant leaders of the people. The call for restraint, both in the demands as well as in the methods used, is seen as proof of concern for the landlords and propertied classes of Indian society. It is possible, however, that the advice of the national leadership was prompted by the desire to protect the peasants from the consequences of violent revolt, consequences which did not remain hidden for long as both in U.P. and Malabar the Government launched heavy repression in order to crush the movements. Their advice that peasants should not push things too far with the landlords by refusing to pay rent could also stem from other considerations. The peasants themselves were not demanding abolition of rent or landlordism, they only wanted an end to ejectments, illegal levies, and exorbitant rents — demands which the national leadership supported. The recourse to extreme measures like refusal to pay rent was likely to push even the small landlords further into the lap of the government and destroy any chances of their maintaining a neutrality towards the on-going conflict between the government and the national movement.

Bardoli Satyagrah

The no tax movement that was launched in Bardoli *taluq* of Surat district in Gujarat in 1928 was also in many ways a child of the Non-cooperation days. Bardoli *taluq* had been selected in 1922 as the place from where Gandhiji would launch the civil disobedience campaign, but events in Chauri Chaura had changed all that and the campaign never took off. However, a marked change had taken place in the area because of the various preparations for the civil disobedience movement and the end result was that Bardoli had undergone a process of intense politicization and awareness of the political scene. The local leaders such as the brothers Kalyanji and Kunverji Mehta, and Dayalji Desai, had worked hard to spread the message of the Non-Cooperation Movement. These leaders, who had been working in the district as social reformers and political activists for at least

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a decade prior to Non-cooperation, had set up many national schools, persuaded students to leave government schools, carried out the boycott of foreign cloth and liquor, and had captured the Surat municipality.

After the withdrawal of the Non-Cooperation Movement, the Bardoli Congressmen had settled down to intense constructive work. Stung by Gandhiji's rebuke in 1922 that they had done nothing for the upliftment of the low-caste untouchable and tribal inhabitants—who were known by the name of *Kaliparaj* (dark people) to distinguish them from the high caste or *Ujaliparaj* (fair people) and who formed sixty per cent of the population of the *taluq*—these men, who belonged to high castes started work among the *Kaliparaj* through a network of six ashrams that were spread out over the *taluq*. These ashrams, many of which survive to this day as living institutions working for the education of the tribals, did much to lift the *taluq* out of the demoralization that had followed the withdrawal of 1922. Kunverji Mehta and Keshavji Ganeshji learnt the tribal dialect, and developed a '*Kaliparaj* literature' with the assistance of the educated members of the *Kaliparaj* community, which contained poems and prose that aroused the *Kaliparaj* against the *Hali* system under which they laboured as hereditary labourers for upper-caste landowners, and exhorted them to abjure intoxicating drinks and high marriage expenses which led to financial ruin. *Bhajan mandalis* consisting of *Kaliparaj* and *Ujaliparaj* members were used to spread the message. Night schools were started to educate the *Kaliparaj* and in 1927 a school for the education of *Kaliparaj* children was set up in Bardoli town. Ashram workers had to often face the hostility of upper-caste landowners who feared that all this would 'spoil' their labour. Annual *Kaliparaj* conferences were held in 1922 and, in 1927, Gandhiji, who presided over the annual conference, initiated an enquiry into the conditions of the *Kaliparaj*, who he also now renamed as *Raniparaj* or the inhabitants of the forest in preference to the derogatory term *Kaliparaj* or dark people. Many leading figures of Gujarat including Narhari Parikh and Jugatram Dave conducted the inquiry which turned into a severe indictment of the *Hali* system, exploitation by money lenders and sexual exploitation of women by upper-castes. As a result of this, the Congress had built up a considerable base among the *Kaliparaj*, and could count on their support in the future.

Simultaneously, of course, the Ashram workers had continued to work among the landowning peasants as well and had to an extent regained their influence among them. Therefore, when in January 1926 it became known that Jayakar, the officer charged with the duty of reassessment of the land revenue demand of the *taluq*, had recommended a thirty percent increase over the existing assessment, the Congress leaders were quick to protest against the increase and set up the Bardoli Inquiry Committee to go into the issue. Its report, published in July 1926, came to the conclusion that the increase was unjustified. This was followed by a campaign in the Press, the lead being taken by *Young India* and *Navjivan* edited by Gandhiji. The constitutionalist leaders of the area, including the members of the Legislative Council, also took up the issue. In July 1927, the Government reduced the enhancement to 21.97 per cent.

But the concessions were too meagre and came too late to satisfy anybody. The constitutionalist leaders now began to advise the peasants to resist by paying only the current amount and withholding the enhanced amount. The 'Ashram' group, on the other hand, argued that the entire amount must be withheld if it was to have any effect on the Government. However, at this stage, the peasants seemed more inclined to heed the advice of the moderate leaders.

Gradually, however, as the limitations of the constitutional leadership became more apparent, and their unwillingness to lead even a movement based on the refusal of the enhanced amount was clear, the peasants began to move towards the 'Ashram' group of Congress leaders. The latter, on their part, had in the meanwhile contacted Vallabhbhai Patel and were persuading him to take on the leadership of the movement. A meeting of representatives of sixty villages at Bamni in Kadod division formally invited Vallabhbhai to lead the campaign. The local leaders also met Gandhiji and after having assured him that the peasants were fully aware of the implications of such a campaign, secured his approval.

Patel reached Bardoli on 4 February and immediately had a series of meetings with the representatives of the peasants and the constitutionalist leaders. At one such meeting, the moderate leaders frankly told the audience that their methods had failed and they should now try

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Vallabhbhai's methods. Vallabhbhai explained to the peasants the consequences of their proposed plan of action and advised them to give the matter a week's thought. He then returned to Ahmedabad and wrote a letter to the Governor of Bombay explaining the miscalculations in the settlement report and requesting him to appoint an independent enquiry; else, he wrote, he would have to advise the peasants to refuse to pay the land revenue and suffer the consequences.

On 12 February, Patel returned to Bardoli and explained the situation, including the Government's curt reply, to the peasants' representatives. Following this, a meeting of the occupants of Bardoli *taluq* passed a resolution advising all occupants of land to refuse payment of the revised assessment until the Government appointed an independent tribunal or accepted the current amount as full payment. Peasants were asked to take oaths in the name of *Prabhu* (the Hindu name for god) and *Khuda* (the Muslim name for god) that they would not pay the land revenue. The resolution was followed by the recitation of sacred texts from the *Gita* and the *Koran* and songs from Kabir, who symbolized Hindu-Muslim unity. The *Satyagraha* had begun.

Vallabhbhai Patel was ideally suited for leading the campaign. A veteran of the *Kheda Satyagraha*, the Nagpur Flag *Satyagraha*, and the Borsad Punitive Tax *Satyagraha*, he had emerged as a leader of Gujarat who was second only to Gandhiji. His capacities as an organizer, speaker, indefatigable campaigner, inspirer of ordinary men and women were already known, but it was the women of Bardoli who gave him the title of *Sardar*. The residents of Bardoli to this day recall the stirring effect of the Sardar's speeches which he delivered in an idiom and style that was close to the peasant's heart.

The Sardar divided the *taluq* into thirteen workers' camps or *Chhavanis* each under the charge of an experienced leader. One hundred political workers drawn from all over the province, assisted by 1,500 volunteers, many of whom were students, formed the army of the movement. A publications bureau that brought out the daily Bardoli *Satyagraha Patrika* was set up. This Patrika contained reports about the movement, speeches of the leaders, pictures of the *jabti* or confiscation proceedings and other news. An army of volunteers distributed this to the farthest corners of the *taluq*. The movement also had its own intelligence wing, whose job was to find out who the indecisive peasants were. The members of the intelligence wing would shadow them night and day to see that they did not pay their dues, secure information about Government moves, especially of the likelihood of *jabti* (confiscation) and then warn the villagers to lock up their houses or flee to neighbouring Baroda.

The main mobilization was done through extensive propaganda via meetings, speeches, pamphlets, and door to door persuasion. Special emphasis was placed on the mobilization of women and many women activists like Mithuben Petit, a Parsi lady from Bombay, Bhaktiba, the wife of Darbar Gopaldas, Maniben Patel, the Sardar's daughter, Shardaben Shah and Sharda Mehta were recruited for the purpose. As a result, women often outnumbered men at the meetings and stood firm in their resolve not to submit to Government threats. Students were another special target and they were asked to persuade their families to remain firm.

Those who showed signs of weakness were brought into line by means of social pressure and threats of social boycott. Caste and village panchayats were used effectively for this purpose and those who opposed the movement had to face the prospect of being refused essential services from sweepers, barbers, washermen, agricultural labourers, and of being socially boycotted by their kinsmen and neighbours. These threats were usually sufficient to prevent any weakening. Government officials faced the worst of this form of pressure. They were refused supplies, services, transport and found it almost impossible to carry out their official duties. The work that the Congress leaders had done among the *Kaliparaj* people also paid dividends during this movement and the Government was totally unsuccessful in its attempts to use them against the upper caste peasants.

Sardar Patel and his colleagues also made constant efforts to see that they carried the constitutionalist and moderate leadership, as well as public opinion, with them on all important issues. The result of this was that very soon the Government found even its supporters and sympathizers, as well as impartial men, deserting its side. Many members of the Bombay Legislative Council like

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K.M. Munshi and Lalji Naranji, the representatives of the Indian Merchants Chamber, who were not hot-headed extremists, resigned their seats. By July 1928, the Viceroy, Lord Irwin, himself began to doubt the correctness of the Bombay Government's stand and put pressure on Governor Wilson to find a way out. Uncomfortable questions had started appearing in the British Parliament as well.

Public opinion in the country was getting more and more restive and anti-Government. Peasants in many parts of Bombay Presidency were threatening to agitate for revision of the revenue assessments in their areas. Workers in Bombay textile mills were on strike and there was a threat that Patel and the Bombay Communists would combine in bringing about a railway strike that would make movement of troops and supplies to Bardoli impossible. The Bombay Youth League and other organizations had mobilized the people of Bombay for huge public meetings and demonstrations. Punjab was offering to send *jathas* on foot to Bardoli. Gandhiji had shifted to Bardoli on 2 August, 1928, in order to take over the reins of the movement if Patel was arrested. All told, a retreat, if it could be covered up by a face saving device, seemed the best way out for the Government.

The face-saving device was provided by the Legislative Council members from Surat who wrote a letter to the Governor assuring him that his pre-condition for an enquiry would be satisfied. The letter contained no reference to what the pre-condition was (though everyone knew that it was full payment of the enhanced rent) because an understanding had already been reached that the full enhanced rent would not be paid. Nobody took the Governor seriously when he declared that he had secured an 'unconditional surrender.' It was the Bardoli peasants who had won.

The enquiry, conducted by a judicial officer, Broomfield, and a revenue officer, Maxwell, came to the conclusion that the increase had been unjustified, and reduced the enhancement to 6.03 per cent. *The New Statesman* of London summed up the whole affair on 5 May 1929: 'The report of the Committee constitutes the worst rebuff which any local government in India has received for many years and may have far-reaching results ... It would be difficult to find an incident quite comparable with this in the long and controversial annals of Indian Land Revenue.

The relationship of Bardoli and other peasant struggles with the struggle for freedom can best be described in Gandhiji's pithy words: 'Whatever the Bardoli struggle may be, it clearly is not a struggle for the direct attainment of *swaraj*. That every such awakening, every such effort as that of Bardoli will bring *swaraj* nearer and may bring it nearer even than any direct effort is undoubtedly true.

Self-Assessment

Choose the correct option:

1. The first cotton mill was set up in Bombay in
   (*i*) 1854 (*ii*) 1853 (*iii*) 1844 (*iv*) 1860
2. The first big show of strength of the sabha was the rally held at ..... on 20 and 21 December.
   (*i*) Faizabad (*ii*) Ayodhya (*iii*) Kanpur (*iv*) Murshidabad
3. In August, ... peasant discontent erupted in the Malabar district of Kerala.
   (*i*) 1920 (*ii*) 1921 (*iii*) 1919 (*iv*) 1923.
4. Bardoli talaq has been selected in ..... as the place from where Ghandhiji would launch the civil disobedience campaign.
   (*i*) 1922 (*ii*) 1923 (*iii*) 1920 (*iv*) 1924.
5. Gandhiji had shifted to Bardoli on ..... 1928 in order to take over the reins of the movement if Patel was arrested.
   (*i*) 3 August (*ii*) 5 August (*iii*) 2 August (*iv*) 9 August

8.2 Peasant Movements in the 1930's and 1940's

The 1930s bore witness to a new and nation-wide awakening of Indian peasants to their own strength and capacity to organize for the betterment of their living conditions. This awakening

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was largely a result of the combination of particular economic and political developments: the great Depression that began to hit India from 1929-30 and the new phase of mass struggle launched by the Indian National Congress in 1930.

The Depression which brought agricultural prices crashing down to half or less of their normal levels dealt a severe blow to the already impoverished peasants burdened with high taxes and rents. The Government was obdurate in refusing to scale down its own rates of taxation or in asking *zamindars* to bring down their rents. The prices of manufactured goods, too, didn't register comparable decreases. All told, the peasants were placed in a situation where they had to continue to pay taxes, rents, and debts at pre-Depression rates while their incomes continued to spiral steadily downward.

The Civil Disobedience Movement was launched in this atmosphere of discontent in 1930, and in many parts of the country it soon took on the form of a no-tax and no-rent campaign. Peasants, emboldened by the recent success of the Bardoli *Satyagraha* (1928), joined the protest in large numbers. In Andhra, for example, the political movement was soon enmeshed with the campaign against re-settlement that threatened an increase in land revenue. In U.P., no-revenue soon turned into no-rent and the movement continued even during the period of truce following the Gandhi-Irwin Pact. Gandhiji himself issued a manifesto to the U.P. *kisans* asking them to pay only fifty per cent of the legal rent and get receipts for payment of the full amount. Peasants in Gujarat, especially in Surat and Kheda, refused to pay their taxes and went *hijrat* to neighbouring Baroda territory to escape government repression. Their lands and movable property were confiscated. In Bihar and Bengal, powerful movements were launched against the hated *chowkidara* tax by which villagers were made to pay for the upkeep of their own oppressors. In Punjab, a no-revenue campaign was accompanied by the emergence of *kisan sabhas* that demanded a reduction in land revenue and water-rates and the scaling down of debts. Forest *satyagrahas* by which peasants, including tribals, defied the forest laws that prohibited them from use of the forests, were popular in Maharashtra, Bihar and the Central Provinces. Anti-*zamindari* struggles emerged in Andhra, and the first target was the Venkatagiri *zamindari* in Nellore district.

The Civil Disobedience Movement contributed to the emerging peasant movement in another very important way; a whole new generation of young militant, political cadres was born from its womb. This new generation of political workers, which first received its baptism of fire in the Civil Disobedience Movement, was increasingly brought under the influence of the Left ideology that was being propagated by Jawaharlal Nehru, Subhas Bose, the Communists and other Marxist and Left individuals and groups. With the decline of the Civil Disobedience Movement, these men and women began to search for an outlet of their political energies and many of them found the answer in organizing the peasants.

First Conference of Kisan Sabha

Also, in 1934, with the formation of the Congress Socialist Party (CSP), the process of the consolidation of the Left forces received a significant push forward. The Communists, too, got the opportunity, by becoming members of the CSP, to work in an open and legal fashion. This consolidation of the Left acted as a spur to the formation of an all-India body to coordinate the *kisan* movement, a process that was already under way through the efforts of N.G. Ranga and other *kisan* leaders. The culmination was the establishment of the All-India *Kisan* Congress in Lucknow in April 1936 which later changed its name to the All-India *Kisan Sabha*. Swami Sahajanand, the militant founder of the Bihar Provincial *Kisan Sabha* (1929), was elected the President, and N.G. Ranga, the pioneer of the *kisan* movement in Andhra and a renowned scholar of the agrarian problem, the General Secretary. The first session was greeted in person by Jawaharlal Nehru. Other participants included Ram Manohar Lohia, Sohan Singh Josh, Indulal Yagnik, Jayaprakash Narayan, Mohanlal Gautam, Kamal Sarkar, Sudhin Pramanik and Ahmed Din. The Conference resolved to bring out a *Kisan* Manifesto and a periodic bulletin edited by Indulal Yagnik.

A *Kisan* Manifesto was finalized at the All-India *Kisan* Committee session in Bombay and formally presented to the Congress Working Committee to be incorporated into its forthcoming manifesto for the 1937 elections. The *Kisan* Manifesto considerably influenced the agrarian programme adopted

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by the Congress at its Faizpur session, which included demands for fifty per cent reduction in land revenue and rent, a moratorium on debts, the abolition of feudal levies, security of tenure for tenants, a living wage for agricultural labourers, and the recognition of peasant unions.

At Faizpur, in Maharashtra, along with the Congress session, was held the second session of the All India *Kisan* Congress presided over by N.G. Ranga. Five hundred *kisans* marched for over 200 miles from Manmad to Faizpur educating the people along the way about the objects of the *Kisan* Congress. They were welcomed at Faizpur by Jawaharlal Nehru, Shankar Rao Deo, M.N. Roy, Narendra Dev, S.A. Dange, M.R. Masani, Yusuf Meherally, Bankim Mukherji and many other *Kisan* and Congress leaders. Ranga, in his Presidential Address, declared: 'We are organizing ourselves in order to prepare ourselves for the final inauguration of a Socialist state and society.'

The formation of Congress Ministries in a majority of the provinces in early 1937 marked the beginning of a new phase in the growth of the peasant movement. The political atmosphere in the country underwent a marked change: increased civil liberties, a new sense of freedom born of the feeling that 'our own people are in power', a heightened sense of expectation that the ministries would bring in pro-people measures — all combined to make the years 1937-39 the high-water mark of the peasant movement. The different Ministries also introduced varying kinds of agrarian legislation — for debt relief, restoration of lands lost during the Depression, for security of tenure to tenants — and this provided an impetus for the mobilization of the peasantry either in support of proposed legislation or for asking for changes in its content.

The chief form of mobilization was through the holding of *kisan* conferences or meetings at the *thana*, *taluqa*, district and provincial levels at which peasants' demands would be aired and resolutions passed. These conferences would be addressed by local, provincial and all-India leaders. They would also usually be preceded by a campaign of mobilization at the village level when *kisan* workers would tour the villages, hold meetings, enroll Congress and *kisan sabha* members, collect subscriptions in money and kind and exhort the peasants to attend the conferences in large numbers. Cultural shows would be organized at these conferences to carry the message of the movement to the peasants in an appealing manner. The effect on the surrounding areas was powerful indeed, and peasants returned from these gatherings with a new sense of their own strength and a greater understanding of their own conditions.

Rise of Karshaka Sanghams

In Malabar, in Kerala, for example, a powerful peasant movement developed as the result of the efforts mainly of CSP activists, who had been working among the peasants since 1934, touring villages and setting up *Karshaka Sanghams* (peasant associations). The main demands around which the movement cohered, were for the abolition of feudal levies or *akramapirivukal*, renewal fees or the practice of *policceluthu*, advance rent, and the stopping of eviction of tenants by landlords on the ground of personal cultivation. Peasants also demanded a reduction in the tax, rent, and debt burden, and the use of proper measures by landlords when measuring the grain rent, and an end to the corrupt practices of the landlords' managers.

The main forms of mobilization and agitation were the formation of village units of the *Karshaka Sanghams*, conferences and meetings. But a form that became very popular and effective was the marching of *jathas* or large groups of peasants to the houses of big *jenmies* or landlords, placing the demands before them and securing immediate redressal. The main demand of these *jathas* was for the abolition of feudal levies such as *vasi, nuri,* etc.

The *Karshaka Sanghams* also organized a powerful campaign around the demand for amending the Malabar Tenancy Act of 1929. The 6th of November, 1938 was observed as the Malabar Tenancy Act Amendment Day, and meetings all over the district passed a uniform resolution pressing the demand. A committee headed by R. Ramachandra Nedumgadi was appointed by the All Malabar *Karshaka Sangham* to enquire into the tenurial problem, and its recommendations were endorsed by the Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee on 20 November 1938. In December, two *jathas* of five hundred each started from Karivallur in north Malabar and Kanjikode in the south and, after being received and hosted by local Congress Committees en route, converged at Chevayur near Calicut where the All Malabar *Karshaka Sangham* was holding its conference. A public meeting was

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held the same evening at Calicut beach presided over by P. Krishna Pillai, the CSP and later Communist leader, and resolutions demanding amendments in the Tenancy Act were passed. In response to popular pressure, T. Prakasam, the Andhra Congress leader who was the Revenue Minister in the Congress Ministry, in Madras Presidency, toured Malabar in December 1938 to acquaint himself with the tenant problem. A Tenancy Committee was set up which included three left-wing members. The *Karshaka Sangham* units and Congress committees held a series of meetings to mobilize peasants to present evidence and to submit memoranda to the Committee. But, by the time the Committee submitted its report in 1940, the Congress Ministries had already resigned and no immediate progress was possible. But the campaign had successfully mobilized the peasantry on the tenancy question and created an awareness that ensured that in later years these demands would inevitably have to be accepted. Meanwhile, the Madras Congress Ministry had passed legislation for debt relief, and this was welcomed by the *Karshaka Sangham*.

In coastal Andhra, top, the mobilization of peasants proceeded on an unprecedented scale. The Andhra Provincial Ryots Association and the Andhra Zamin Ryots Association already had a long history of successful struggle against the Government and *zamindars*. In addition, N.G. Ranga had, since 1933, been running the Indian Peasants' Institute in his home village of Nidobrolu in Guntur district which trained peasants to become active workers of the peasant movement. After 1936, left-wing Congressmen, members of the CSP, many of whom were to latter join the CPI also joined in the effort to organize the peasants, and the name of P. Sundarayya was the foremost among them.

The defeat of many *zamindar* and pro-*zamindar* candidates in the 1937 elections by Congress candidates dealt a blow to the *zamindars*' prestige and gave confidence to the *zamindari ryots*. Struggles were launched against the Bobbili and Mungala *zamindaris*, and a major struggle erupted against the Kalipatnam *zamindari* over cultivation and fishing rights.

In coastal Andhra, the weapon of peasant marches had already been used effectively since 1933. Peasant marchers would converge on the district or *taluqa* headquarters and present a list of demands to the authorities. But in 1938, the Provincial Kisan Conference organized, for the first time, a march on a massive scale — a true long march in which over 2,000 *kisans* marched a distance of over 1,500 miles, starting from Itchapur in the north, covering nine districts and walking for a total of 130 days. En route, they held hundreds of meetings attended by lakhs of peasants, and collected over 1,100 petitions; these were then presented to the provincial legislature in Madras on 27 March 1938. One of their main demands was for debt relief, and this was incorporated in the legislation passed by the Congress Ministry and was widely appreciated in Andhra. In response to the peasants' demands the Ministry had appointed a *Zamindari* Enquiry Committee, but the legislation based on its recommendations could not be passed before the Congress Ministries resigned.

Another notable feature of the movement in Andhra was the organization of Summer Schools of Economics and Politics for peasant activists. These training camps, held at Kothapatnam, Mantenavaripalam and other places were addressed by many of the major Left Communist leaders of the time including P.C. Joshi, Ajoy Ghosh and R.D. Bhardwaj. Lectures were delivered on Indian history, the history of the national struggle, on Marxism, on the Indian economy and numerous associated subjects. Money and provisions for running these training camps were collected from the peasants of Andhra. The celebration of various *kisan* and other 'days,' as well as the popularization of peasant songs, was another form of mobilization.

Demands of Zamindari Abolition

Bihar was another major area of peasant mobilization in this period. Swami Sahajanand, the founder of the Bihar Provincial *Kisan Sabha* and a major leader of the All India *Kisan Sabha*, was joined by many other left-wing leaders like Karyanand Sharma, Rahul Sankritayan, Panchanan Shanna, and Yadunandan Sharma in spreading the *kisan sabha* organization to the village of Bihar.

The Bihar Provincial *Kisan Sabha* effectively used meetings, conferences, rallies, and mass demonstrations, including a demonstration of one lakh peasants at Patna in 1938, to popularize the *kisan sabha* programme. The slogan of *zamindari* abolition, adopted by the Sabha in 1935, was

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popularized among the peasants through resolutions passed at these gatherings. Other demands included the stopping of illegal levies, the prevention of eviction of tenants and the return of *bakasht* lands.

The Congress Ministry had initiated legislation for the reduction of rent and the restoration of *bakasht* lands. *Bakasht* lands were those which the occupancy tenants had lost to *zamindars*, mostly during the Depression years, by virtue of non-payment of rent, and which they often continued to cultivate as share-croppers. But the formula that was finally incorporated in the legislation on the basis of an agreement with the *zamindars* did not satisfy the radical leaders of the *kisan sabha*. The legislation gave a certain proportion of the lands back to the tenants on condition that they pay half the auction price of the land. Besides, certain categories of land had been exempted from the operation of the law.

The *bakasht* lands issue became a major ground of contention between the *kisan sabha* and the Congress Ministry. Struggles, such as the one already in progress in Barahiya tal in Monghyr district under the leadership of Karyanand Sharma, were continued and new ones emerged. At Reora, in Gaya district, with Yadunandan Sharma at their head, the peasants won a major victory when the District Magistrate gave an award restoring 850 out of the disputed 1,000 *bighas* to the tenants. This gave a major fillip to the movement elsewhere. In Darbhanga, movements emerged in Padri, Raghopore, Dekuli and Pandoul. Jamuna Karjee led the movement in Saran district, and Rahul Sankritayan in Annawari. The movements adopted the methods of *Satyagraha*, and forcible sowing and harvesting of crops. The *zamindars* retaliated by using *lathials* to break up meetings and terrorize the peasants. Clashes with the *zamindars*' men became the order of the day and the police often inteivened to arrest the leaders and activists. In some places, the government and other Congress leaders intervened to bring a compromise. The movement on the *bakasht* issue reached its peak in late 1938 and 1939, but by August 1939 a combination of concessions, legislation and the arrest of about 600 activists succeeded in quietening the peasants. The movement was resumed in certain pockets in 1945 and continued in one form or another till *zamindari* was abolished.

Punjab was another centre of *kisan* activity. Here, too, the *kisan sabhas* that had emerged in the early 1930s, through the efforts of Naujawan Bharat Sabha, *Kirti Kisan*, Congress and Akali activists, were given a new sense of direction and cohesion by the Punjab *Kisan* Committee formed in 1937. The pattern of mobilization was the familiar one — *kisan* workers toured villages enrolling *kisan sabha* and Congress members, organizing meetings, mobilizing people for the *tehsil*, district and provincial level conferences (which were held with increasing frequency and attended by an array of national stars). The main demands related to the reduction of taxes and a moratorium on debts. The target of attack was the Unionist Ministry, dominated by the big landlords of Western Punjab.

The two issues that came up for an immediate struggle were the resettlement of land revenue of Amritsar and Lahore districts and the increase in the canal tax or water-rates. *Jathas* marched to the district headquarters and huge demonstrations were held. The culmination was the Lahore Kisan Morcha in 1939 in which hundreds of *kisans* from many districts of the province courted arrest. A different kind of struggle broke out in the Multan and Montgomery canal colony areas. Here large private companies that had leased this recently-colonized land from the government and some big landlords insisted on recovering a whole range of feudal levies from the share-croppers who tilled the land. The *kisan* leaders organized the tenants to resist these exactions which had recently been declared illegal by a government notification and there were strikes by cultivators in some areas in which they refused to pick cotton and harvest the crops. Many concessions were won as a result. The tenants' struggle, suspended as a result of the War, was resumed in 1946-47.

The peasant movement in Punjab was mainly located in the Central districts, the most active being the districts of Jullundur, Amritsar, Hoshiarpur, Lyallpur and Sheikhupura. These districts were the home of the largely self-cultivating Sikh peasantry that had already been mobilized into the national struggle via the Gurdwara Reform Movement of the early 1920s and the Civil Disobedience Movement in 1930-32. The Muslim tenants-at-will of Western Punjab, the most backward part of the province, as well as the Hindu peasants of South-eastern Punjab (the present-day Haryana) largely remained outside the ambit of the *Kisan* Movement. The tenants of Montgomery and

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Multan districts mobilized by the *kisan* leaders were also mostly emigrants from Central Punjab, Baba Sohan Singh, Teja Singh Swatantar, Baba Rur Singh, Master Hari Singh, Bhagat Singh Bilga, and Wadhawa Ram were some of the important peasant leaders.

The princely states in Punjab also witnessed a major outbreak of peasant discontent. The most powerful movement emerged in Patiala and was based on the demand for restoration of lands illegally seized by a landlord-official combine through various forms of deceit and intimidation. The *muzaras* (tenants) refused to pay the *batai* (share rent) to their *biswedars* (landlords) and in this they were led by Left leaders like Bhagwan Singh Longowalia and Jagir Singh Joga and in later years by Teja Singh Swatantar. This struggle continued intermittently till 1953 when legislation enabling the tenants to become owners of their land was passed.

In other parts of the country as well, the mobilization of peasants around the demands for security of tenure, abolition of feudal levies, reduction of taxes and debt relief, made major headway. In Bengal, under the leadership of Bankim Mukherji, the peasants of Burdwan agitated against the enhancement of the canal tax on the Damodar canal and secured major concessions. *Kisans* of the 24-Parganas pressed their demands by a march to Calcutta in April 1938. In Surma Valley, in Assam, a no-rent struggle continued for six months against *zamindari* oppression and Karuna Sindhu Roy conducted a major campaign for amendment of the tenancy law.

In Orissa, the Utkal Provincial *Kisan Sabha,* organized by Malati Chowdhury and others in 1935, succeeded in getting the *kisan* manifesto accepted by the PCC as part of its election manifesto, and the Ministry that followed introduced significant agrarian legislation. In the Orissa States, a powerful movement in which tribals also participated was led on the question of forced labour, rights in forests, and the reduction of rent. Major clashes occurred in Dhenkanal and thousands fled the state to escape repression. The *kisans* of Ghalla Dhir state in the North-West Frontier Province protested against evictions and feudal exactions by their Nawab. In Gujarat the main demand was for the abolition of the system of *hali* (bonded labour) and a significant success was registered. The Central Provinces *Kisan Sabha* led a march to Nagpur demanding the abolition of the *malguzari* system, reduction of taxes and moratorium on debts.

Effects of Second World War

The rising tide of peasant awakening was checked by the outbreak of World War II which brought about the resignation of the Congress Ministries and the launching of severe repression against left-wing and *kisan sabha* leaders and workers because of their strong anti-War stance. The adoption by the CPI of the Peoples' War line in December 1941 following Hitler's attack on the Soviet Union created dissensions between the Communist and non-Communist members of the *kisan sabha*. These dissensions came to a head with the Quit India Movement, in which Congress Socialist members played a leading role. The CPI because of its pro-War People's War line asked its cadres to stay away, and though many local level workers did join the Quit India Movement, the party line sealed the rift in the *kisan sabha* ranks, resulting in a split in 1943. In these years three major leaders of the All India *Kisan Sabha*, N.G. Ranga, Swami Sahajanand Saraswati and Indulal Yagnik, left the organization.

Nevertheless, during the War years the *kisan sabha* continued to play an important role in various kinds of relief work, as for example in the Bengal Famine of 1943, and helped to lessen the rigour of shortages of essential: goods, rationing and the like. It also continued its organizational work, despite being severely handicapped by its taking the unpopular pro-War stance which alienated it from various sections of the peasantry.

The end of the War, followed by the negotiations for the transfer of power and the anticipation of freedom, marked a qualitatively new stage in the development of the peasant movement. A new spirit was evident and the certainty of approaching freedom with the promise of a new social order encouraged peasants, among other social groups, to assert their rights and claims with a new vigour.

Many struggles that had been left off in 1939 were renewed. The demand for *zamindari* abolition was pressed with a greater sense of urgency. The organization of agricultural workers in Andhra which had begun a few years earlier took on the form of a struggle for higher wages and use of standard measures for payment of wages in kind.

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The peasants of Punnapra-Vayalar in Travancore fought bloody battles with the administration. In Telengana, the peasants organized themselves to resist the landlords' oppression and played an important role in the anti-Nizam struggle. Similar events took place in other parts of the country.

Tebhaga Struggle in Bengal

But in British India. They were no doubt encouraged by the fact that the Bengal Land Revenue Commission, popularly known as the Floud Commission, had already made this recommendation in its report to the government. The Hajong tribals were simultaneously demanding commutation of their kind rents into cash rents. The *tebhaga* movement, led by the Bengal Provincial *Kisan Sabha*, soon developed into a clash between *jotedars* and *bargadars* with the *bargadars* insisting on storing the crop in their own *khamars*.

Did u know? It was the *tebhaga* struggle in Bengal that held the limelight. In late 1946, the share-croppers of Bengal began to assert that they would no longer pay a half share of their crop to the *jotedars* but only one-third and that before division the crop would be stored in their *khamars* (godowns) and not that of the *jotedars*.

The movement received a great boost in late January 1947 when the Muslim League Ministry led by Suhrawardy published the Bengal Bargadars Temporary Regulation Bill in the *Calcutta Gazette* on 22 January 1947. Encouraged by the fact that the demand for *tebhaga* could no longer be called illegal, peasants in hitherto untouched villages and areas joined the struggle. In many places, peasants tried to remove the paddy already stored in the *jotedars' khamars* to their own, and this resulted in innumerable clashes.

The *jotedars* appealed to the Government, and the police came in to suppress the peasants. Major clashes ensued at a few places, the most important being the one at Khanpur in which twenty peasants were killed. Repression continued and by the end of February the movement was virtually dead. A few incidents occurred in March as well, but these were only the death pangs of a dying struggle.

The Muslim League Ministry failed to pursue the bill in the Assembly and it was only in 1950 that the Congress Ministry passed a Bargadars Bill which incorporated, in substance, the demands of the movement.

The main centres of the movement were Dinajpur, Rangpur, Jalpaiguri, Mymensingh, Midnapore, and to a lesser extent 24-Parganas and Khulna. Initially, the base was among the Rajbansi Kshatriya peasants, but it soon spread to Muslims, Hajongs, Santhals and Oraons. Among the important leaders of this movement were Krishnobinode Ray, Abani Lahiri, Sunil Sen, Bhowani Sen, Moni Singh, Ananta Singh, Bhibuti Guha, Ajit Ray, Sushil Sen, Samar Ganguli, and Gurudas Talukdar.

Peasant Movements and National Movement

To draw up a balance sheet of such a diverse and varied struggle is no easy task, but it can be asserted that perhaps the most important contribution of the peasant movements that covered large areas of the subcontinent in the 30s and 40s was that even when they did not register immediate successes, they created the climate which necessitated the post-Independence agrarian reforms. *Zamindari* abolition, for example, did not come about as a direct culmination of any particular struggle, but the popularization of the demand by the *kisan sabha* certainly contributed to its achievement.

The immediate demands on which struggles were fought in the pre-Independence days were the reduction of taxes, the abolition of illegal cesses or feudal levies and *begar* or *vethi*, the ending of oppression by landlords and their agents, the reduction of debts, the restoration of illegally or illegitimately seized lands, and security of tenure for tenants. Except in a few pockets like Andhra and Gujarat, the demands of agricultural labourers did not really become part of the movement.

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These demands were based on the existing consciousness of the peasantry of their just or legitimate rights, which was itself a product of tradition, custom, usage, and legal rights. When landlords or the Government demanded what was seen by peasants as illegitimate — high taxes, exorbitant rents, illegal cesses, forced labour or rights over land which the peasants felt was theirs — they were willing to resist if they could muster the necessary organizational and other resources. But they were also willing to continue to respect what they considered legitimate demands.

The struggles based on these demands were clearly not aimed at the overthrow of the existing agrarian structure but towards alleviating its most oppressive aspects. Nevertheless, they corroded the power of the landed classes in many ways and thus prepared the ground for the transformation of the structure itself. The *kisan* movement was faced with the task of transforming the peasants' consciousness and building movements based on a transformed consciousness.

It is also important to note that, by and large, the forms of struggle and mobilization adopted by the peasant movements in diverse areas were similar in nature as were their demands. The main focus was on mobilization through meetings, conferences, rallies, demonstrations, enrolment of members, formation, of *kisan sabhas* or *ryotu* and *karshaka sanghams*. Direct action usually involved *Satyagraha* or civil disobedience, and non-payment of rent and taxes. All these forms had become the stock-in-trade of the national movement for the past several years. As in the national movement, violent clashes were the exception and not the norm. They were rarely sanctioned by the leadership and were usually popular responses to extreme repression.

The relationship of the peasant movement with the national movement continued to be one of a vital and integral nature. For one, areas where the peasant movement was active were usually the ones that had been drawn into the earlier national struggles. This was true at least of Punjab, Kerala, Andhra, U.P. and Bihar. This was hardly surprising since it was the spread of the national movement that had created the initial conditions required for the emergence of peasant struggles — a politicized and conscious peasantry and a band of active political workers capable of and willing to perform the task of organization and leadership.

In its ideology as well, the *kisan* movement accepted and based itself on the ideology of nationalism. Its cadres and leaders carried the message not only of organization of the peasantry on class lines but also of national freedom. As we have shown earlier, in most areas *kisan* activists simultaneously enrolled *kisan sabha* and Congress members.

True, in some regions, like Bihar, serious differences emerged between sections of Congressmen and the *kisan sabha* and at times the *kisan* movement seemed set on a path of confrontation with the Congress, but this tended to happen only when both left-wing activists and right-wing or conservative Congressmen took extreme positions and showed an unwillingness to accommodate each other. Before 1942 these differences were usually contained and the *kisan* movement and the national movement occupied largely common ground. With the experience of the split of 1942, the *kisan* movement found that if it diverged too far and too clearly from the path of the national movement, it tended to lose its mass base, as well as create a split within the ranks of its leadership. The growth and development of the peasant movement was thus indissolubly linked with the national struggle for freedom.

8.3 The Trade Union Movement

The Trade Union Movement: A trade union may be defined as "a continuous association of wage-earners for the purpose of maintaining or improving the conditions of their working lives". Political motivations and ideologies influenced the Indian trade union movement and were in turn influenced by its increased strength.

The twin aspects of the Indian Trade Union movement—labour organisation for industrial bargaining and its ideological orientation—should be viewed in the larger background of the naionalist struggle against imperialism and the emergence of politically-inspired opposing International Labour organisations.

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Early History: Ironically the first ever demand for regulation of the condition of workers in factories in India came from the Lancashire textile capitalist lobby; apprehending the emergence of a competitive rival in the Indian textile industry under conditions of cheap and unregulated labour, they demanded the appointment of a commission for investigation into factory conditions. The first commission was appointed in 1875 although the First Factory Act was not passed before 1881. The Act prohibited the employment of children under the age of 7, limited the number of working hours for children below the age of 12 years and provided that dangerous machinery should be fenced. Under similar extraneous pressure from British textile interests the Factory Act of 1891 was passed which limited the working day to 11 hours with an interval of 1½ hours for women labour, increased the minimum and maximum ages of children from 7 and 12 years and 14 years Similar circumstances resulted in the enactment of factory acts for jute industry in 1909 and 1911. The opening decade of the 20th century also gave the first ever demonstration of the emerging political consciousness among the Indian working class; the Bombay workers went on a political six-day strike over the conviction and inprisonment of Lokamanya Tilak in 1908—a development which elicited Lenin's comments that "the Indian proletariat has already matured sufficiently to wage a class-conscious and political mass struggle".

First World War, Left Awakening and Organised Trade Unionism: The First World War and its aftermath brought a period of soaring prices, unprecedented profiteering for the industrialists but miserably low wages for the workers. The average dividend paid by the jute mills during 1915-24 was 140% (420% in 1919), while the average wage of workers in the industry was only £ 12 p.a. Similarly the cotton mill industry paid an average dividend of 120% (the highest being 365%).

The emergence of Mahatma Gandhi on the national scene also marked a determined bid to broad-base the nationalist movement and mobilisation of the workers and the peasants for the national cause. It was felt that the workers should be organised into a national Trade Union and drawn into the vortex of the struggle for independence. At almost the same time the October Revolution in Russia and the formation of the Comintern was a open call to the workers of the world to combine to dispossess the capitalists and institute a Proletarian Revolution. The setting up of the League of Nations' Agency I.L.O. (International Labour Organisation) gave an international complexion to the labour problem.

The initiative in organising a Trade Union on the national basis was taken by the nationalist leaders and the All-India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) was founded on 31 October 1920. The Indian National Congress President of the year, Lala Lajpat Rai, was elected its President. The national leaders kept close association with this Trade Union and nationalist leaders like C.R. Das, V.V. Giri and later on Sarojini Naidu, J.L. Nehru and Subhash Bose presided over its annual sessions. By 1927 the number of trade unions affiliated to the AITUC increased to 57 with a total membership of 1,50,555. To begin with the AITUC was influenced by social democratic ideas of the British Labour Party. Despite some Socialist leanings the AITUC remained, by and large, under the influence of moderates like N.M. Joshi who believed that the political activities of labour organisations should not go beyond agitation for the amelioration of their economic grievances. Gandhian philosophy of non-violence, Trusteeship and class-collaboration had great influence on the movement and strike was a weapon rarely employed. The Trade Union Act of 1926 recognised trade unions as legal associations, laid down conditions for registration and regulation of trade union activities, secured their immunity, both civil and criminal, from prosecution for legitimate activities but put some restrictions on their political activities.

The rise of the Communist movement in India in the 1920s lent a militant and revolutionary content to the Trade Union movement. The 4th Congress of the Communist International sent a message to the AITUC not to be content with 'fair day's wages for a fair day's work' but to fight for the ultimate goal of overthrow of capitalism and imperialism. Further, the Indian Communists were urged to organise the Trade Union movement 'on a class basis and purge it of all alien basis'.

During 1926-27 the AITUC was divided into two groups called 'the reforming' and 'the, revolutionary' groups also labelled as the Geneva-Amsterdam group' and the 'Moscovite group',

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the former wanting AITUC to be affiliated to the International Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU) with headquarters at Amsterdam and the latter desiring affiliation with the Red Labour Union (R.I.T.U.) organised from Moscow. The Communist thinking seemed to carry greater influence. During 1928 the country witnessed unprecedented industrial unrest. The total number of strikes was 203 involving no less then 506,851 people and the total number of working days lost was 31,647,404. These strikes were inspired more by political ideas than immediate economic demands. The Communist journal *Kranti* thundered, "There is no peace until capitalism is overthrown". On the question of affiliation to an international labour body too the Communist viewpoint prevailed and the AITUC was affiliated to the Pan-Pacific Secrertariat and to the Third International at Moscow. In protest the moderate group under Joshi's leadership withdrew from the AITUC and formed the All India Trade Union Federation in 1929.

Alarmed at the increasing strength of the Trade Union movement and its control under extremist hands, the Government of India sought to contain its activities by legislative restrictions. A Public Safety Bill was introduced in the Legislative Assembly in 1928 but could not get majority support and had to be issued in the form of an ordinance in 1929. The Trade Disputes Act (1929) provided, among other provisions, for compulsory appointment of Courts of Enquiry and Conciliation Boards for settling industrial disputes, made strikes illegal in public utility services (like Postal Service, Railways, Water and Electricity Departments) unless each individual worker planning to go on strike gave an advance notice of one month to the Administration and, above all, forbade trade union activities of coercieve or purely political nature and even sympathetic strikes.

The Meerut Conspiracy Trial: In March 1929 the Government of Lord Irwin arrested the principal leaders of the working class movement and brought them to Meerut for trial. The principal charge against the 31 trade union leaders was of "conspiring to deprive the King of his Sovereignty of India". The trial lasted 3½ years and resulted in the conviction of Muzaffar Ahmed, Dange, Joglekar, Spratt, Bradley, Usmani and others to various terms of transportation or rigorous imprisonment. However, the Meerut trial (1929-33) attracted world-wide publicity and drew symphathetic comments from Prof, instein, H.G. Wells, Harold Laski and even President Roosevelt. In 1933, the Joint Council of the British Trade Union Congress and Labour Party described it as "a judicial scandal". In Indian it brought the Leftists and the Rightists together and a broad-based Central Defence Committee defended the case.

The Meerut trial dealt a 'heavy immediate blow' to the working class movement and weakened the political role of the working class in the national struggle that followed—as had been the intention of imperialism.

During the Non-cooperation Movement (1930-34) the Government struck hard at the workers and resorted to large-scale arrests, victimization through repression, legislation and appointment of commissions. These developments drove home to the union leaders the lesson of unity. The Congress Socialist Party founded in 1934 also worked for unity between the moderate and radical trade unions. During 1935-36 the three trade union organisations viz., AITUC, the Red Trade Union Congress and the National Federation of Trade Unions worked towards unity though the merger was not formalised before April 1938.

Popular Governments in Provinces and Trade Unionism: The formation of Congress ministries in six provinces in 1937 gave a fillip to trade union activities and the number of trade unions increased to 296 by 1938. The Congress ministries showed a sympathetic attitude towards the workers' demands. The most successful strike during this period was of Kanpur workers strike which continued for 55 days and involved 10,000 workers. The Government appointed the Kanpur Labour Enquiry Committee under the chairmanship of Babu Rajendra Prasad. The Congress governments in Bihar, Bombay, the U.P. and the C.P. also appointed Labour Enquiry Committees which made liberal recommendations for improvement of the lot of workers. Some beneficial legislations like the Bombay Industrial Disputes Act (1938), the Bombay Shop Assistants Act (1939), the C.P. Maternity Act (1939), and the Bengal Maternity Act (1939) were enacted.

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Self- Assessment

2. Fill in the blanks:

(*i*) A Kissan manifesto was finalized at the All-India Kissan committee session in ..... .

(*ii*) The 6th of November ..... was observed as the Malabar tenancy Act Amendment day.

(*iii*) In Orissa, the Utkal Provincial Kisan Sabha, organised ..... .

(*iv*) The first commission was appointed in ..... although the First Factory Act was not passed before 1881.

(*v*) During 1926-27 the AITCIC was divided into two groups called ..... and the revlutionary groups also called Geneva Amsterdam Group and the Mascovite Group.

8.4. Summary

- It was the more active members of the Home Rule League in U.P. who initiated the process of the organization of the peasants of the province on modern lines into *kisan sabhas*. The U.P. *Kisan Sabha* was set up in February 1918 through the efforts of Gauri Shankar Misra and Indra Narain Dwivedi, and with the support of Madan Mohan Malaviya.
- In June 1920, Baba Ramchandra led a few hundred tenants from the Jaunpur and Pratapgarh districts to Allahabad. There he met Gauri Shankar Misra and Jawaharlal Nehru and asked them to visit the villages to see for themselves the living conditions of the tenants. The result was that, between June and August, Jawaharlal Nehru made several visits to the rural areas and developed close contacts with the *Kisan Sabha* movement.
- They succeeded in getting Ramchandra and thirty-two kisans arrested on a trumped-up charge of theft on 28 August 1920.
- Mehta was called back from leave to deal with the situation and he quickly withdrew the case of theft and attempted to bring pressure on the landlords to change their ways. This easy victory, however, gave a new confidence to the movement and it burgeoned forth.
- Congress at Calcutta had chosen the path of non-cooperation and many nationalists of U.P. had committed themselves to the new political path. But there were others, including Madan Mohan Malaviya, who preferred to stick to constitutional agitation. These differences were reflected in the U.P. *Kisan Sabha* as well, and soon the Non-cooperators set up an alternative Oudh *Kisan Sabha* at Pratapgarh on 17 October 1920.
- The Eka meetings were marked by a religious ritual in which a hole that represented the river Ganges was dug in the ground and filled with water, a priest was brought in to preside and the assembled peasants vowed that they would pay only the recorded rent but pay it on time, would not leave when ejected, would refuse to do forced labour, would give no help to criminals and abide by the panchayat decisions.
- In August 1921, peasant discontent erupted in the Malabar district of Kerala. Here Mappila (Muslim) tenants rebelled. Their grievances related to lack of any security of tenure, renewal fees, high rents, and other oppressive landlord exactions. In the nineteenth century as well, there had been cases of Mappila resistance to landlord oppression but what erupted in 1921 was on a different scale together.
- The Manjeri conference was followed by the formation of a tenants' association at Kozhikode, and soon tenants' associations were set up in other parts of the district.
- on 5 February 1921. On 18 February, all the prominent Khilafat and Congress leaders, Yakub Hasan, U. Gopala Menon, P. Moideen Koya and K. Madhavan Nair, were arrested.
- Thomas, on 20 August 1921, accompanied by a contingent of police and troops, raided the mosque at Tirurangadi to arrest Ali Musahar, a Khilafat leader and a highly respected priest. They found only three fairly insignificant Khilafat volunteers and arrested them.

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- Forced conversions, attacks on and murders of Hindus increased as the sense of desperation mounted. What had been largely an anti-government and anti-landlord affair acquired strong communal overtones.
- The toll was heavy indeed: 2,337 Mappilas had lost their lives. Unofficial estimates placed the number at above 10,000. A total of 45,404 rebels were captured or had surrendered. But the toll was in fact even heavier, though in a very different way. From then onwards, the militant Mappilas were so completely crushed and demoralized that till independence their participation in any form of politics was almost nil. They neither joined the national movement nor the peasant movement that was to grow in Kerala in later years under the Left leadership.
- In Avadh, in the early months of 1921 when peasant activity was at its peak, it was difficult to distinguish between a Non-cooperation meeting and a peasant rally.
- This divergence between the actions and perceptions of peasants and local leaders and the understanding of the national leaders had often been interpreted as a sign of the fear of the middle class or bourgeois leadership that the movement would go out of its own 'safe' hands into that of supposedly more radical and militant leaders of the people.
- Their advice that peasants should not push things too far with the landlords by refusing to pay rent could also stem from other considerations. The peasants themselves were not demanding abolition of rent or landlordism, they only wanted an end to ejectments, illegal levies, and exorbitant rents
- The no tax movement that was launched in Bardoli *taluq* of Surat district in Gujarat in 1928 was also in many ways a child of the Non-cooperation days. Bardoli *taluq* had been selected in 1922 as the place from where Gandhiji would launch the civil disobedience campaign
- The relationship of Bardoli and other peasant struggles with the struggle for freedom can best be described in Gandhiji's pithy words: 'Whatever the Bardoli struggle may be, it clearly is not a struggle for the direct attainment of *swaraj*. That every such awakening, every such effort as that of Bardoli will bring *swaraj* nearer and may bring it nearer even than any direct effort is undoubtedly true.
- The Civil Disobedience Movement was launched in this atmosphere of discontent in 1930, and in many parts of the country it soon took on the form of a no-tax and no-rent campaign.
- The Civil Disobedience Movement contributed to the emerging peasant movement in another very important way; a whole new generation of young militant, political cadres was born from its womb.
- The culmination was the establishment of the All-India *Kisan* Congress in Lucknow in April 1936 which later changed its name to the All-India *Kisan Sabha*. Swami Sahajanand, the militant founder of the Bihar Provincial *Kisan Sabha* (1929), was elected the President, and N.G. Ranga, the pioneer of the *kisan* movement in Andhra and a renowned scholar of the agrarian problem, the General Secretary.
- At Faizpur, in Maharashtra, along with the Congress session, was held the second session of the All India *Kisan* Congress presided over by N.G. Ranga.
- The formation of Congress Ministries in a majority of the provinces in early 1937 marked the beginning of a new phase in the growth of the peasant movement.
- In Malabar, in Kerala, for example, a powerful peasant movement developed as the result of the efforts mainly of CSP activists, who had been working among the peasants since 1934, touring villages and setting up *Karshaka Sanghams* (peasant associations).
- The *Karshaka Sanghams* also organized a powerful campaign around the demand for amending the Malabar Tenancy Act of 1929. The 6th of November, 1938 was observed as the Malabar Tenancy Act Amendment Day, and meetings all over the district passed a uniform resolution pressing the demand.
- The Muslim League Ministry failed to pursue the bill in the Assembly and it was only in 1950 that the Congress Ministry passed a Bargadars Bill which incorporated, in substance, the demands of the movement.

Notes

- A trade union may be defined as "a continuous association of wage-earners for the purpose of maintaining or improving the conditions of their working lives". Political motivations and ideologies influenced the Indian trade union movement and were in turn influenced by its increased strength.
- The first commission was appointed in 1875 although the First Factory Act was not passed before 1881. The Act prohibited the employment of children under the age of 7, limited the number of working hours for children below the age of 12 years and provided that dangerous machinery should be fenced.
- The initiative in organising a Trade Union on the national basis was taken by the nationalist leaders and the All-India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) was founded on 31 October 1920. The Indian National Congress President of the year, Lala Lajpat Rai, was elected its President. The national leaders kept close association with this Trade Union and nationalist leaders like C.R. Das, V.V. Giri and later on Sarojini Naidu, J.L. Nehru and Subhash Bose presided over its annual sessions.
- The 4th Congress of the Communist International sent a message to the AITUC not to be content with 'fair day's wages for a fair day's work' but to fight for the ultimate goal of overthrow of capitalism and imperialism. Further, the Indian Communists were urged to organise the Trade Union movement 'on a class basis and purge it of all alien basis'.
- In March 1929 the Government of Lord Irwin arrested the principal leaders of the working class movement and brought them to Meerut for trial. The principal charge against the 31 trade union leaders was of "conspiring to deprive the King of his Sovereignty of India".

8.5 Key-Words

1. Taluqdars : Big landlords
2. Nazrana : Illegal levies
3. Bedakhli : Arbitrary ejectments

8.6 Review Questions

1. Discuss the peasant movement in the first half of the 20th century.
2. The motive of Mappila rebellion was religious. Discuss.
3. Briefly explain the peasant movement in the 1930's and 1940's.
4. Briefly describe trade union.

Answers: Self-Assessment

1. (*i*) 2. (*ii*) 3. (*ii*) 4. (*i*) 5. (*iii*)
2. (*i*) Bombay (*ii*) 1938 (*iii*) Malti Chowdhury
   (*iv*) 1875 (*v*) the reforming

8.7 Further Readings

1. V.D. Mahajan, History of Modern India, S. Chand and Co. Ltd. New Delhi.
2. Chandra, Bipin, India's Struggle for Freedom (1857–1947) Penguin, Delhi, 1996.

Notes

Unit 9: Establishment of the Indian National Congress: Home Rule Movement, Moderates and Extremists

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9.2 Home Rule Movement and Its Fallout
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Objectives

After studying this unit students will be able to:

- Explain the theory and factors responsible for the establishment of the Congress
- Analyse Home Rule Movement
- Understand the Concept of Moderates and Extremists

Introduction

Indian National Congress was founded in December 1885 by seventy-two political workers. It was the first organized expression of Indian nationalism on an all-India scale. A.O. Hume, a retired English ICS officer, played an important role in its formation. But why was it founded by these seventy-two men and why at that time?

A powerful and long-lasting myth, the myth of 'the safety valve,' has arisen around this question. Generations of students and political activists have been fed on this myth. But despite widespread popular belief, this myth has little basis in historical fact.

The myth is that the Indian National Congress was started by A.O. Hume and others under the official direction, guidance and advice of no less a person than Lord Dufferin, the Viceroy, to provide a safe, mild, peaceful, and constitutional outlet or *safety valve* for the rising discontent among the masses, which was inevitably leading towards a popular and violent revolution. Consequently, the revolutionary potential was nipped in the bud. The core of the myth, that a violent revolution was on the cards at the time and was avoided only by the foundations of the Congress, is accepted by most writers; the liberals welcome it, the radicals use it to prove that the Congress has always been compromising if not loyalist vis-a-vis imperialism, the extreme right use it to show that the Congress has been anti-national from the beginning. All of them agree that the manner of its birth affected the basic character and future work of the Congress in a crucial manner.

9.1 Establishment of Congress, Factors Responsible for Its Foundation and Theories of its Origin

In his *Young India* published in 1916, the Extremist leader Lala Lajpat Rai used the safety-valve theory to attack the Moderates in the Congress. Having discussed the theory at length and suggested

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that the Congress 'was a product of Lord Dufferin's brain,' he argued that 'the Congress was started more with the object of saving the British Empire from danger than with that of winning political liberty for India. The interests of the British Empire were primary and those of India only secondary.' And he added: 'No one can say that the Congress has not been true to that ideal.' His conclusion was: 'So this is the genesis of the Congress, and this is sufficient to condemn it in the eyes of the advanced Nationalists.'

More than a quarter century later, R. Palme Dutt's authoritative work *India Today* made the myth of the safety-valve a staple of left-wing opinion. Emphasizing the myth, Dutt wrote that the Congress was brought into existence through direct Governmental initiative and guidance and through 'a plan secretly pre-arranged with the Viceroy' so that it (the Government) could use it 'as an intended weapon for safeguarding British rule against the rising forces of popular unrest and anti-British feeling.' It was 'an attempt to defeat, or rather forestall, an impending revolution.' The Congress did, of course, in time become a nationalist body; 'the national character began to overshadow the loyalist character.' It also became the vehicle of mass movements. But the 'original sin' of the manner of its birth left a permanent mark on its politics. Its 'two-fold character' as an institution which was created by the Government and yet became the organizer of the anti-imperialist movement 'ran right through its history.' It both fought and collaborated with imperialism. It led the mass movements and when the masses moved towards the revolutionary path, it betrayed the movement to imperialism. The Congress, thus, had two strands: 'On the one hand, the strand of cooperation with imperialism against the "menace" of the mass movement; on the other hand, the strand of leadership of the masses in the national struggle.' This duality of the Congress leadership from Gokhale to Gandhi, said Dutt, in fact reflected the two-fold and vacillating character of the Indian bourgeoisie itself; 'at once in conflict with the British bourgeoisie and desiring to lead the Indian people, yet feeling that "too rapid" advance may end in destroying its privileges along with those of the imperialists.' The Congress had, thus, become an organ of opposition to real revolution, that is, a violent revolution. But this role did not date from Gandhiji; 'this principle was implanted in it by imperialism at the outset as its intended official role.' The culmination of this dual role was its 'final capitulation with the Mountbatten Settlement.

Earlier, in 1939, M.S. Golwalkar, the RSS chief, had also found the safety-valve theory handy in attacking the Congress for its secularism and, therefore, anti-nationalism. In his pamphlet *We* Golwalkar complained that Hindu national consciousness had been destroyed by those claiming to be 'nationalists' who had pushed the 'notions of democracy' and the perverse notion that 'our old invaders and foes', the Muslims, had something in common with Hindus. Consequently, 'we have allowed our foes to be our friends and with our hands are undermining true nationality.' In fact, the fight in India was not between Indians and the British only. It was 'a triangular fight.' Hindus were at war with Muslims on the one hand and with the British on the other. What had led Hindus to enter the path of 'denationalization,' said Golwalkar, were the aims and policy laid down by Hume, Cotton, and Wedderburn in 1885; 'the Congress they founded as a "safety valve" to "seething nationalism," as a toy which would full the awakening giant into slumber, an instrument to destroy National consciousness, has been, as far as they are concerned, a success.

The liberal C.F. Andrews and Girija Mukerji fully accepted the safety-valve theory in their work, *The Rise and Growth of the Congress in India* published in 1938. They were happy with it because it had helped avoid 'useless bloodshed.' Before as well as after 1947, tens of scholars and hundreds of popular writers have repeated some version of these points of view.

Hume and Secret Reports

Historical proof of the safety-valve theory was provided by the seven volumes of secret reports which Hume claimed to have read at Simla in the summer of 1878 and which convinced him of the existence of 'seething discontent' and a vast conspiracy among the lower classes to violently overthrow British rule.

Before we unravel the mystery of the seven volumes, let us briefly trace the history of its rise and growth. It was first mentioned in William Wedderburn's biography of A.O. Hume published in 1913. Wedderburn (ICS) found an undated memorandum in Hume's papers which dealt with the

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foundation of the Congress. He quoted at length from this document. To keep the mystery alive so that the reader may go along with the writer step by step towards its solution, I will withhold an account of Wedderburn's writing, initially giving only those paragraphs which were quoted by the subsequent writers. According to Lajpat Rai, despite the fact that Hume was 'a lover of liberty and wanted political liberty for India under the aegis of the British crown,' he was above all 'an English patriot.' Once he saw that British rule was threatened with 'an impending calamity,' he decided to create a safety valve for the discontent.

As decisive proof of this Lajpat Rai provided a long quotation from Hume's memorandum that Wedderburn had mentioned along with his own comments in his book. Since this passage is quoted or cited by all subsequent authors, it is necessary to reproduce it here at length.

"I was shown," wrote Hume, "several large volumes containing a vast number of entries; English abstracts or translations — longer or shorter — of vernacular reports or communications of one kind or another, all arranged according to districts (not identical with ours) . . . The number of these entries was enormous; there were said, at the time to be communications from over 30,000 different reporters." He (Hume) mentions that he had the volumes in his possession only for a week . . . Many of the entries reported conversations between men of the lowest classes, "all going to show that these poor men were pervaded with a sense of the hopelessness of the existing state of affairs; that they were convinced that they would starve and die, and that they wanted to do *something*, and stand by each other, and *that something meant violence* . . . a certain small number of the educated classes, at the time desperately, perhaps unreasonably, bitter against the Government, would join the movement, assume here and there the lead, give the outbreak cohesion, and direct it as a national revolt."

Very soon, the seven volumes, whose character, origin, etc., were left undefined in Lajpat Rai's quotation, started undergoing a metamorphosis. In 1933, in Gurmukh Nihal Singh's hands, they became 'government reports.' Andrews and Mukerji. transformed them into 'several volumes of secret reports from the CID' which came into Hume's possession 'in his official capacity.' The classical and most influential statement came from R. Palme Dutt. After quoting the passage quoted by Lajpat Rai from Wedderburn, Dutt wrote: 'Hume in his official capacity had received possession of the voluminous secret police reports. Numerous other historians of the national movement including recent ones such as R.C. Majumdar and Tara Chand, were to accept this product of he creative imagination of these writers as historical fact.

So deeply rooted had become the belief in Hume's volumes as official documents that in the 1950s a large number of historians and would-be historians, including the present writer, devoted a great deal of time and energy searching for them in the National Archives. And when their search proved futile, they consoled themselves with the thought that the British had destroyed them before their departure in 1947. Yet only if the historians had applied a minimum of their historiographic sense to the question and looked at the professed evidence a bit more carefully, they would not have been taken for a ride. Three levels of historical evidence and logic were available to them even before the private papers of Ripon and Dufferin became available.

A perusal of Dufferin's private papers thrown open to scholars in the late 1950s, should have put an end to the myth of Dufferin's sponsorship of or support to the Congress. It was only after Hume had sent him a copy of the letter to the *Indian Spectator* with a covering note deprecating Malabari's views on social reform that Dufferin *expressed agreement with Hume* and asked him to meet him. Definite confirmation of the fact that Hume never proposed a social gathering but rather a political one comes in Dufferin's letter to Lord Reay, Governor of Bombay, after his first meeting with Hume in May 1885: "At his last interview he told me that he and his friends were going to assemble a political convention of delegates, as far as I understood, on the lines adopted by O'Connell previous to Catholic emancipation."

Neither Dufferin and his fellow-liberal Governors of Bombay and Madras nor his conservative officials like Alfred and J.B. Lyall, D.M. Wallace, A. Colvin and S.C. Bayley were sympathetic to the Congress.

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Did u know? It was not only in 1888 that Dufferin attacked the Congress in a vicious manner by writing that he would consider 'in what way the happy despatch may be best applied to the Congress,' for 'we cannot allow the Congress to continue to exist.'

In May 1885 itself, he had written to Reay asking him to be careful about Hume's Congress, telling him that it would be unwise to identify with either the reformers or the reactionaries. Reay in turn, in a letter in June 1885, referred with apprehension to the new political activists as 'the National Party of India' and warned against Indian delegates, like Irish delegates, making their appearance on the British political scene. Earlier, in May, Reay had cautioned Dufferin that Hume was 'the head-centre of an organization . . . (which) has for its object to bring native opinion into a focus.

In fact, from the end of May 1885, Dufferin had grown cool to Hume and began to keep him at an arm's length. From 1886 onwards he also began to attack the 'Bengali *Baboos* and Mahratta Brahmins' for being 'inspired by questionable motives' and for wanting to start Irish-type revolutionary agitations in India. And, during May-June 1886, he was describing Hume as 'cleverish, a little cracked, excessively vain, and absolutely indifferent to truth,' his main fault being that he was 'one of the chief stimulants of the Indian Home Rule movement.

Notes The foundation of the Indian National Congress in 1885 was not a sudden event, or a historical accident. It was the culmination of a process of political awakening that had its beginnings in the 1860s and 1870s and took a major leap forward in the late 1870s and early 1880s.

The year 1885 marked a turning point in this process, for that was the year the political Indians, the modern intellectuals interested in politics, who no longer saw themselves as spokesmen of narrow group interests, but as representatives of national interest vis-a-vis foreign rule, as a 'national party,' saw their efforts bear fruit. The all-India nationalist body that they brought into being was to be the platform, the organizer, the headquarters, the symbol of the new national spirit and politics.

British officialdom, too, was not slow in reading the new messages that were being conveyed through the nationalist political activity leading to the founding of the Congress, and watched them with suspicion, and a sense of foreboding. As this political activity gathered force, the prospect of disloyalty, sedition and Irish-type agitations began to haunt the Government.

The official suspicion was not merely the over-anxious response of an administration that had not yet recovered from the mutiny complex, but was, in fact, well-founded. On the surface, the nationalist Indian demands of those years — no reduction of import duties on textile imports, no expansion in Afghanistan or Burma, the right to bear arms, freedom of the Press, reduction of military expenditure, higher expenditure on famine relief, Indianization of the civil services, the right of Indians to join the semi-military volunteer corps, the right of Indian judges to try Europeans in criminal cases, the appeal to British voters to vote for a party which would listen to Indians — look rather mild, especially when considered separately. But these were demands which a colonial regime could not easily concede, for that would undermine its hegemony over the colonial people. It is true that any criticism or demand no matter how innocuous its appearance but which cannot be accommodated by a system is in the long-run subversive of the system.

The new political thrust in the years between 1875 and 1885 was the creation of the younger, more radical nationalist intellectuals most of whom entered politics during this period. They established new associations, having found that the older associations were too narrowly conceived in terms

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of their programmes and political activity as well as social bases. For example, the British Indian Association of Bengal had increasingly identified itself with the interests of the *zamindars* and, thus, gradually lost its anti-British edge. The Bombay Association and Madras Native Association had become reactionary and moribund. And so the younger nationalists of Bengal, led by Surendranath Banerjea and Anand Mohan Bose, founded the Indian Association in 1876. Younger men of Madras — M. Viraraghavachariar, G. Subramaniya Iyer, P. Ananda Charlu and others — formed the Madras Mahajan Sabha in 1884. In Bombay, the more militant intellectuals like K.T. Telang and Pherozeshah Mehta broke away from older leaders like Dadabhai Framji and Dinshaw Petit on political grounds and formed the Bombay Presidency Association in 1885. Among the older associations only the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha carried on as before. But, then, it was already in the hands of nationalist intellectuals.

A sign of new political life in the country was the coming into existence during these years of nearly all the major nationalist newspapers which were to dominate the Indian scene till 1918 — *The Hindu, Tribune*, *Bengalee, Mahratta* and *Kesari*. The one exception was the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* which was already edited by new and younger men. It became an English language newspaper only in 1878.

By 1885, the formation of an all-India political organization had become an objective necessity, and the necessity was being recognized by nationalists all over the country. Many recent scholars have furnished detailed information on the many moves that were made in that direction from 1877. These moves acquired a greater sense of urgency especially from 1883 and there was intense political activity. The *Indian Mirror* of Calcutta was carrying on a continuous campaign on the question. The Indian Association had already in December 1883 organized an All-India National Conference and given a call for another one in December 1885. (Surendranath Banerjea, who was involved in the All-India National Conference, could not for that reason attend the founding session of the National Congress in 1885).

Meanwhile, the Indians had gained experience, as well as confidence, from the large number of agitations they had organized in the preceding ten years. Since 1875, there had been a continuous campaign around cotton import duties which Indians wanted to stay in the interests of the Indian textile industry. A massive campaign had been organized during 1877-88 around the demand for the Indianization of Government services. The Indians had opposed the Afghan adventure of Lord Lytton and then compelled the British Government to contribute towards the cost of the Second Afghan War. The Indian Press had waged a major campaign against the efforts of the Government to control it through the Vernacular Press Act. The Indians had also opposed the effort to disarm them through the Arms Act. In 1881-82 they had organized a protest against the Plantation Labour and the Inland Emigration Act which condemned plantation labourers to serfdom. A major agitation was organized during 1883 in favour of the llbert Bill which would enable Indian magistrates to try Europeans. This Bill was successfully thwarted by the Europeans. The Indians had been quick to draw the political lesson. Their efforts had failed because they had not been coordinated on an all-India basis. On the other hand, the Europeans had acted in a concerted manner. Again in July 1883 a massive all-India effort was made to raise a National Fund which would be used to promote political agitation in India as well as England. In 1885, Indians fought for the right to join the volunteer corps restricted to Europeans, and then organized an appeal to British voters to vote for those candidates who were friendly towards India. Several Indians were sent to Britain to put the Indian case before British yoters through public speeches, and other means.

It, thus, becomes clear that the foundation of the Congress was the natural culmination of the political work of the previous years. By 1885, a stage had been reached in the political development of India when certain basic tasks or objectives had to be laid down and struggled for. Moreover, these objectives were correlated and could only be fulfilled by the coming together of political workers in a single organization formed on an all-India basis. The men who met in Bombay on 28 December 1885 were inspired by these objectives and hoped to initiate the process of achieving them. The success or failure and the future character of the Congress would be determined not by who founded it but by the extent to which these objectives were achieved in the initial years.

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The Process of becoming a Nation

India had just entered the process of becoming a nation or a people. The first major objective of the founders of the Indian national movement was to promote this process, to weld Indians into a nation, to create an Indian people. It was common for colonial administrators and ideologues to assert that Indians could not be united or freed because they were not a nation or a people but a geographical expression, a mere congeries of hundreds of diverse races and creeds. The Indians did not deny this but asserted that they were now becoming a nation. India was as Tilak, Surendranath Banerjee and many others were fond of saying — a nation-in-the-making. The Congress leaders recognized that objective historical forces were bringing the Indian people together. But they also realized that the people had to become subjectively aware of the objective process and that for this it was necessary to promote the feeling of national unity and nationalism among them.

Above all, India being a nation-in-the-making, its nationhood could not be taken for granted. It had to be constantly developed and consolidated. The promotion of national unity was a major objective of the Congress and later its major achievement. For example, P. Ananda Charlu in his presidential address to the Congress in 1891 described it 'as a mighty nationalizer,' and said that this was its most 'glorious' role. Among the three basic aims and objectives of the Congress laid down by its first President, W.C. Banerjee, was that of 'the fuller development and consolidation of those sentiments of national unity.' The Russian traveller, I.P. Minayeff, wrote in his diary that, when travelling with Banerjee, he asked, 'what practical results did the Congress leaders expect from the Congress,' Banerjee replied: 'Growth of national feeling and unity of Indians.' Similarly, commenting on the first Congress session, the *Indu Prakash* of Bombay wrote: It marks the beginning of a new life . . . it will greatly help in creating a national feeling and binding together distant people by common sympathies, and common ends.'

The making of India into a nation was to be a prolonged historical process. Moreover, the Congress leaders realized that the diversity of India was such that special efforts unknown to other parts of the world would have to be made and national unity carefully nurtured. In an effort to reach , all regions, it was decided to rotate the Congress session among different parts of the country. The President was to belong to a region other than where the Congress session was being held.

To reach out to the followers of all religions and to remove the fears of the minorities, a rule was made at the 1888 session that no resolution was to be passed to which an overwhelming majority of Hindu or Muslim delegates objected. In 1889, a minority clause was adopted in the resolution demanding reform of legislative councils. According to the clause, wherever Parsis, Christians, Muslims or Hindus were a minority their number elected to the Councils would not be less than their proportion in the population. The reason given by the mover of the resolution was that India was not yet a homogenous country and political methods here had, therefore, to differ from those in Europe.

The early national leaders were also determined to build a secular nation, the Congress itself being intensely secular.

The second major objective of the early Congress was to create a common political platform or programme around which political workers in different parts of the country could gather and conduct their political activities, educating and mobilizing people on an all-India basis. This was to be accomplished by taking up those grievances and fighting for those rights which Indians had in common in relation to the rulers.

For the same reason the Congress was not to take up questions of social reform. At its second session, the President of the Congress, Dadabhai Naoroji, laid down this rule and said that 'A National Congress must confine itself to questions in which the entire nation has a direct participation.' Congress was, therefore, not the right place to discuss social reforms. 'We are met together,' he said, 'as a political body to represent to our rulers our political aspirations.'

Modem politics — the politics of popular participation, agitation, mobilization — was new to India. The notion that politics was not the preserve of the few but the domain of everyone was not yet familiar to the people. No modern political movement was possible till people realized this. And,

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then, on the basis of this realization, an informed and determined political opinion had to be created. The arousal, training, organization and consolidation of public opinion was seen as a major task by the Congress leaders. All initial activity of the early nationalism was geared towards this end.

The first step was seen to be the politicization and unification of the opinion of the educated, and then of other sections. The primary objective was to go beyond the redressal of immediate grievances and organize *sustained* political activity along the lines of the Anti-Com Law League (formed in Britain by Cobden and Bright in 1838 to secure reform of Com Laws). The leaders as well as the people also had to gain confidence in their own capacity to organize political opposition to the most powerful state of the day.

All this was no easy task. A prolonged period of politicization would be needed. Many later writers and critics have concentrated on the methods of political struggle of the early nationalist leaders, on their petitions, prayers and memorials. It is, of course, true that they did not organize mass movements and mass struggles. But the critics have missed out the most important part of their activity — that all of it led to politics, to the politicization of the people. Justice Ranade, who was known as a political sage, had, in his usual perceptive manner, seen this as early as 1891. When the young and impatient twenty-six-year-old Gokhale expressed disappointment when the Government sent a two line reply to a carefully and laboriously prepared memorial by the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha, Ranade reassured him: 'You don't realize our place in the history of our country. These memorials are nominally addressed to Government, in reality they are addressed to the people, so that they may learn how to think in these matters. This work must be done for many years, without expecting any other result, because politics of this kind is altogether new in this land.

As part of the basic objective of giving birth to a national movement, it was necessary to create a common all-India national-political leadership, that is, to construct what Antonio Gramsci, the famous Italian Marxist, calls the headquarters of a movement. Nations and people become capable of meaningful and effective political action only when they are organized. They become a people or 'historical subjects' only when they are organized as such. The first step in a national movement is taken when the 'carriers' of national feeling or national identity begin to organize the people. But to be able to do so successfully, these 'carriers' or leaders must themselves be unified; they must share a collective identification, that is, they must come to know each other and share and evolve a common outlook, perspective, sense of purpose, as also common feelings. According to the circular which, in March 1885, informed political workers of the coming Congress session, the Congress was intended 'to enable all the most earnest labourers in the cause of national progress to become personally known to each other.' W.C. Banerjee, as the first Congress President, reiterated that one of the Congress objectives was the 'eradication, by direct friendly personal intercourse, of all possible race, creed, or provincial prejudices amongst all lovers of our country,' and 'the promotion of personal intimacy and friendship amongst all the more earnest workers in our country's cause in (all) parts of the Empire.

In other words, the founders of the Congress understood that the first requirement of a national movement was a national leadership. The social-ideological complexion that this leadership would acquire was a question that was different from the main objective of the creation of a national movement. This complexion would depend on a host of factors: the role of different social classes, ideological influences, outcomes of ideological struggles, and so on.

The early nationalist leaders saw the internalization and indigenization of political democracy as one of their main objectives. They based their politics on the doctrine of the sovereignty of the people, or, as Dadabhai Naoroji put it, on 'the new lesson that Kings are made for the people, not peoples for their Kings.

From the beginning, the Congress was organized in the form of a Parliament. In fact, the word Congress was borrowed from North American history to connote an assembly of the people. The proceedings of the Congress sessions were conducted democratically, issues being decided through debate and discussion and occasionally through voting. It was, in fact, the Congress, and not the bureaucratic and authoritarian colonial state, as some writers wrongly argue, which indigenized, popularized and rooted parliamentary democracy in India.

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Similarly, the early national leaders made maintenance of civil liberties and their extension an integral part of the national movement. They fought against every infringement of the freedom of the Press and speech and opposed every attempt to curtail them. They struggled for separation of the judicial and executive powers and fought against racial discrimination.

It was necessary to evolve an understanding of colonialism and then a nationalist ideology based on this understanding. In this respect, the early nationalist leaders were simultaneously learners and teachers. No ready-made anti-colonial understanding or ideology was available to them in the 1870s and 1880s. They had to develop their own anti-colonial ideology on the basis of a concrete study of the reality and of their own practice.

There could have been no national struggle without an ideological struggle clarifying the concept of *we* as a nation against colonialism as an enemy. They had to find answers to many questions. For example, is Britain ruling India for India's benefit? Are the interests of the rulers and the ruled in harmony, or does a basic contradiction exist between the two? Is the contradiction of the Indian people with British bureaucrats in India, or with the British Government, or with the system of colonialism as such? Are the Indian people capable of fighting the mighty British empire? And how is the fight to be waged?

In finding answers to these and other questions many mistakes were made. For example, the early nationalists failed to understand, at least till the beginning of the 20th century, the character of the colonial state. But, then, some mistakes are an inevitable part of any serious effort to grapple with reality. In a way, despite mistakes and setbacks, it was perhaps no misfortune that no ready-made, cut and dried, symmetrical formulae were available to them. Such formulae are often lifeless and, therefore, poor guides to action.

True, the early national leaders did not organize mass movements against the British. But they did carry out an ideological struggle against them. It should not be forgotten that nationalist or anti-imperialist struggle is a struggle *about* colonialism before it becomes a struggle against colonialism. And the founding fathers of the Congress carried out this 'struggle about colonialism' in a brilliant fashion.

From the beginning, the Congress was conceived not as a party but as a movement. Except for agreement on the very broad objectives discussed earlier, it did not require any particular political or ideological commitment from its activists. It also did not try to limit its following to any social class or group. As a movement, it incorporated different political trends, ideologies and social classes and groups so long as the commitment to democratic and secular nationalism was there. From the outset, the Congress included in the ranks of its leadership persons with diverse political thinking, widely disparate levels of political militancy and varying economic approaches.

To sum up: The basic objectives of the early nationalist leaders were to lay the foundations of a secular and democratic national movement, to politicize and politically educate the people, to form the headquarters of the movement, that is, to form an all-India leadership group, and to develop and propagate an anti-colonial nationalist ideology.

History will judge the extent of the success or failure of the early national movement not by an abstract, historical standard but by the extent to which it was able to attain the basic objectives it had laid down for itself. By this standard, its achievements were quite substantial and that is why it grew from humble beginnings in the 1880s into the most spectacular of popular mass movements in the 20th century. Historians are not likely to disagree with the assessment of its work in the early phase by two of its major leaders. Referring to the preparatory nature of the Congress work from 1885 to 1905, Dadabhai Naoroji wrote to D.E. Wacha in January 1905: 'The very discontent and impatience it (the Congress) has evoked against itself as slow and non-progressive among the rising generation are among its best results or fruit. It is its own evolution and progress . . . (the task is) to evolve the required revolution — whether it would be peaceful or violent. The character of the revolution will depend upon the wisdom or unwisdom of the British Government and action of the British people.

And this is how G.K. Gokhale evaluated this period in 1907: 'Let us not forget that we are at a stage of the country's progress when our achievements are bound to be small, and our

disappointments frequent and trying. That is the place which it has pleased Providence to assign to us in this struggle, and our responsibility is ended when we have done the work which belongs to that place. It will, no doubt, be given to our countrymen of future generations to serve India by their successes; we, of the present generation, must be content to serve her mainly by our failures. For, hard though it be, out of those failures the strength will come which in the end will accomplish great tasks.

Role of Hume

As for the question of the role of A.O. Hume, if the founders of the Congress were such capable and patriotic men of high character, why did they need Hume to act as the chief organizer of the Congress? It is undoubtedly true that Hume impressed — and quite rightly — all his liberal and democratic contemporaries, including Lajpat Rai, as a man of high ideals with whom it was no dishonour to cooperate. But the real answer lies in the conditions of the time. Considering the size of the Indian subcontinent, there were very few political persons in the early 1880s and the tradition of open opposition to the rulers was not yet firmly entrenched.

Courageous and committed persons like Dadabhai Naoroji, Justice Ranade, Pherozeshah Mehta, G. Subramaniya Iyer and Surendranath Banerjee (one year later) cooperated with Hume because they did not want to arouse official hostility at such an early stage of their work. They assumed that the rulers would be less suspicious and less likely to attack a potentially subversive organization if its chief organizer was a retired British civil servant. Gokhale, with his characteristic modesty and political wisdom, stated this explicitly in 1913: 'No Indian could have started the Indian National Congress . . . if an Indian had . . . come forward to start such a movement embracing all India, the officials in India would not have allowed the movement to come into existence. If the founder of the Congress had not been a great Englishman and a distinguished ex-official, such was the distrust of political agitation in those days that the authorities would have at once found some way or the other to suppress the movement.

In other words, if Hume and other English liberals hoped to use the Congress as a safety-valve, the Congress leaders hoped to use Hume as a lightning conductor. And as later developments show, it was the Congress leaders whose hopes were fulfilled.

Self Assessment

1. Choose the correct option:

(*i*) Who gave the theory of safety-valve to the Congress?

(*a*) B.G. Tilak (*b*) Lala Lajpat Rai

(*c*) Surendrenath Banarjee (*d*) Gopal Krishna Ghokhley

(*ii*) Who established Indian National Congress in 1885?

(*a*) A.O. Hume (*b*) Dafferin (*c*) Vedararn (*d*) Lord Ray

(*iii*) Indian association was founded by Surendra Nath Benerjee and Anand Mohan Bose on.

(*a*) 1872 (*b*) 1874 (*c*) 1876 (*d*) 1878

(*iv*) Indian Mirror was published from

(*a*) Bombay (*b*) Calcutta (*c*) Allhabad (*d*) Delhi

(*v*) When did Indian Association organised An Indian National Conference?

(*a*) 1883 (*b*) 1884 (*c*) 1885 (*d*) 1888

9.2 Home Rule Movement and Its Fallout

Role of Lokmanya Tilak and Annie Besant

The romantic adventure of the *Ghadar* revolutionaries was the dramatic response of Indians living abroad to the First World War. We now turn to the less charged, but more effective, Indian response — the Home Rule League Movement, led by Lokamanya Tilak and Annie Besant.

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On 16 June 1914, Bal Gangadhar Tilak was released after serving a prison sentence of six years, most of which he had spent in Mandalay in Burma. He returned to India very different to the one he had been banished from. Aurobindo Ghose, the firebrand of the Swadeshi days, had taken *sanyas* in Pondicherry, and Lala Lajpat Rai was away in the United States of America. The Indian National Congress had yet to recover from the combined effects of the split at Surat in 1907, the heavy government repression of the activists of the Swadeshi Movement, and the disillusionment of the Moderates with the constitutional reforms of 1909.

Tilak initially concentrated all his attention on seeking readmission, for himself and other Extremists, into the Indian National Congress. He was obviously convinced that the sanction of this body, that had come to symbolize the Indian national movement, was a necessary pre-condition for the success of any political action. To conciliate the Moderates and convince them of his *bonafides*, as well as to stave off any possible government repression, he publicly declared: 'I may state once for all that we are trying in India, as the Irish Home-rulers have been doing in Ireland, for a reform of the system of administration and not for the overthrow of Government; and I have no hesitation in saying that the acts of violence which had been committed in the different parts of India are not only repugnant to me, but have, in my opinion, only unfortunately retarded to a great extent, the pace of our political progress. He Further assured the Government of his loyalty to the Crown and urged all Indians to assist the British Government in its hour of crisis.

Many of the Moderate leaders of the Congress were also unhappy with the choice they had made in 1907 at Surat, and also with the fact that the Congress had lapsed into almost total inactivity. They were, therefore, quite sympathetic to Tilak' s overtures. Further, they were under considerable pressure from Mrs. Annie Besant, who had just joined the Indian National Congress and was keen to arouse nationalist political activity, to admit the Extremists.

Annie Besant, already sixty-six in 1914, had begun her political career in England as a proponent of free Thought, Radicalism, Fabianism and Theosophy, and had come to India in 1893 to work for the Theosophical Society. Since 1907, she had been spreading the message of Theosophy from her headquarters in Adyar, a suburb of Madras, and had gained a large number of followers, among the educated members of many communities that had experienced no cultural revival of their own. In 1914, she decided to enlarge the sphere of her activities to include the building of a movement for Home Rule on the lines of the Irish Home Rule League. For this, she realized it was necessary both to get the sanction of the Congress, as well as the active cooperation of the Extremists. She devoted her energies, therefore, to persuading the Moderate leaders to open the doors of the Congress to Tilak and his fellow-Extremists.

But the annual Congress session in December 1914 was to prove a disappointment — Pherozeshah Mehta and his Bombay Moderate group succeeded, by winning over Gokhale and the Bengal Moderates, in keeping out the Extremists. Tilak and Besant there upon decided to revive political activity on their own, while maintaining their pressure on the Congress to re-admit the Extremist group.

In early 1915, Annie Besant launched a campaign through her two papers, *New India and Commonweal*, and organized public meetings and conferences to demand that India be granted self-government on the lines of the White colonies after the War. From April 1915, her tone became more peremptory and her stance more aggressive.

Meanwhile, Lokamanya began his political activities, but, not yet having gained admittance into the Congress, was careful that he did not in any way alarm the Moderates or appear to be by-passing the Congress. This is clear from the fact that at the meeting of his followers convened at Poona in May 1915, it was decided that their initial phase of action would be to set up an agency 'to enlighten the villagers regarding the objects and work of the Congress. The local associations that were set up in many Maharashtra towns in August and September of that year also concentrated more on emphasizing the need for unity in the Congress than on the stepping up of political activity. While sometimes resorting to threats to pressurize the more conservative among the Moderates, Tilak still hoped to persuade the majority to accept him because of his reasonableness and caution.

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Achievements of Extremists Success

His efforts and those of Annie Besant were soon to meet with success, and at the annual session of the Congress in December 1915 it was decided that the Extremists be allowed to rejoin the Congress. The opposition from the Bombay group had been greatly weakened by the death of Pherozeshah Mehta. But Annie Besant did not succeed in getting the Congress and the Muslim League to support her decision to set up Home Rule Leagues. She did manage, however, to persuade the Congress to commit itself to a programme of educative propaganda and to a revival of the local level Congress committees. Knowing that the Congress, as constituted at the time, was unlikely to implement this, she had inserted a condition by which, if the Congress did not start this activity by September 1916, she would be free to set up her own League.

Tilak, not bound by any such commitment, and having gained the right of readmission, now took the lead and set up the Home Rule League at the Bombay Provincial Conference held at Belgaum in April 1916. Annie Besant's impatient followers, unhappy with her decision to wait till September, secured her permission to start Home Rule groups. Jamnadas Dwarkadas, Shankerlal Banker and Indulal Yagnik set up a Bombay paper *Young India* and launched an All India Propaganda Fund to publish pamphlets in regional languages and in English. In September 1916, as there were no signs of any Congress activity, Annie Besant announced die formation of her Home Rule League, with George Arundale, her Theosophical follower, as the Organizing Secretary. The two Leagues avoided any friction by demarcating their area of activity: Tilak's League was to work in Maharashtra, (excluding Bombay city), Karnataka, the Central Provinces and Berar, and Annie Besant's League was given charge of the rest of India. The reason the two Leagues did not merge was because, in Annie Besant's words, 'some of his followers disliked me and some of mine disliked him. We, however, had no quarrel with each other.

Tilak promoted the Home Rule campaign with a tour of Maharashtra and through his lectures clarified and popularized the demand for Home Rule. 'India was like a son who had grown up and attained maturity. It was right now that the trustee or the father should give him what was his due. The people of India must get this effected. They have a right to do so. He also linked up the question of *swaraj* with the demand for the formation of linguistic states and education in the vernacular. 'Form one separate state each for Marathi, Telugu and Kanarese provinces . . . The principle that education should be given through the vernaculars is self-evident and clear. Do the English educate their people through the French language? Do Germans do it through English or the Turks through French? At the Bombay Provincial Conference in 1915, he told V.B. Alur who got up to support his condolence resolution on Gokhale's death: 'Speak in Kannada to establish the right of Kannada language. It is clear that the Lokamanya had no trace of regional or linguistic Marathi chauvinism.

His stand on the question of non-Brahmin representation and on the issue of untouchability demonstrated that he was no casteist either. When the non-Brahmins in Maharashtra sent a separate memorandum to the Government dissociating themselves from the demands of the advanced classes, Tilak urged those who opposed this to be patient: 'If we can prove to the non-Brahmins, by example, that we are wholly on their side in their demands from the Government, I am sure that in times to come their agitation, now based on social inequality, will merge into our struggle. To the non-Brahmins, he explained that the real difference was not between Brahmin and non-Brahmin, but between the educated and the non-educated. Brahmins were ahead of others in jobs because they were more educated, and the Government, in spite of its sympathy for non-Brahmins and hostility towards Brahmins, was forced to look to the needs of the administration and give jobs to Brahmins. At a conference for the removal of untouchability, Tilak declared: 'If a God were to tolerate untouchability, I would not recognize him as God at all.

Nor can we discern in his speeches of this period any trace of religious appeal; the demand for Home Rule was made on a wholly secular basis. The British were aliens not because they belonged to another religion but because they did not act in the Indian interest. 'He who does what is beneficial to the people of this country, be he a Muhammedan or an Englishman, is not alien. 'Alienness' has to do with interests. Alienness is certainly not concerned with white or black skin ... or religion.

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Tilak's League furthered its propaganda efforts by publishing six Marathi and two English pamphlets, of which 47,000 copies were sold. Pamphlets were brought out in Gujarati and Kannada as well. The League was organized into six branches, one each in Central Maharashtra, Bombay city, Karnataka, and Central Provinces, and two in Berar.

As soon as the movement for Home Rule began to gather steam, the Government hit back, and it chose a particularly auspicious day for the blow. The 23rd of July, 1916, was Tilak's sixtieth birthday, and, according to custom, it was the occasion for a big celebration. A purse of Rs. one lakh was presented to him. The same day the Government offered him their own present: a notice asking him to show cause why he should not be bound over for good behaviour for a period of one year and demanding securities of Rs. 60,000. For Tilak, this was the best gift he could have wanted for his birthday. 'The Lord is with us,' he said, 'Home Rule will now spread like wildfire. Repression was sure to fan the fire of revolt.

Tilak was defended by a team of lawyers led by Mohammed Ali Jinnah. He lost the case in the Magistrate's Court but was exonerated by the High Court in November. The victory was hailed all over the country. Gandhiji's *Young India* summed up the popular feeling: 'Thus, a great victory has been won for the cause of Home Rule which has, thus, been freed from the chains that were sought to be put upon it. Tilak immediately pushed home the advantage by proclaiming in his public speeches that Home Rule now had the sanction of the Government and he and his colleagues intensified their propaganda campaign for Home Rule. By April 1917 Tilak had enlisted 14,000 members.

Meanwhile, Annie Besant had gone ahead with the formal founding of her League in September 1916. The organization of her League was much looser than that of Tilak's, and three members could form a branch while in the case of Tilak's League each of the six branches had a clearly defined area and activities. Two hundred branches of Besant's League were established, some consisting of a town and others of groups of villages. And though a formal Executive Council of seven members was elected for three years by thirty-four 'founding branches,' most of the work was carried on by Annie Besant and her lieutenants — Arundale, C.P. Ramaswamy Aiyar, and B.P. Wadia — from her headquarters at Adyar. Nor was there any organized method for passing on instructions — these were conveyed through individual members and through Arundale's column on Home Rule in *New India*. The membership of Annie Besant's League increased at a rate slower than that of Tilak's. By March 1917, her League had 7,000 members. Besides her existing Theosophical followers, many others including Jawaharlal Nehru in Allahabad and B. Chakravarti and J. Banerjee in Calcutta joined the Home Rule League. However, the strength of the League could not be judged from the number of branches because, while many were extremely active, others remained adjuncts of the Theosophical societies. In Madras city, for example, though the number of branches was very large, many were inactive, while the branch in Bombay city, the four branches in the U.P. towns, and many village branches in Gujarat were very active.

The main thrust of the activity was directed towards building up an agitation around the demand for Home Rule. This was to be achieved by promoting political education and discussion. Arundale, through *New India*, advised members to promote political discussions, establish libraries containing material on national politics, organize classes for students on politics, print and circulate pamphlets, collect funds, organize social work, take part in local government activities, arrange political meetings and lectures, present arguments to friends in favour of Home Rule and urge them to join the movement. At least some of these activities were carried on by many of the branches, and especially the task of promotion of political discussion and debate.

Some idea of the immensity of the propaganda effort that was launched can be gauged from the fact that by the time Annie Besant's League was formally founded in September 1916, the Propaganda Fund started earlier in the year had already sold 300,000 copies of twenty-six English pamphlets which focused mainly on the system of government existing in India and the arguments for self-government. After the founding of the League, these pamphlets were published again and, in addition, new ones in Indian languages were brought out. Most branches were also very active in holding public meetings and lectures. Further, they would always respond when a nation-wide call was given for protest on any specific issue. For example," when Annie Besant was externed

from the Central Provinces and Berar in November 1916, most of the branches, at Arundale's instance, held meetings and sent resolutions of protest to the Viceroy and the Secretary of State. Tilak's externment from Punjab and Delhi in February 1917 elicited a similar response.

Many Moderate Congressmen, who were dissatisfied with the inactivity into which the Congress had lapsed, joined the Home Rule agitation. Members of Gokhale's Servants of India Society, though not permitted to become members of the League, were encouraged to add their weight to the demand for Home Rule by undertaking lecture tours and publishing pamphlets. Many other Moderate nationalists joined the Home Rule Leaguers in U.P. in touring the surrounding towns and villages in preparation for the Lucknow session of the Congress in December 1916. Their meetings were usually organized in the local Bar libraries, and attended by students, professionals, businessmen and, if it was a market day, by agriculturists. Speaking in Hindi, they contrasted India's current poverty with her glorious past, and also explained the main features of European independence movements. The participation of Moderates was hardly surprising, since the Home Rule Leagues were after all only implementing the programme of political propaganda and education that they had been advocating for so long.

Congress-Home Rule League Settlement

The Lucknow session of the Congress in December 1916 presented the Home Rule Leaguers with the long-awaited opportunity of demonstrating their strength. Tilak's Home Rule League established a tradition that was to become an essential part of later Congress annual sessions — a special train, known variously as the 'Congress Special' and the 'Home Rule Special,' was organized to carry delegates from Western India to Lucknow. Arundale asked every member of the League to get himself elected as a delegate to the Lucknow session—the idea being quite simply to flood the Congress with Home Rule Leaguers.

Tilak and his men were welcomed back into the Congress by the Moderate president, Ambika Charan Mazumdar: 'After nearly 10 years of painful separation and wanderings through the wilderness of misunderstandings and the mazes of unpleasant controversies . . . both the wings of the Indian Nationalist party have come to realize the fact that united they stand, but divided they fall, and brothers have at last met brothers . . .

The Lucknow Congress was significant also for the famous Congress League Pact, popularly know as the Lucknow Pact. Both Tilak and Annie Besant had played a leading role in bringing about this agreement between the Congress and the League, much against the wishes of many important leaders, including Madan Mohan Malaviya. Answering the criticism that the Pact had acceded too much to the Muslim League, Lokamanya Tilak said: 'It has been said, gentlemen, by some that we Hindus have yielded too much to our Mohammedan brethern. I am sure I represent the sense of the Hindu community all over India when I say that we could not have yielded too much. I would not care if the rights of self-government are granted to the Mohammedan community only. I would not care if they are granted to the Rajputs. I would not care if they are granted to the lower and the lowest classes of the Hindu population provided the British Government consider them more fit than the educated classes of India for exercising those rights. I would not care if those rights are granted to any section of the Indian community .. . When we have to fight against a third party — it is a very important thing that we stand on this platform united, united in race, united in religion, united as regards all different shades of political creed.

Faced with such a stand by one who was considered the most orthodox of Hindus and the greatest scholar of the ancient religious texts, the opposition stood little chance of success, and faded away. And though the acceptance of the principle of separate electorates for Muslims was certainly a most controversial decision, it cannot be denied that the Pact was motivated by a sincere desire to allay minority fears about majority domination.

The Lucknow Congress also demanded a further dose of constitutional reforms as a step towards self-government. Though this did not go as far as the Home Rule Leaguers wished, they accepted it in the interests of Congress unity. Another very significant proposal made by Tilak — that the Congress should appoint a small and cohesive Working Committee that would carry on the day to day affairs of the Congress and be responsible for implementing the resolutions passed at the

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annual sessions, a proposal by which he hoped to transform the Congress from a deliberative body into one capable of leading a sustained movement — was unfortunately quashed by Moderate opposition. Four years later, in 1920, when Mahatma Gandhi prepared a reformed constitution for the Congress, this was one of the major changes considered necessary if the Congress was to lead a sustained movement.

After the end of the Congress session, a joint meeting of the two Home Rule Leagues was held in the same *pandal*, and was attended by over 1,000 delegates. The Congress League Pact was hailed and the gathering was addressed by both Annie Besant and Tilak. On their return journeys, both the leaders made triumphant tours through various parts of North, Central and Eastern India.

Suppression of Government

The increasing popularity of the Home Rule Movement soon attracted the Government's wrath. The Government of Madras was the most harsh and first came out with an order banning students from attending political meetings. This order was universally condemned and Tilak commented. 'The Government is fully aware that the wave of patriotism strikes the students most, and if at all a nation is to prosper, it is through an energetic new generation.

The turning point in the movement came with the decision of the Government of Madras in June 1917 to place Mrs. Besant and her associates, B.P. Wadia and George Arundale, under arrest. Their internment became the occasion for nation-wide protest. In a dramatic gesture, Sir S. Subramania Aiyar renounced his knighthood. Those who had stayed away, including many Moderate leaders like Madan Mohan Malaviya, Surendranath Banerjea and M.A. Jinnah now enlisted as members of the Home Rule Leagues to record their solidarity with the internees and their condemnation of the Government's action. At a meeting of the AICC on 28 July, 1917, Tilak advocated the use of the weapon of passive resistance or civil disobedience if the Government refused to release the internees. The proposal for adopting passive resistance was sent for comment to all the Provincial Congress Committees, and while Berar and Madras were willing to adopt it immediately, most of the others were in favour of waiting for more time before taking a decision. At Gandhiji's instance, Shankerlal Banker and Jamnadas Dwarkadas collected signatures of one thousand men willing to defy the internment orders and march to Besant's place of detention. They also began to collect signatures of a million peasants and workers on a petition for Home Rule. They made regular visits to Gujarat towns and villages and helped found branches of the League. In short, repression only served to harden the attitude of the agitators and strengthen their resolve to resist the Government. Montagu, writing in his Diary, commented: '. . . Shiva ... cut his wife into fifty-two pieces only to discover that he had fifty-two wives. This is really what happens to the Government of India when it interns Mrs. Besant.

The Government in Britain decided to effect a change in policy and adopt a conciliatory posture. The new Secretary of State, Montagu, made a historic declaration in the House of Commons, on 20 August, 1917 in which he stated: 'The policy of His Majesty's Government... is that of the 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. This statement was in marked contrast to that of Lord Morley who, while introducing the Constitutional Reforms in 1909, had stated categorically that these reforms were in no way intended to lead to self-government. The importance of Montagu's Declaration was that after this the demand for Home Rule or self-government could no longer be treated as seditious.

This did not, however, mean that the British Government was about to grant self-government. The accompanying clause in the statement which clarified that the nature and the timing of the advance towards responsible government would be decided by the Government alone gave it enough leeway to prevent any real transfer of power to Indian hands for a long enough time.

In keeping with the conciliatory stance of the Montagu Declaration, Annie Besant was released in September 1917. Annie Besant was at the height of her popularity and, at Tilak's suggestion, was elected President at the annual session of the Congress in December 1917.

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During 1918, however, various factors combined to diffuse the energies that had concentrated in the agitation for Home Rule. The movement, instead of going forward after its great advance in 1917, gradually dissolved. For one, the Moderates who had joined the movement after Besant's arrest were pacified by the promise of reforms and by Besant's release. They were also put off by the talk of civil disobedience and did not attend the Congress from September 1918 onwards. The publication of the scheme of Government reforms in July 1918 further divided the nationalist ranks. Some wanted to accept it outright and others to reject it outright, whlie many felt that, though inadequate, they should be given a trial. Annie Besant herself indulged in a lot of vacillation on this question as well as on the question of passive resistance. At times she would disavow passive resistance, and at other times, under pressure from her younger followers, would advocate it. Similarly, she initially, along with Tilak, considered the reforms unworthy of Britain to offer and India to accept, but later argued in favour of acceptance. Tilak was more consistent in his approach, but given Besant's vacillations, and the change in the Moderate stance, there was little that he could do to sustain the movement on his own. Also, towards the end of the year, he decided to go to England to pursue the libel case that he had filed against Valentine Chirol, the author of *Indian Unrest*, and was away for many critical months. With Annie Besant unable to give a firm lead, and Tilak away in England, the movement was left leaderless.

The tremendous achievement of the Home Rule Movement and its legacy was that it created a generation of ardent nationalists who formed the backbone of the national movement in the coming years when, under the leadership of the Mahatma, it entered its truly mass phase. The Home Rule Leagues also created organizational links between town and country which were to prove invaluable in later years. And further, by popularizing the idea of Home Rule or self-government, and making it a commonplace thing, it generated a widespread pro-nationalist atmosphere in the country.

By the end of the First World War, in 1918, the new generation of nationalists aroused to political awareness and impatient with the pace of change, were looking for a means of expressing themselves through effective political action. The leaders of the Home Rule League, who themselves were responsible for bringing them to this point, were unable to show the way forward. The stage was thus set for the entry of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, a man who had already made a name for himself wilth his leadership of the struggle of Indians in South Africa and by leading the struggles of Indian peasants and workers in Champaran, Ahmedabad and Kheda. And in March 1919, when he gave a call for a *Satyagrah* to protest against the obnoxious 'Rowlatt' Act, he was the rallying point for almost all those who had been awakened to politics by the Home Rule Movement.

9.3 Moderates and Extremists

The national leaders like Dadabhai Naoroji, P.M. Mehta, D.E. Wacha, W.C. Bannerjee, S.N. Banerjee who dominated the Congress policies during this period were staunch believers in liberalism and 'moderate' politics and came to be labelled as Moderates to distinguish them from the neonationalists of the early 20th century who were referred to as Extremists. The Moderate leaders explained their political outlook as a happy combination of liberalism and moderation. Believers in the spirit of liberalism, they worked to procure for Indians freedom from race and creed prejudices, equality between man and man, equality before law, extension of civil liberties, extension of representative institutions etc. As to their methods, M.G. Ranade explained, "Moderation implies the conditions of never vainly aspiring after the impossible or after too remote ideals, but fairness. Thus the Moderate leaders were convinced believers in the policy of gradualism and constitutionalism.

During this period the Congress was dominated by the affluent middle class intelligentsia, men of legal, medical, engineering, literary pursuits and journalists. The ideas and methods of this middle class held the field and governed the character of the national struggle. The educated middle class was enamoured of titles and services under the state and by its training and culture had isolated itself from the masses. The delegates to the Congress sessions were mostly drawn from the cities and had hardly any real contact with the masses. Sir Pherozeshah Mehta once explained: "The Congress was indeed not the voice of the masses, but it was the duty of their compatriots to interpret their grievances and offer suggestions for their redress."

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The Congress had been founded by A.O. Hume after consultations with Lord Dufferin (Viceroy, 1884-88). The congress leaders were full of admiration for British history and culture and spok of the British connection as 'providential'. It was their cardinal faith that British rule in India was in the interest of the Indians. As such they looked upon the British Government not as an antagonist but as an ally ; in the course of time, they believed, Britain would help them to acquire the capacity to govern themselves in accordance with the highest standards of the West. In 1886, Dadabhai Naoroji presiding over the Calcutta session of the Congress dwelt at length on the 'Blessings of British Rule' and his remarks were cheered by the audience. Mr. Hume moved a resolution for three times three cheers for Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen Empress and a further resolution for long life of the Queen. Ananda Mohan Bose as Congress President (1898) declared, "The educated classes are the friends and not the foes of England—her natural and necessary allies in the great work that lies before her." Thus, it was generally believed that the chief obtacle in the path of India's progress was not British colonial rule but the social and economic backwardness of the Indian people and the reactionary role of the Anglo-Indian bureaucracy.

The Moderate leaders stood for the maintenance, reather strengthening of the British Empire. This approach was the outcome of their apprehension that anarchy and disorder would reappear in India if British Government was superseded. In their eyes British rule was the embodiment of Peace and Order in the country and as such British rule was indispensable in India for a long time to come. Gokhale explained this viewpoint when he said, "Whatever the shortcomings of bureaucracy, and however intolerable at times the insolence of the individual Englishman, they alone stand to-day in the country for order; and without continued order, no real progress is possible for our people. It is not difficult at any time to create disorder in our country—it was our position for centuries—but it is not so easy to substitute another form of order for that which has been evolved in the course of a century". The Moderates sincerely believed that India's progress could be possible only under the supervision of the British. Hence their loyalty to the British Crown. Badr-ud-din Tyabji, the third Congress President, declared that nowhere among the millions of Her Majesty's subject in India were to be found "more truly loyal nay, more devoted friends of the British Empire than among these educated natives". Thus, the Moderates would do nothing to weaken the Empire. Loyalty to the Crown was their faith, one important article of their political religion.

Most of the Congress leaders of the period believed that the British people were just, righteous and freedom-loving. They were further convinced that the British people meant justice to be done to India. If Indians had certain grievances, these were only due to the reactionary policy of the British bureaucracy in India or ignorance of the British people about these grievances. As such the nationalist leaders believed that all they had to do was to prepare their case and present and plead it before the British Parliament and nation and their grievances would be redressed and justice done. As a natural corollary the Congress leaders put great emphasis on Congress propaganda in England. A British Committee of the Indian National Congress was set up in Londen which published a weekly journal *India* to present India's case before the British public. Dadabhai Naoroji was never tried of telling the Congress leaders: "Nothing is more dear to the heart of England—and I speak from actual knowledge—than India's welfare; and, if we only speak out loud enough and persistently enough, to reach that busy heart, we shall not speak in vain." Thus, with a view to educating the English people about the real needs of India, in 1890 a decision was taken to hold a session of the Indian National Congress in London in 1892, but owing to the British elections of 1891 the proposal was postponed and afterwards never revived.

During the period under review, the Congress demanded a few concessions and not freedom for the nation. True, Lokamanya Tilak used the word *Swaraj* or self-government towards the last decade of the nineteenth century but it did not become popular nor did it figure in the official resolutions of the Congress. Presiding over the Poona Congress in 1895, Surendranath Banerjee declared that the Congress had never asked for "representative institutions for the masses but "representative institutions of a modified character for the educated community, who by reason of their culture and enlightenment, their assimilation of English ideas and their familiarity with

English methods of Government might be presumed to be qualified for such a boon." Congress resolutions generally demanded expansion of Legislative Councils with enlarged powers and more representation of Indians in them ; representation of Indians in the Secretary of State's Council, Viceroy's Executive Council and Governors' Executive Councils; more opportunities for Indians in the Civil Service; holding of simultaneous examinations in India as well as England; broadening of the basis of civil liberties; reduction of military expenditure and more expenditure on development of education; separation of judiciary from executive work in District administration; enquiry into the backward economic and industrial condition of the country; improvement of the lot of Indians in South Africa and the Empire generally etc. These demands were always worded in prayerful and apologetic language and the Congress was wedded to the use of constitutional methods.

Official attitude towards the Congress: Despite its moderate methods and its emphasis on loyalty to the British Crown the Indian National Congress failed to evoke sympathetic response from the Government. In the beginning, however, the official attitude was of outward neutrality. It was in this spirit that Lord Dufferin gave a garden party to the delegates attending the second Congress session (1886) at Calcutta, taking care to explain that the invitation was not to representatives of the Congress but to 'distinguished visitors to the capital'; in 1887 the Governor of Madras gave facilities to the organisers of the third session of the Congress at Madras. However, the official attitude stiffened after 1887. The publication of Congress pamphlets like 'A Tamil Congress Catechism', 'A conversation between Moulvi Farrukh-ud-in and one Ram Buksh of Kambakhtpur' which condemned despotic system of government and absentee landlordism brought about the open hostility of the Government. The officials encouraged reactionary elements like Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and Raja Sheo Prasad of Benares to organise the United Indian Patriotic Association to counter Congress propaganda. Further, Lord Dufferin challenged the very national charater of the Congress and dubbed it as representing only 'a microscopic minority' and Congress demands as 'a big jump into the unknown'. In 1890 Government employees were forbidden from participating in its deliberations or attending its meetings. Lord Curzon was more categorical in his pronouncements when he said that the Congress was 'tottering to its fall' and one of his greatest ambitions in India was 'to assist it to a peaceful demise'.

***Assessment of the Policies of the Moderates* (*1885-1905*):** The achievements of this period were decried by the Radical otherwise called Extremist leaders of the early twentieth century. The policy of the Moderate leaders or the 'Old Guard' was criticised as 'political mendicancy'. Lala Lajpat Raj wrote: "It was at best an opportunist movement. It opened opportunities for treacheries and hypocrites. It enabled some people to trade in the name of patriotism."

A big charge against the moderates was their loyalty to the Crown. It may be mentioned that the Moderate leaders believed that India lacked some of the essential elements which constituted a nation and British rule kept them together. As such they did not see any alternative to British rule in the foreseeable future. Their patriotism, therefore, demanded that they should be loyal to the British *raj*, for any termination of British rule was likely to be harmful to Indian national interests. B.C. Pal, then a Moderate leader, said in 1887, "I am loyal to the British Government because with me loyalty to the British Government is identical with loyalty to my own people and my own country...I am loyal to the British Government, because I love self-government."

In all fairness it must be said that men like Dadabhai Naoroji, Sir Pherozeshah Mehta, Sir Dinshah Wacha, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Surendra Nath Banerjee etc. were the most progressive elements in Indian society and true patriots. They desired all-round progress and modernisation of India—social reform, modern education, industrial and economic development of India. They earnestly wished the betterment of Indian society and worked to lessen the harshness of British rule. Their main achievement was the appointment of a Public Service Commission in 1886 which caused disappointment and the enactment of the Indian Councils Act of 1892 which did not modify the basic constitution. Further, their efforts resulted in a resolution of the House of Commons (1893) for simultaneous examination for the I.C. S. in London and India and appointment of the Welby Commission on Indian Expenditure (1895). In addition, they did a lot of spadework. Their methods-the use of prayers, press and protests-brought about political maturity.

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Perhaps, the greatest service of the Moderate leaders was rendered when they assessed the economic impact of British rule on India. They focussed public attention on the fact of *Indian poverty* and explained that this poverty was largely due to the colonial exploitation of India's economic resources by Britain. The Drain Theory popularized by Dadabhai Naoroji, Dutt, Wacha and others was an open indictment of Britian's economic role in India. This Drain Theory was used as a convenient stick by the Extremist leaders to malign and spit British rule in India.

Extremist

The closing decade of the 19th century and early years of the 20th century witnessed the emergence of a new and younger group within the Indian National Congress which was sharply critical of the ideology and method of the old leadership. These 'angry young men' advocated the adoption of *Swaraj* as the goal of the Congress to be achieved by more self-reliant and independent methods. The new group came to be called the Extremist Party in contrast to the older one which began to be referred to as the Moderate Party.

The process of split in the Congress Party began when Lokamanya Tilak clashed with the Moderates (also called *Sudharaks*) over the question of Social Reforme. In July 1895 Tilak and his group ousted Ranade and Gokhale from the control of Poona Sarvajanik Sabha. Gokhale organised a separate political association called 'The Deccan Sabha'. There was no love lost between Tilak and Gokhale. Tilak outmanoeuvred Gokhale from national politics over the 'apology affair' and Gokhale was labelled a *Kacha* reed i.e. spineless fellow who could be brow-beaten by the Government.

Tilak was made of a different stuff than most of the Congress leaders. He was forthright in his criticism of the Government and its policies and was prepared to make sacrifices to get wrongs redressed. He was the first Congress leader to suffer several terms of imprisonment for the sake of the country. As early as 1882, for criticising in strong language the treatment meted out to the Maharaja of Kolhapur, the Government tried and sentenced Tilak to four months' imprisonment. Again, in 1897 Tilak was charged with 'exciting feelings of disaffection to the British Government' and sent to jail for 18 months' R.I. At the Congress session at Amraoti (Dec. 1897) the supporters of Tilak made an attempt to push a resolution demanding the release of Tilak. The Moderate leaders who controlled the Congress did not permit it. Similarly, the Moderates foiled the attempt of martyrdom at the Congress session at Madras (Dec. 1898). At the Lucknow session of the Congress (Dec. 1899). Tilak's attempt to move a resolution condemning Governor Sandhurst's administration of Bombay was also blocked by the Moderate leaders on the plea that the matter was of provincial interest and could not be discussed at the National Congress. It was because of ideological differences with Tilak and his Group that the Moderate leaders were determined to keep Tilak and Congressmen of his line of thinking out of all positions of power and responsibility in the Congress and never gave him a chance to become the Congress President.

Causes for the Rise of Extremism

The dissatisfaction with the working of the Congress had been expressed by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee when he described the Congressmen as "place-hunting politicians". Aurobindo Ghose wrote a series of articles during 1893-94 entitled 'New Lamps for Old' wherein he described the Congress as being out of contact with the 'proletariat', its character as 'unnational' and its work as 'failure' and added: "Yet more appalling was the general timidity of the congress, its glossing of hard names, its disinclinations to tell the direct truth, its fear of too deeply displeasing our masters". He thought that the Congress was 'dying of consumption.'

Among the cause and circumstances that helped in the growth of Extremism the following deserve special mention:

1. ***Recognition of the True Nature of British Rule:*** The efforts of the early nationalist leaders paved the way for the development of the next stage of the nationalist movement. By their painstaking studies and writings the early nationalist leaders had *exposed the true nature of British Rule in India*, They conclusively proved by elaborate statistical data that British rule and its policies were responsible for the economic ruin of India and her deepening poverty. Dadabhai Naoroji, for example, exposed the exploitative nature of British rule in India and proved that

Britain was 'bleeding India white' and the constant 'drain of wealth' from India was directly responsible for India's economic miseries. He characterized British rule in India as 'a constant and continuous' plunder. Nationalist leaders like Ananda Charlu, R.N. Mudholkar, D.E. Wacha, G.K. Gokhale, Madan Mohan Malaviya too exposed the exploitative nature of British rule in India. R.C. Dutt and G.V. Joshi, examined thread-bare the true nature of British Land Revenue policy while S.N. Banerjee explained at length the big gap between the professed aims and practised policy of the Government of India in matters of recruitment to public service. The second session of the Congress (Calcutta, 1886) brought a resolution on increasing poverty of India and this resolution was affirmed year after year at subsequent Congress sessions. The 'proverty verging on starvation' of fifty millions of the population was described by the Congress as due to the most extravagant civil and military administration, mounting Home Charges, discriminating tariff policy (as evident from the frequent changes in the Cotton Duties and Sugar Duties etc.) shortsighted land revenue policy, indifference to technical and industrial development of India and exclusion of the sons of the soil from a share in the Higher and Minor services. Scholarly writings of nationalist leaders like Ranade's *Essays in Indian Economics* (1898), Dadabhai Naoroji's *Indian Poverty and un-British Rule in India* (1901), R.C. Dutt's *Economic History of India* (1901) were the arsenals from which the new leaders shot their arrows at the British rule in India. Thus the Extremist ideology was a natural and logical next step in the development of Indian political thinking.

2. ***Reaction to Increasing Westernization:*** The new leadership felt the stranglehold of excessive Westernization in Indian life, thought and politics—Christianity and utilitarianism (visible in the teachings of Brahma Samaj) were a challenge to Indian religion and thought, the materialistic and individualistic Western civilization was eroding the values of Indian culture and civilization; and the merger of Indian national identity in the British Empire was being attempted.

   The intellectual and emotional inspiration of the new leadership (Extremists) was Indian. They drew inspiration from Indian spiritual heritage, they appealed to heroes of Indian history and hoped to revive the glories of ancient India. The writings of Bankim, Vivekananda and Swami Dayanand appealed to their imagination. Though Bankim, in the beginning, had written in Bengali and on Bengal (*Anandamath*, published in 1880), by 1886 he had emerged an Indian and dreamed of a united India under the leadership of a superman like Lord Krishna (video *Krishna Charitra* Part 1,1886). Bankim saw in Lord Krishna a *Karamyogin* i.e. a man of action who fought evil and stood for righteousness. He saw in Lord Krishna a good soldier, a clever strategist and a successful empire-builder, at Kurukshetra war Lord Krishna deliberately worked for the destruction of petty states and for the emergence of *dharmaraja*. The main *mantra* of Bankim, 'Service to the Motherland' now acquired an added significance. Vivekanand a great Vedantist, gave new confidence to the Indians in India's past heritage. He exhorted his compatriots to realize the value of their rich cultural heritage. He gave a feeling of self-confidence to the youth and gave them a new mission-to conquer the West with India's spirituality-Swami Dayanand exploded the myth of Western superiority. By referring to India's rich civilization in the Vedic Ages, when Europe was steeped in ignorance, Dayanand gave a 'new confidence' to the Hindus and undermined the current belife in the superiority of the White races over the Brown or Black. Dayanand's Political message was 'India for the Indians.

3. ***Dissatisfaction with the Achievement of the Congress:*** The younger elements within the Congress were dissatisfied with the achievements of the Congress during the first 15-20 years and were disgusted with the cold and reactionary attitude of the Government. They had lost all faith in the British sense of justice and fairplay. They were strongly critical of the methods of peaceful and constitutional agitation, popularly nicknamed of 3 Ps-Petition, Prayer and Prostest—and described these methods as 'political mendicancy'. They became impatient with the slow, almost negligible achievements during the first fifteen years and advocated the adoption of European revolutionary methods to meet European imperialism.

   On his return from England in 1905 Lala Lajpat Rai told his countrymen that the British democracy was too busy with its own affairs to do anything worthwhile for India, that the British press was not likely to champion their aspirations and that it was very difficult to get a

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hearing in England. He exhorted the people that if they really cared for their country, "they would have to strike a blow for freedom themselves, and they should be prepared to give unmistakable proof of their earnestness.

The younger generation of Congressmen (also called Nationalists or Extremists) had nothing but disgust for the Old Guard. According to them the only 'political religion' of the Congress was— loyalty to the Crown; their only 'political aim'-to improve their chances of getting seats in the central/provinicial legislatures or judicial services or acquiring titles etc.; their only 'political activity'— excessive speechyfying and attending Congress session towards December-end every year. The Moderate leaders were accused of limiting the range of their activities for the benefit of the middle class intelligentsia and limiting the membership of the Congress to the middle class—for fear of losing their leadership if the masses joined the movement. Thus the Moderate leaders were accused of 'trading in the name of patriotism'. Tilak described the Congress as 'a Congress of flatterers and Congress session 'a holiday recreation while Lajpat Rai dubbed Congress meeting the annual national festival of educated Indians.' Both Tilak and Lajpat Rai believed that the Congress had no constructive activity. Tilak affirmed: "We will not achieve any success in our labours if we croak once a year like a frog."

4. ***Deteriorating Economic Condition of India:*** The economic miseries of the closing years of the 19th century provided a congenial atmosphere for the growth of extremism in Indian national activity. The terrible famines of 1896-97 and 1899-1900 coupled with the bubonic plague which broke out in Maharashtra took a heavy toll of life. The Government relief machinery was inadequate, slow-moving and badly organised. Tilak criticised the callous and over-bearing Government Plague Commissioners who caused more harm than good. He thundered that fear and anxiety was the cause of the disease arid that "plague is less cruel to us than the official measures". Riots broke out in the Deccan and the Government tried to stifle public opinion and suppress lawlessness. These events revealed to the Indians their plight of utter helplessness. Even recurring famines were attributed to the antinational policy followed by the Government. In his presidential speech in 1903 Lal Mohan Ghose referred to the Durbar of 1903 and said: "Nothing could seem more heartless than the spectacle of a great Government imposing the heaviest taxation upon the poorest population in the world, and then lavishly spending the money so obtained over fire-works and pompous pageants, while millions of the poor were dying of starvation.
5. ***Contemporary International Influences:*** Events outside India exercised a powerful influence on the younger generation. The humiliating treatment meted out to Indians in British colonies, especially in South Africa, created anti- British feelings. Further, nationalist movements in Egypt, Persia, Turkey and Russia gave Indians new hopes and new aspirations. Indian nationalists gained more confidence and drew inspiration from Abyssinia's repulsion of the Italian army (1896) and Japan's thumping victory over Russia (1905). If Japan could become a great power on its own, what— but for the British grip—was holding India back. The spell of European invincibility was broken.
6. ***Curzon's Reactionary Policies*****:** Cutzon's seven-year rule in India which was full of 'missions, omissions and commissions' created a sharp reaction in the Indian mind. Curzon refused to recongnise that India was a 'nation' and characterized their activity as the 'letting off of gas'. He insulted Indian Intelligentsia and talked very low of Indian character ; at the Calcutta University Convocation Curzon said, "Undoubtedly truth took a high place in the codes of the West before it had been similarly honoured in the East, where craftiness and diplomatic wile have always been held in high repute." The Calcutta Corporation Act, the official Secrets Act and the Indian Universities Act created great resentment in India. The Delhi Durbar held in 1903, coming at a time when India had not fully recovered from the devastating effects of the famine of 1899-1900 was interpreted as 'a pompous pageant to a starving population'.
7. ***The Partition of Bengal*****:** The partition forced in teeth of Bengali opposition and protests from the Indian National Congress (in 1904) showed the contemptuous disregard Curzon and the Home authorities had for Indian public opinion. It was abundantly clear that the partition of Bengal was a machiavellian devise to divide the people on the basis of religion and to put the

Muslims against the Hindus. The uttar disregard Curzon showed for public opinion gave ample evidence, if any evidence was still needed, that the Moderates' policy of 'petitions, prayers and protests' was barren of results.

Did u know? The worst and most-hated aspect of Curzon's administration was the partition of Bengal into two provinces of Bengal and Eastern Bengal and Assam in 1905.

Self-Assessment

2. Fill in the blanks:

(*i*) ..... Bal Gangadhar Tilak was released after serving a prison sentence of six years.

(*ii*) In early 1915, Annie Besant launched a campaign through her two papers New India and ..... .

(*iii*) The Home Rule League at the Bombay provincial conference held at ..... in April 1916.

(*iv*) The new secretary of state, Montagu, made a historic declaration in the House Commons, on 20 August, ...

(*v*) The third and the final Phase of the struggle began with the coming of Lord Hastings as Governor-General in ..... .

9.4 Summary

- Indian National Congress was founded in December 1885 by seventy-two political workers. It was the first organized expression of Indian nationalism on an all-India scale. A.O. Hume, a retired English ICS officer, played an important role in its formation.
- In his *Young India* published in 1916, the Extremist leader Lala Lajpat Rai used the safety-valve theory to attack the Moderates in the Congress. Having discussed the theory at length and suggested that the Congress 'was a product of Lord Dufferin's brain.'
- Emphasizing the myth, Dutt wrote that the Congress was brought into existence through direct Governmental initiative and guidance and through 'a plan secretly pre-arranged with the Viceroy' so that it (the Government) could use it 'as an intended weapon for safeguarding British rule against the rising forces of popular unrest and anti-British feeling.' It was 'an attempt to defeat, or rather forestall, an impending revolution.'
- Its 'two-fold character' as an institution which was created by the Government and yet became the organizer of the anti-imperialist movement 'ran right through its history.' It both fought and collaborated with imperialism. It led the mass movements and when the masses moved towards the revolutionary path, it betrayed the movement to imperialism.
- What had led Hindus to enter the path of 'denationalization,' said Golwalkar, were the aims and policy laid down by Hume, Cotton, and Wedderburn in 1885; 'the Congress they founded as a "safety valve" to "seething nationalism," as a toy which would full the awakening giant into slumber, an instrument to destroy National consciousness, has been, as far as they are concerned, a success.
- On 16 June 1914, Bal Gangadhar Tilak was released after serving a prison sentence of six years, most of which he had spent in Mandalay in Burma. He returned to India very different to the one he had been banished from.
- Tilak initially concentrated all his attention on seeking readmission, for himself and other Extremists, into the Indian National Congress. He was obviously convinced that the sanction of this body, that had come to symbolize the Indian national movement, was a necessary pre-condition for the success of any political action.

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- They were under considerable pressure from Mrs. Annie Besant, who had just joined the Indian National Congress and was keen to arouse nationalist political activity, to admit the Extremists.
- Annie Besant, already sixty-six in 1914, had begun her political career in England as a proponent of free Thought, Radicalism, Fabianism and Theosophy, and had come to India in 1893 to work for the Theosophical Society.
- In early 1915, Annie Besant launched a campaign through her two papers, *New India and Commonweal*, and organized public meetings and conferences to demand that India be granted self-government on the lines of the White colonies after the War. From April 1915, her tone became more peremptory and her stance more aggressive.
- This is clear from the fact that at the meeting of his followers convened at Poona in May 1915, it was decided that their initial phase of action would be to set up an agency 'to enlighten the villagers regarding the objects and work of the Congress.
- Tilak, not bound by any such commitment, and having gained the right of readmission, now took the lead and set up the Home Rule League at the Bombay Provincial Conference held at Belgaum in April 1916. Annie Besant's impatient followers, unhappy with her decision to wait till September, secured her permission to start Home Rule groups.
- Tilak promoted the Home Rule campaign with a tour of Maharashtra and through his lectures clarified and popularized the demand for Home Rule. 'India was like a son who had grown up and attained maturity. It was right now that the trustee or the father should give him what was his due. The people of India must get this effected. They have a right to do so.
- At a conference for the removal of untouchability, Tilak declared: 'If a God were to tolerate untouchability, I would not recognize him as God at all.
- By March 1917, her League had 7,000 members. Besides her existing Theosophical followers, many others including Jawaharlal Nehru in Allahabad and B. Chakravarti and J. Banerjee in Calcutta joined the Home Rule League.
- when Annie Besant was externed from the Central Provinces and Berar in November 1916, most of the branches, at Arundale's instance, held meetings and sent resolutions of protest to the Viceroy and the Secretary of State. Tilak's externment from Punjab and Delhi in February 1917 elicited a similar response.
- The turning point in the movement came with the decision of the Government of Madras in June 1917 to place Mrs. Besant and her associates, B.P. Wadia and George Arundale, under arrest. Their internment became the occasion for nation-wide protest. In a dramatic gesture, Sir S. Subramania Aiyar renounced his knighthood. Those who had stayed away, including many Moderate leaders like Madan Mohan Malaviya, Surendranath Banerjea and M.A. Jinnah now enlisted as members of the Home Rule Leagues to record their solidarity with the internees and their condemnation of the Government's action. At a meeting of the AICC on 28 July, 1917, Tilak advocated the use of the weapon of passive resistance or civil disobedience if the Government refused to release the internees.

9.5 Key-Words

1. Bubonic plague : A zoonotic disease, circulating mainly among small rodents and their fleas
2. Homogenous country : A country with diverse group of people

9.6 Review Questions

1. What was the aim of A.O. Hume behind the establishment of the Congress? Discuss.
2. Explain the theory of safety-valve of Congress.
3. What do you mean by Home Rule Movement? Discuss the role of Lok Manya Tilak and Anne Basent.
4. Who were moderates and extremists? Discuss their role in freedom movement.

Notes

Answers-Self Assessment

1. (*i*) (*b*) (*ii*) (*a*) (*iii*) (*c*) (*iv*) (*d*) (*v*) (*c*)
2. (*i*) On 16 June 1914 (*ii*) Common weal (*iii*) Belgaum
   (*iv*) 1917 (*v*) 1813

9.7 Further Readings

1. V.D. Mahajan, History of Modern India, S. Chand and Co. Ltd. New Delhi.
2. Chandra, Bipin, India's Struggle for Freedom (1857–1947) Penguin, Delhi, 1996.

Notes

Unit 10: National Movements and Indian Independence

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Objectives

After studying this unit students will be able to:

- Explain Non-cooperation Movement.
- Know about Quit India Movement.
- Discuss Indian Independence and Partition.

Introduction

The last year of the second decade of the twentieth century found India highly discontented. With much cause. The Rowlatt Act, the Jallianwala Bagh massacre and martial law in Punjab had belied all the generous wartime promises of the British. The Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms, announced towards the end of 1919, with their ill-considered scheme of dyarchy satisfied few. The Indian Muslims were incensed when they discovered that their loyalty had been purchased during the War by assurances of generous treatment of Turkey after the War — a promise British statesman had no intention of fulfilling. The Muslims regarded the Caliph of Turkey as their spiritual head and were naturally upset when they found that he would retain no control over the holy places it was his duty as Caliph to protect. Even those who were willing to treat the happenings at Jallianwala Bagh and other places in Punjab as aberrations, that would soon be 'corrected', were disillusioned when they discovered that the Hunter Committee appointed by the Government to enquire into the Punjab disturbances was an eye wash and that the House of Lords had voted in favour of General Dyer's action, and that the British public had demonstrated its support by helping the *Morning Post* collect 30,000 pounds for General Dyer.

By the end of the first quarter of 1920, all the excuses in favour of the British Government were fast running out. The Khilafat leaders were told quite clearly that they should not expect anything more and the Treaty of Sevres signed with Turkey in May 1920 made it amply clear that the dismemberment of the Turkish Empire was complete. Gandhiji, who had been in close touch with the Khilafat leaders for quite some time, and was a special invitee to the Khilafat Conference in November 1919, had all along been very sympathetic to their cause, especially because he felt the British had committed a breach of faith by making promises that they had no intention of keeping. In February 1920, he suggested to the Khilafat Committee that it adopt a programme of non-violent non-cooperation to protest the Government's behaviour. On 9 June 1920, the Khilafat Committee at Allahabad unanimously accepted the suggestion of non-cooperation and asked Gandhiji to lead the movement.

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Meanwhile, the Congress was becoming sceptical of any possibility of political advance through constitutional means. It was disgusted with the Hunter Committee Report especially since it was appraised of brutalities in Punjab by its own enquiry committee. In the circumstances, it agreed to consider non-cooperation. The AICC met in May 1920 and decided to convene a special session in September to enable the Congress to decide on its course of action.

It was apparent they had to work out something soon for it was clear that the people were chafing for action. Large numbers of them, who had been awakened to political consciousness by the incessant propaganda efforts that the nationalist leadership had been making for the previous four decades or more, were thoroughly outraged by what they perceived as insults by the British government. To swallow these insults appeared dishonourable and cowardly. Also many sections of Indian society suffered considerable economic distress. In the towns, the workers and artisans, the lower middle class and the middle class had been hit by high prices, and shortage of food and essential commodities. The rural poor and peasants were in addition victims of widespread drought and epidemics.

10.1 Non-Cooperation Movement

The movement was launched formally on 1 August 1920, after the expiry of the notice that Gandhiji had given to the Viceroy in his letter of 22 June, in which he had asserted the right recognized 'from time immemorial of the subject to refuse to assist a ruler who misrules.' Lokamanya Tilak passed away in the early hours of 1 August, and the day of mourning and of launching of the movement merged as people all over the country observed *hartal* and took out processions. Many kept a fast and offered prayers.

The Congress met in September at Calcutta and accepted non-cooperation as its own. The main opposition, led by C.R. Das, was to the boycott of legislative councils, elections to which were to be held very soon. But even those who disagreed with the idea of boycott accepted the Congress discipline and withdrew from the elections. The voters, too, largely stayed away.

By December, when the Congress met for its annual session at Nagpur, the opposition had melted away; the elections were over and, therefore, the boycott of councils was a non-issue, and it was C.R. Das who moved the main resolution on non-cooperation. The programme of non-cooperation included within its ambit the surrender of titles and honours, boycott of government affiliated schools and colleges, law courts, foreign cloth, and could be extended to include resignation from government service and mass civil disobedience including the non-payment of taxes. National schools and colleges were to be set up, panchayats were to be established for settling disputes, hand-spinning and weaving was to be encouraged and people were asked to maintain Hindu-Muslim unity, give up untouchability and observe strict non-violence.

Gandhiji promised that if the programme was fully implemented, *Swaraj* would be ushered in within a year. The Nagpur session, thus, committed the Congress to a programme of extra-constitutional mass action. Many groups of revolutionary terrorists, especially in Bengal, also pledged support to the movement.

To enable the Congress to fulfill its new commitment, significant changes were introduced in its creed as well as in its organizational structure. The goal of the Congress was changed from the attainment of self-government by constitutional and legal means to the attainment of *Swaraj* by peaceful and legitimate means. The new constitution of the Congress, the handwork of Gandhiji, introduced other important changes.

The Congress was now to have a Working Committee of fifteen members to look after its day-to-day affairs. This proposal, when first made by Tilak in 1916, had been shot down by the Moderate opposition. Gandhiji, too, knew that the Congress could not guide a sustained movement unless it had a compact body that worked round the year. Provincial Congress Committees were now to be organized on a linguistic basis, so that they could keep in touch with the people by using the local language.

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Did u know? The Congress organization was to reach down to the village and the *mohalla* level by the formation of village and *mohalla* or ward committees.

The membership fee was reduced to four annas per year to enable the poor to become members. Mass involvement would also enable the Congress to have a regular source of income. In other ways, too, the organization structure was both streamlined and democratized. The Congress was to use Hindi as far as possible. The adoption of the Non-Cooperation Movement (initiated earlier by the Khilafat Conference) by the Congress gave it a new energy and, from January 1921, it began to register considerable success all over the country. Gandhiji, along with the Ali brothers (who were the foremost Khilafat leaders), undertook a nation-wide tour during which he addressed hundreds of meetings and met a large number of political workers. In the first month itself, thousands of students (90,000 according to one estimate) left schools and colleges and joined more than 800 national schools and colleges that had sprung up all over the country.

The educational boycott was particularly successful in Bengal, where the students in Calcutta triggered off a province-wide strike to force the managements of their institutions to disaffiliate themselves from the Government. C.R. Das played a major role in promoting the movement and Subhas Bose became the principal of the National Congress in Calcutta. The Swadeshi spirit was revived with new vigour, this time as part of a nation-wide struggle. Punjab, too, responded to the educational boycott and was second only to Bengal, Lala Lajpat Rai playing a leading part here despite his initial reservations about this item of the programme. Others areas that were active were Bombay, U.P., Bihar, Orissa and Assam, Madras remained lukewarm. The boycott of law courts by lawyers was not as successful as the educational boycott, But it was very dramatic and spectacular. Many leading lawyers of the country, like C.R. Das, Motilal Nehru, M.R. Jayakar, Saifuddin Kitchlew, Vallabhbhai Patel, C. Rajagopalachari, T. Prakasam and Asaf Ali gave up lucrative practices, and their sacrifice became a source of inspiration for many. In numbers again Bengal led, followed by Andhra Pradesh, U.P., Kamataka and Punjab.

Notes Perhaps, the most successful item of the programme was the boycott of foreign cloth. Volunteers would go from house to house collecting clothes made of foreign cloth, and the entire community would collect to light a bonfire of the goods.

Prabhudas Gandhi, who accompanied Mahatma Gandhi on his nation-wide tour in the first part of 1921, recalls how at small way-side stations where their train would stop for a few minutes, Gandhiji would persuade the crowd, assembled to greet him, to at least discard their head dress on the spot. Immediately, a pile of caps, *dupattas*, and turbans would form and as the train moved out they would see the flames leaping upwards. Picketing of shops selling foreign cloth was also a major form of the boycott. The value of imports of foreign cloth fell from Rs. 102 crore in 1920-21 to Rs. 57 crore in 1921-22. Another feature of the movement which acquired great popularity in many parts of the country, even though it was not pail of the original plan, was the picketing of toddy shops. Government revenues showed considerable decline on this count and the Government was forced to actually carry on propaganda to bring home to the people the healthy effects of a good drink.

The Government of Bihar and Orrisa even compiled and circulated a list of all the great men in history (which included Moses, Alexander, Julius Caesar, Napoleon, Shakespeare, Gladstone, Tennyson and Bismarck) who enjoyed their liquor.

The AICC, at its session at Vijayawada in March 1921, directed that for the next three months Congressmen should concentrate on collection of funds, enrolment of members and distribution

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of *charkhas*. As a result, a vigorous membership drive was launched and though the target of one crore members was not achieved, Congress membership reached a figure roughly of 50 lakhs. The Tilak Swaraj Fund was oversubscribed, exceeding the target of rupees one crore. *Charkhas* were popularized on a wide scale and *khadi* became the uniform of the national movement. There was a complaint at a students meeting Gandhiji addressed in Madurai that *khadi* was too costly. Gandhiji retorted that the answer lay in wearing less clothes and, from that day, discarded his *dhoti* and *kurta* in favour of a *langot*. For the rest of his life, he remained a 'half-naked fakir.'

In July 1921, a new challenge was thrown to the Government. Mohammed Ali, at the All India Khilafat Conference held at Karachi on 8 July, declared that it was 'religiously unlawful for the Muslims to continue in the British Army' and asked that this be conveyed to every Muslim in the Army. As a result, Mohammed Ali, along with other leaders, was immediately arrested. In protest, the speech was repeated at innumerable meetings all over the country. On 4 October, forty-seven leading Congressmen, including Gandhiji, issued a manifesto repeating whatever Mohammed Ali had said and added that every civilian and member of the armed forces should sever connections with the repressive Government. The next day, the Congress Working Committee passed a similar resolution, and on 16 October, Congress committees all over the country held meetings at which the same resolution was adopted. The Government was forced to ignore the whole incident, and accept the blow to its prestige.

The next dramatic event was the visit of the Prince of Wales which began on 17 November, 1921. The day the Prince landed in Bombay was observed as a day of *hartal* all over the country. In Bombay, Gandhiji himself addressed a mammoth meeting in the compound of the Elphinstone Mill owned by the nationalist Umar Shobhani, and lighted a huge bonfire of foreign cloth. Unfortunately, however, clashes occurred between those who had gone to attend the welcome function and the crowd returning from Gandhiji's meeting. Riots followed, in which Parsis, Christians, Anglo-Indians became special targets of attack as identifiable loyalists. There was police firing, and the three-day turmoil resulted in fifty-nine dead. Peace returned only after Gandhiji had been on fast for three days. The whole sequence of events left Gandhiji profoundly disturbed and worried about the likelihood of recurrence of violence once mass civil disobedience was sanctioned.

The Prince of Wales was greeted with empty streets and downed shutters wherever he went. Emboldened by their successful defiance of the Government, non-cooperators became more and more aggressive. The Congress Volunteer Corps emerged as a powerful parallel police, and the sight of its members marching in formation and dressed in uniform was hardly one that warmed the Government's heart. The Congress had already granted permission to the PCCs to sanction mass civil disobedience wherever they thought the people were ready and in some areas, such as Midnapur district in Bengal, which had started a movement against Union Board Taxes and Chirala-Pirala and Pedanandipadu taluqa in Guntur district of Andhra, no-tax movements were already in the offing.

The Non-Cooperation Movement had other indirect effects as well. In the Avadh area of U.P., where *kisan sabhas* and a *kisan* movement had been gathering strength since 1918, Non-cooperation propaganda, carried on among others by Jawaharlal Nehru, helped to fan the already existing ferment, and soon it became difficult to distinguish between a Non- cooperation meeting and a *kisan* meeting. In Malabar in Kerala, Non-cooperation and Khilafat propaganda helped to arouse the Muslims tenants against their landlords, but the movement here, unfortunately, at times took on a communal colour.

In Assam, labourers on tea plantations went on strike. When the fleeing workers were fired upon, there were strikes on the steamer service, and on the Assam-Bengal Railway as well. J.M. Sengupta, the Bengali nationalist leader, played a leading role in these developments. In Midnapur, a cultivators' strike against a White *zamindari* company was led by a Calcutta medical student. Defiance of forest laws became popular in Andhra. Peasants and tribals in some of the Rajasthan states began movements for securing better conditions of life. In Punjab, the Akali Movement for wresting control of the gurdwaras from the corrupt mahants (priests) was a part of the general movement of Non-cooperation, and the Akalis observed strict non-violence in the face of tremendous

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repression. The examples could be multiplied, but the point is that the spirit of unrest and defiance of authority engendered by the Non-Cooperation Movement contributed to the rise of many local movements in different parts of the country, movements which did not often adhere strictly either to the programme of the Non-Cooperation Movement or even to the policy of non-violence.

In this situation, it was hardly surprising that the Government came to the conclusion that its earlier policy had not met with success and that the time to strike had arrived. In September 1920, at the beginning of the movement, the Government had thought it best to leave it alone as repression would only make martyrs of the nationalists and fan the spirit of revolt. In May 1921, it had tried, through the Gandhi-Reading talks, to persuade Gandhiji to ask the Ali brothers to withdraw from their speeches those passages that contained suggestions of violence; this was an attempt to drive a wedge between the Khilafat leaders and Gandhiji, but it failed. By December, the Government felt that things were really going too far and announced a change of policy by declaring the Volunteer Corps illegal and arresting all those who claimed to be its members.

C.R. Das was among the first to be arrested, followed by his wife Basantidebi, whose arrest so incensed the youth of Bengal that thousands came forward to court arrest. In the next two months, over 30,000 people were arrested from all over the country, and soon only Gandhiji out of the top leadership remained out of jail. In mid-December, there was an abortive attempt at negotiations, initiated by Malaviya, but the conditions offered were such that it meant sacrificing the Khilafat leaders, a course that Gandhiji would not accept. In any case, the Home Government had already decided against a settlement and ordered the Viceroy, Lord Reading, to withdraw from the negotiations. Repression continued, public meetings and assemblies were banned, newspapers gagged, and midnight raids on Congress and Khilafat offices became common.

Chauri Chaura Incident

Gandhiji had been under considerable pressure from the Congress rank and file as well as the leadership to start the phase of mass civil disobedience. The Ahmedabad session of the Congress in December 1921 had appointed him the sole authority on the issue. The Government showed no signs of relenting and had ignored both the appeal of the All-Parties Conference held in mid-January 1922 as well as Gandhiji's letter to the Viceroy announcing that, unless the Government lifted the ban on civil liberties and released political prisoners, he would be forced to go ahead with mass civil disobedience. The Viceroy was unmoved and, left with no choice, Gandhiji announced that mass civil disobedience would begin in Bardoli taluqa of Surat district, and that all other parts of the country should cooperate by maintaining total discipline and quiet so that the entire attention of the movement could be concentrated on Bardoli. But Bardoli was destined to wait for another six years before it could launch a no-tax movement. Its fate was decided by the action of members of a Congress and Khilafat procession in Chauri Chaura in Gorakhpur district of U.P. on 5 February 1922. Irritated by the behaviour of some policemen, a section of the crowd attacked them. The police opened fire. At this, the entire procession attacked the police and when the latter hid inside the police station, set fire to the building. Policemen who tried to escape were hacked to pieces and thrown into the fire. In all twenty-two policemen were done to death. On hearing of the incident, Gandhiji decided to withdraw the movement. He also persuaded the Congress Working Committee to ratify his decision and thus, on 12 February 1922, the Non-Cooperation Movement came to an end. Gandhiji's decision to withdraw the movement in response to the violence at Chauri Chaura raised a controversy whose heat can still be felt in staid academic seminars and sober volumes of history. Motilal Nehru, C.R. Das, Jawaharlal Nehru, Subhas Bose, and many others have recorded their utter bewilderment on hearing the news. They could not understand why the whole country had to pay the price for the crazy behaviour of some people in a remote village. Many in the country thought that the Mahatma had failed miserably as a leader and that his days of glory were over.

Many later commentators, following the tradition established by R. Palme Dutt in *India Today*, have continued to condemn the decision taken by Gandhiji, and seen in it proof of the Mahatma's concern for the propertied classes of Indian society. Their argument is that Gandhiji did not withdraw the movement simply because of his belief in the necessity of non-violence. He withdrew

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it because the action at Chauri Chaura was a symbol and an indication of the growing militancy of the Indian masses, of their growing radicalization, of their willingness to launch an attack on the status quo of property relations. Frightened by this radical possibility and by the prospect of the movement going out of his hands and into the hands of radical forces, and in order to protect the interests of landlords and capitalists who would inevitably be at the receiving end of this violence, Gandhiji cried halt to the movement. They have found supportive proof in the resolution of the Congress Working Committee of 12 February 1922 popularly known as the Bardoli resolution which while announcing the withdrawal, asked the peasants to pay taxes and tenants to pay rents. This, they say, was the real though hidden motive behind the historic decision of February 1922.

It seems, however, that Gandhiji's critics have been less than fair to him. First, the argument that violence in a remote village could not be a sufficient cause for the decision is in itself a weak one. Gandhiji had repeatedly warned that he did not even want any non-violent movement in any other part of the country while he was conducting mass civil disobedience in Bardoli, and in fact had asked the Andhra PCC to withdraw the permission that it had granted to some of the District Congress Committees to start civil disobedience. One obvious reason for this was that, in such a situation of mass ferment and activity, the movement might easily take a violent turn, either due to its own volatile nature or because of provocation by the authorities concerned (as had actually happened in Bombay in November 1921 and later in Chauri Chaura); also if violence occurred anywhere it could easily be made the excuse by the Government to launch a massive attack on the movement as a whole. The Government could always cite the actual violence in one part as proof of the likelihood of violence in another part of the country, and thus justify its repression. This would upset the whole strategy of non-violent civil disobedience which was based on the principle that the forces of repression would always stand exposed since they would be using armed force against peaceful civil resisters. It was, therefore, not enough to assert that there was no connection between Chauri Chaura and Bardoli.

It is entirely possible that in Gandhiji's assessment the chances of his being allowed to conduct a mass civil disobedience campaign in Bardoli had receded further after Chauri Chaura. The Government would have had excuse to remove him and other activists from the scene and use force to cow down the people. Mass civil disobedience would be defeated even before it was given a fair trail. By taking the onus of withdrawal on himself and on the Working Committee, Gandhiji was protecting the movement from likely repression, and the people from demoralization. True, the withdrawal itself led to considerable demoralization, especially of the active political workers, but it is likely that the repression and crushing of the movement (as happened in 1932) would have led to even greater demoralization. Perhaps, in the long run, it was better to have felt that, if only Gandhiji had not withdrawn the movement, it would have surged forward, than to see it crushed and come to the conclusion that it was not possible for a mass movement to succeed in the face of government repression. It is necessary to remember that, after all, the Non-Cooperation Movement was the first attempt at an all-India mass struggle against the British, and a serious reverse at this elementary stage could have led to a prolonged period of demoralization and passivity.

The other argument that the real motive for withdrawal was the fear of the growth of radical forces and that Chauri Chaura was proof of the emergence of precisely such a radical sentiment is on even thinner ground. The crowd at Chauri Chaura had not demonstrated any intention of attacking landlords or overturning the structure of property relations, they were merely angered by the overbearing behaviour of policemen and vented their wrath by attacking them. Peasant unrest in most of Avadh and Malabar had died out long before this time, and the Eka movement that was on in some of the rural areas of Avadh showed no signs of wanting to abolish the *zamindari* system; it only wanted zamindars to stop 'illegal' cesses and arbitrary rent enhancements. In fact, one of the items of the oath that was taken by peasants who joined the Eka movement was that they would 'pay rent regularly at Kharif and Rabi. The no-tax movement in Guntur was very much within the framework of the Non-Cooperation Movement; it was directed against the government and remained totally peaceful. Moreover, it was already on the decline before February 1922. It is difficult to discern where the threat from radical tendencies is actually located.

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That the Bardoli resolution which announced the withdrawal also contained clauses which asked peasants to pay up taxes and tenants to pay up rents, and assured zamindars that the Congress had no intention of depriving them of their rights, is also no proof of hidden motives. The Congress had at no stage during the movement sanctioned non-payment of rent or questioned the rights of zamindars; the resolution was merely a reiteration of its position on this issue. Non-payment of taxes was obviously to cease if the movement as a whole was being withdrawn.

There are also some indications that Gandhiji's decision may have been prompted by the fact that in many parts of the country, by the second half of 1921, the movement had shown clear signs of being on the ebb. Students had started drifting back to schools and colleges, lawyers and litigants to law courts, the commercial classes showed signs of weariness and worry at the accumulating stocks of foreign cloth, attendance at meetings and rallies had dwindled, both in the urban and rural areas. This does not mean that in some pockets, like Bardoli in Gujarat or Guntur in Andhra, where intensive political work had been done, the masses were not ready to carry on the struggle. But the mass enthusiasm that was evident all over the country in the first part of 1921 had, perhaps, receded. The cadre and the active political workers were willing to carry on the fight but a mass movement of such a nature required the active participation of the masses, and not only of the highly motivated among them. However, at the present stage of research, it"is not possible to argue this position with great force; we only wish to urge the possibility that this too was among the factors that led to the decision to withdraw.

Gandhiji's critics often fail to recognize that mass movements have an inherent tendency to ebb after reaching a certain height, that the capacity of the masses to withstand repression, endure suffering and make sacrifices is not unlimited, that a time comes when breathing space is required to consolidate, recuperate, and gather strength for the next round of struggle, and that, therefore, withdrawal or a shift to a phase of non-confrontation is an inherent part of a strategy of political action that is based on the masses. Withdrawal is not tantamount to betrayal; it is an inevitable part of the strategy itself.

Of course, whether or not the withdrawal was made at the correct time can always be a matter open to debate. But perhaps Gandhiji had enough reasons to believe that the moment he chose was the right one. The movement had already gone on for over a year, the Government was in no mood for negotiations, and Chauri Chaura presented an opportunity to retreat with honour, before the internal weaknesses of the movement became apparent enough to force a surrender or make the retreat look like a rout.

Gandhiji had promised *Swaraj* within a year if his programme was adopted. But the year was long over, the movement was withdrawn, and there was no sign of *Swaraj* or even of any tangible concessions. Had it all been in vain? Was the movement a failure?

One could hardly answer in the affirmative. The Non-Cooperation Movement had in fact succeeded on many counts. It certainly demonstrated that it commanded the support and sympathy of vast sections of the Indian people. After Non-cooperation, the charge of representing a 'microscopic minority,' made by the Viceroy, Dufferin, in 1888, could never again be hurled at the Indian National Congress. Its reach among many sections of Indian peasants, workers, artisans, shopkeepers, traders, professionals, white-collar employees, had been demonstrated. The spatial spread of the movement was also nation-wide. Some areas were more active than others, but there were few that showed no signs of activity at all.

The capacity of the 'poor dumb millions' of India to take part in modern nationalist politics was also demonstrated. By their courage, sacrifice, and fortitude in the face of adversity and repression, they dispelled the notion that the desire for national freedom was the preserve of the educated and the rich and showed that it was an elemental urge common to all members of a subject nation. They may not as yet have fully comprehended all its implications, understood all the arguments put forth in its favour or observed all the discipline that the movement demanded for its successful conduct. This was, after all, for many of them, first contact with the modern world of nationalist politics and the modem ideology of nationalism. This was the first time that nationalists from the towns, students from schools and colleges or even the educated and politically aware in the

villages had made a serious attempt to bring the ideology and the movement into their midst. Its success was bound to be limited, the weaknesses many. There were vast sections of the masses that even then remained outside the ambit of the new awakening. But this was only the beginning and more serious and consistent efforts were yet in the offing. But the change was striking.

The tremendous participation of Muslims in the movement, and the maintenance of communal unity, despite the Malabar developments, was in itself no mean achievement. There is hardly any doubt that it was Muslim participation that gave the movement its truly mass character in many areas; at some places two-thirds of those arrested were Muslims. And it was, indeed, unfortunate that this most positive feature of the movement was not to be repeated in later years once communalism began to take its toll. The fraternization that was witnessed between Hindus and Muslims, with Gandhiji and other Congress leaders speaking from mosques, Gandhiji being allowed to address meetings of Muslim women in which he was the only male who was not blind-folded, all these began to look like romantic dreams in later years.

The retreat that was ordered on 12 February, 1922 was only a temporary one. The battle was over, but the war would continue. To the challenge thrown by Montagu and Birkenhead that 'India would not challenge with success the most determined people in the world, who would once again answer the challenge with all the vigour and determination at its command,' Gandhiji, in an article written in *Young India* on 23 February 1922 *after* the withdrawal of the movement, replied: 'It is high time that the British people were made to realize that the fight that was commenced in 1920 is a fight to the finish, whether it lasts one month or one year or many months or many years and whether the representatives of Britain re-enact all the indescribable orgies of the Mutiny days with redoubled force or whether they do not.'

Self-Assessment

1. Fill in the blanks:

(*i*) Non-cooperation Movement was started in September ..... .

(*ii*) On ..... the Khilafat committee at Allahabad unanimously accepted the suggestion of non-cooperation.

(*iii*) The British public had demonstrated its support by helping the morning Post collecting ..... for General Dyer.

(*iv*) All India Khilafat conference was held at Karachi on ..... and declared that it was 'religiously unlawful for the Muslims to continue in the British Army.

(*v*) The Prince of Wales landed in Bombay on ..... .

10.2 Civil Disobedience Movement

The Lahore Congress of 1929 had authorized the Working Committee to launch a programme of civil disobedience including non-payment of taxes. It had also called upon all members of legislatures to resign their seats. In mid-February, 1930, the Working Committee, meeting at Sabarmati Ashram, invested Gandhiji with full powers to launch the Civil Disobedience Movement at a time and place of his choice. The acknowledged expert on mass struggle was already 'desperately in search of an effective formula.' His ultimatum of 31 January to Lord Irwin, stating the minimum demands in the form of 11 points, had been ignored, and there was now only one way out: civil disobedience.

By the end of February, the formula began to emerge as Gandhiji began to talk about salt: 'There is no article like salt outside water by taxing which the State can reach even the starving millions, the sick, the maimed and the utterly helpless. The tax constitutes therefore the most inhuman poll tax the ingenuity of man can devise.' On 2 March, he addressed his historic letter to the Viceroy in which he first explained at great length why he regarded British rule as a curse: 'It has impoverished the dumb millions by a system of progressive exploitation . . . It has reduced us politically to serfdom. It has sapped the foundations of our culture . . . it has degraded us spiritually.' He then informed the Viceroy of his plan of action, as he believed every true *Satyagrahi* must: '. . . on the

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11th day of this month, I shall proceed with such co-workers of the Ashram as I can take, to disregard the provisions of the salt laws . . . It is, I know, open to you to frustrate my design by arresting me. I hope that there will be tens of thousands ready, in a disciplined manner, to take up the work after me, and, in the act of disobeying the Salt Act to lay themselves open to the penalties of a law that should never have disfigured the Statute-book.'

The plan was brilliantly conceived though few realized its significance when it was first announced. Gandhiji, along with a band of seventy-eight members of the Sabarmati Ashram, among whom were men belonging to almost every region and religion of India, was to march from his headquarters in Ahmedabad through the villages of Gujarat for 240 miles. On reaching the coast at Dandi, he would break the salt laws by collecting salt from the beach. The deceptively innocuous move was to prove devastatingly effective. Even before the march began, thousands began to throng the Sabarmati Ashram in anticipation of the dramatic events that lay ahead. And Gandhiji painstakingly explained his plans, gave directions for future action, impressed on the people the necessity for non-violence, and prepared them for the Government's response: 'Wherever possible, civil disobedience of salt laws should be started . . . Liquor and foreign-cloth shops can be picketed. We can refuse to pay taxes if we have the requisite strength. The lawyers can give up practice. The public can boycott the courts by refraining from litigation. Government servants can resign their posts . . . I prescribe only one condition, viz., let our pledge of truth and non-violence as the only means for the attainment of *swaraj* be faithfully kept.'

Explaining the power of civil disobedience, he said: 'Supposing ten persons from each of the 700,000 villages in India come forward to manufacture salt and to disobey the Salt Act, what do you think this Government can do? Even the worst autocrat you can imagine would not dare to blow regiments of peaceful civil resisters out of a cannon's mouth. If only you will bestir yourselves just a little, I assure you we should be able to tire this Government out in a very short time.'

He also explained how non-violence enabled the widest participation of the people, and put the Government in an unenviable quandary. To a crowd who came to the ashram on 10 March, he said: 'Though the battle is to begin in a couple of days, how is it that you can come here quite fearlessly? I do not think any one of you would be here if you had to face rifle-shots or bombs. But you have no fear of rifle-shots or bombs? Why?

Supposing I had announced that I was going to launch a violent campaign (not necessarily with men armed with rifles, but even with sticks or stones), do you think the Government would have left me free until now? Can you show me an example in history (be it in England, America or Russia) where the State has tolerated violent defiance of authority for a single day? But here you know that the Government is puzzled and preplexed.'

And as Gandhiji began his march, staff in hand, at the head of his dedicated band, there was something in the image that deeply stirred the imagination of the people. News of his progress, of his speeches, of the teeming crowds that greeted and followed the marchers, of the long road lovingly strewn with leaves and festooned with banners and flags, of men and women quietly paying their homage by spinning yarn on their *charkas* as Gandhiji passed, of the 300 village officials in Gujarat who resigned their posts in answer to his appeal, was 'carried day after day by newspapers to readers across the country and broadcast live by thousands of Congress workers to eager listeners. By the time Gandhiji reached Dandi, he had a whole nation, aroused and expectant, waiting restlessly for the final signal. On 6 April 1930, by picking up a handful of salt, Gandhiji inaugurated the Civil Disobedience Movement, a movement that was to remain unsurpassed in the history of the Indian national movement for the country-wide mass participation it unleashed.

While Gandhiji was marching to Dandi, Congress leaders and workers had been busy at various levels with the hard organizational task of enrolling volunteers and members, forming grass-roots Congress Committees, collecting funds, and touring villages and towns to spread the nationalist message. Preparations for launching the salt *Satyagraha* were made, sites chosen, volunteers prepared, and the logistics of battle worked out.

Once the way was cleared by Gandhiji's ritual beginning at Dandi, the defiance of salt laws started all over the country. In Tamil Nadu, C. Rajagopalachari, led a salt march from Trichinopoly to

Vedaranniyam on the Tanjore coast. By the time he was arrested on 30 April he had collected enough volunteers to keep the campaign going for quite some time. In Malabar, K. Kelappan, the hero of the Vaikom *Satvagraha*, walked from Calicut to Payannur to break the salt law. A band of *Satyagrahis* walked all the way from Sylhet in Assam to Noakhali on the Bengal Coast to make salt. In Andhra, a number of *sibirams* (military-style camps) were set up in different districts to serve as the headquarters of the salt *Satyagraha*, and bands of *Satyagrahis* marched through villages on their way to the coastal centres to defy the law. On their return journeys, they again toured through another set of villages. The Government's failure to arrest Gandhiji for breaking the salt law was by the local level leaders to impress upon the people that 'the Government is afraid of persons like ourselves,' and that since the starting of the, salt *Satyagraha* the Government 'has disappeared and hidden itself somewhere and that Gandhi Government has already been established.' Jawaharlal Nehru's arrest on 14 April, for defiance of the salt law, was answered with huge demonstrations and clashes with the police in the cities of Madras, Calcutta and Karachi.

On 23 April, the arrest of Congress leaders in the North West Frontier Province led to a mass demonstration of unprecedented magnitude in Peshawar. Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan had been active for several years in the area, and it was his mass work which lay behind the formation of the band of non-violent revolutionaries, the Khudai Khidmatgars, popularly known as the Red Shirts — who were to play an extremely active role in the Civil Disobedience Movement. The atmosphere created by their political work contributed to the mass upsurge in Peshawar during which the city was virtually in the hands of the crowd for more than a week. The Peshawar demonstrations are significant because it was here that the soldiers of the Garhwali regiments refused to fire on the unarmed crowd.

It was becoming increasingly clear that the Government's gamble — that non-interference with the movement would result in its spending itself out, that Gandhiji's salt strategy would fail to take off — had not paid off. In fact, the Government had never been clear on what course it should follow, and was, as Gandhiji had predicted, 'puzzled and perplexed.' The dilemma in which it found itself was a dilemma that the Gandhian strategy of non-violent civil disobedience was designed to create. The Government was placed in a classic 'damned if you do, damned if you don't' i.e., if it did not suppress a movement that brazenly defied its laws, its administrative authority would be seen to be undermined and its control would be shown to be weak, and if it did suppress it, it would be seen as a brutal, anti-people administration that used violence on non-violent agitators. 'If we do too much, Congress will cry "repression" . . . if we do too little, Congress will cry "victory," ' — this is how a Madras civilian expressed the dilemma in early 1930. Either way, it led to the erosion of the hegemony of the British government.

The rapid spread of the movement left the Government with little choice but to demonstrate the force that lay behind its benevolent facade. Pressure from officials, Governors and the military establishment started building up, and, on 4 May, the Viceroy finally ordered Gandhiji's arrest. Gandhiji's announcement that he would now proceed to continue his defiance of the salt laws by leading a raid on the Dharasana Salt Works certainly forced the Government's hand, but its timing of Gandhiji's arrest was nevertheless ill-conceived. It had neither the advantage of an early strike, which would have at least prevented Gandhiji from carefully building up the momentum of the movement, nor did it allow the Government to reap the benefits of their policy of sitting it out. Coming as it did at a high point in the movement, it only acted as a further spur to activity, and caused endless trouble for the Government.

There was a massive wave of protest at Gandhiji's arrest. In Bombay, the crowd that spilled out into the streets was so large that the police just withdrew. Its ranks were swelled by thousands of textile and railway workers. Cloth-merchants went on a six-day *hartal*. There were clashes and firing in Calcutta and Delhi. But it was in Sholapur, in Maharashtra, that the response was the fiercest. The textile workers, who dominated the town went on strike from 7 May, and along with other residents, burnt liquor shops and proceeded to attack all symbols of Government authority — the railway station, law courts, police stations and municipal buildings. They took over the city and established a virtual parallel government which could only be dislodged with the imposition of martial law after 16 May.

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Task What do you mean by Red Shirts?

But it was non-violent heroism that stole the show as the salt *Satyagraha* assumed yet another, even more potent form. On May 21, with Sarojini Naidu, the first Indian woman to become President of the Congress, and Imam Saheb, Gandhiji's comrade of the South African struggle, at the helm, and Gandhiji's son, Manilal, in front ranks, a band of 2000 marched towards the police cordon that had sealed off the Dharasana salt works. As they came close, the police rushed forward with their steel-tipped lathis and set upon the non-resisting *Satyagrahis* till they fell down. The injured would be carried away by their comrades on make-shift stretchers and another column would take their place, be beaten to pulp, and carried away. Column after column advanced in this way; after a while, instead of walking up to the cordon the men would sit down and wait for the police blows. Not an arm was raised in defence, and by 11 a.m., when the temperature in the shade was 116 degrees Fahrenheit, the toll was already 320 injured and two dead. Webb Miller, the American journalist, whose account of the Dharasana *Satyagraha* was to carry the flavour of Indian nationalism to many distant lands, and whose description of the resolute heroism of the *Satyagrahis* demonstrated effectively that non-violent resistance was no meek affair, summed up his impressions in these words: 'In eighteen years of my reporting in twenty countries, during which I have witnessed innumerable civil disturbances, riots, street fights and rebellions, I have never witnessed such harrowing scenes as at Dharasana.'

This new form of salt *Satyagraha* was eagerly adopted by the people, who soon made it a mass affair. At Wadala, a suburb of Bombay, the raids on the salt works culminated on 1 June in mass action by a crowd of 15,000 who repeatedly broke the police cordon and triumphantly carried away salt in the face of charges by the mounted police. In Karnataka, 10,000 invaded the Sanikatta salt works and faced lathis and bullets. In Madras, the defiance of salt laws led to repeated clashes with the police and to a protest meeting on 23 April on the beach which was dispersed by lathi charges and firing, leaving three dead. This incident completely divided the city on racial lines, even the most moderate of Indians condemning the incident, and rallying behind the nationalists. In Andhra bands of village women walked miles to carry away a handful of salt, and in Bengal, the old Gandhian ashrams, regenerated by the flood of volunteers from the towns, continued to sustain a powerful salt *Satyagraha* in Midnapore and other coastal pockets. The districts of Balasore, Puri and Cuttack in Orissa remained active centres of illegal salt manufacture.

But salt *Satyagraha* was only the catalyst, and the beginning, for a rich variety of forms of defiance that it brought in its wake. Before his arrest, Gandhiji had already called for a vigorous boycott of foreign cloth and liquor shops, and had especially asked the women to play a leading role in this movement. 'To call woman the weaker sex is a libel: it is man's injustice to woman,' he had said; and the women of India certainly demonstrated in 1930 that they were second to none in strength and tenacity of purpose. Women who had never stepped unescorted out of their homes, women who had stayed in purdah, young mothers and widows and unmarried girls, became a familiar sight as they stood from morning to night outside liquor shops and opium dens and stores selling foreign cloth, quietly but firmly persuading the customers and shopkeepers to change their ways.

Along with the women, students and youth played the most prominent part in the boycott of foreign cloth and liquor. In Bombay, for example, regular Congress sentries were posted in business districts to ensure that merchants and dealers did not flout the foreign cloth boycott. Traders' associations and commercial bodies were themselves quite active in implementing the boycott, as were the many millowners who refused to use foreign yarn and pledged not to manufacture coarse cloth that competed with *khadi*. The recalcitrant among them were brought in line by fines levied by their own associations, by social boycott, by Congress black-listing, and by picketing.

The liquor boycott brought Government revenues from excise duties crashing down; it also soon assumed a new popular form, that of cutting off the heads of toddy trees. The success of the liquor

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and drugs boycott was obviously connected with the popular tradition of regarding abstinence as a virtue and as a symbol of respectability. The depth of this tradition is shown by the fact that lower castes trying to move up in the caste hierarchy invariably tried to establish their upper caste status by giving up liquor and eating of meat.

Eastern India became the scene of a new kind of no-tax campaign — refusal to pay the *chowkidara* tax. *Chowkidars*, paid out of the tax levied specially on the villages, were guards who supplemented the small police force in the rural areas in this region. They were particularly hated because they acted as spies for the Government and often also as retainers for the local landlords. The movement against this tax and calling for the resignation of *chowkidars*, and of the influential members of *chowkidari* panchayats who appointed the *chowkidars*, first started in Bihar in May itself, as salt agitation had not much scope due to the land-locked nature of the province. In the Monghyr, Saran and Bhagalpur districts, for example, the tax was refused, *chowkidars* induced to resign, and social boycott used against those who resisted. The Government retaliated by confiscation of property worth hundreds and thousands in lieu of a few rupees of tax, and by beatings and torture. Matters came to a head in Bihpur in Bhagalpur on May 31 when the police, desperate to assert its fast-eroding authority, occupied the Congress ashram which was the headquarters of nationalist activity in the area. The occupation triggered off daily demonstrations outside the ashram, and a visit by Rajendra Prasad and Abdul Bari from Patna became the occasion for a huge mass rally, which was broken up by a lathi charge in which Rajendra Prasad was injured. As elsewhere, repression further increased the nationalists' strength, and the police just could not enter the rural areas.

In Bengal, the onset of the monsoon, which made it difficult to make salt, brought about a shift to anti-*chowkidara* and anti-Union Board agitation. Here too, villagers withstood severe repression, losing thousands of rupees worth of property through confiscation and destruction, and having to hide for days in forests to escape the wrath of the police.

In Gujarat, in Kheda district, in Bardoli *taluqa* in Surat district, and in Jambusar in Broach, a determined no-tax movement was in progress — the tax refused here was the land revenue. Villagers in their thousands, with family, cattle and household goods, crossed the border from British India into the neighbouring princely states such as Baroda and camped for months together in the open fields. Their houses were broken into, their belongings destroyed, their lands confiscated. The police did not even spare Vallabhbhai Patel's eighty-year-old mother, who sat cooking in her village house in Karamsad; her cooking utensils were kicked about and filled with kerosene and stone. Vallabhbhai, on his brief sojourns out of jail throughout 1930, continued to provide encouragement and solace to the hard-pressed peasants of his native land. Though their meagre resources were soon exhausted, and weariness set in, they stuck it out in the wilderness till the truce in March 1931 made it possible for them to return to their homes.

Defiance of forest laws assumed a mass character in Maharashtra, Karnataka and the Central Provinces, especially in areas with large tribal populations who had been the most seriously affected by the colonial Government's restrictions on the use of the forest. At some places the size of the crowd that broke the forest laws swelled to 70,000 and above.

In Assam, a powerful agitation led by students was launched against the infamous 'Cunningham circular' which forced students and their guardians to furnish assurances of good behaviour.

The people seemed to have taken to heart Jawaharlal Nehru's message when he unfurled the national flag at Lahore in December 1929: 'Remember once again, now that this flag is unfurled, it must not be lowered as long as a single Indian, man, woman, or child lives in India.' Attempts to defend the honour of the national flag in the face of severe brutalities often turned into heroism of the most spectacular variety. At Bundur, on the Andhra Coast, Tota Narasaiah Naidu preferred to be beaten unconscious by a fifteen-member police force rather than give up the national flag. In Calicut, P. Krishna Pillai, who later became a major Communist leader, suffered lathi blows with the same determination. In Surat, a group of children used their ingenuity to defy the police. Frustrated by the repeated snatching of the national flag from their hands, they came up with the idea of stitching *khadi* dresses in the three colours of the national flag, and thereafter these little,

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'living flags' triumphantly paraded the streets and defied the police to take away the national flag! The national flag, the symbol of the new spirit, now became a common sight even in remote villages.

U.P. was the setting of another kind of movement — a no-revenue, no-rent campaign. The no-revenue part was a call to the *zamindars* to refuse to pay revenue to the Government, the no-rent a call to the tenants not to pay rent to the *zamindars*. In effect, since the *zamindars* were largely loyal to the Government, this became a no-rent struggle. The Civil Disobedience Movement had taken a firm hold in the province in the initial months, but repression had led to a relative quiet, and though no-rent was in the air, it was only in October that activity picked up again when Jawaharlal Nehru, out of jail for a brief period, got the U.P. Congress Committee to sanction the no-rent campaign. Two months of preparation and intensive propaganda led to the launching of the campaign in December; by January, severe repression had forced many peasants to flee the villages. Among the important centres of this campaign were the districts of Agra and Rae Bareli.

The movement also popularized a variety of forms of mobilization. *Prabhat pheris,* in which bands of men, women and children went around at dawn singing nationalist songs, became the rule in villages and towns. *Patrikas,* or illegal news-sheets, sometimes written by hand and sometimes cyclostyled, were part of the strategy to defy the hated Press Act, and they flooded the country. Magic lanterns were used to take the nationalist message to the villages. And, as before, incessant tours by individual leaders and workers, and by groups of men and women, and the holding of public meetings, big and small, remained the staple of the movement. Children were organized into *vanar senas* or monkey armies and at least at one place the girls decided they wanted their own separate *manjari sena* or cat army!

The Government's attitude throughout 1930 was marked by ambivalence. Gandhiji's arrest itself had come after much vacillation. After that, ordinances curbing the civil liberties of the people were freely issued and provincial governments were given the freedom to ban civil disobedience organizations. But the Congress Working Committee was not declared unlawful till the end of June and Motilal Nehru, who was functioning as the Congress President, also remained free till that date. Many local Congress Committees were not banned till August. Meanwhile, the publication of the report of the Simon Commission, which contained no mention of Dominion Status and was in other ways also a regressive document, combined with the repressive policy, further upset even moderate political opinion. Madan Mohan Malaviya and M.S. Aney courted arrest. In a conciliatory gesture, the Viceroy on 9 July suggested a Round Table Conference and reiterated the goal of Dominion Status. He also accepted the suggestion, made by forty members of the Central Legislature, that Tej Bahadur Sapru and M.R. Jayakar be allowed to explore the possibilities of peace between the Congress and the Government. In pursuance of this, the Nehrus, father and son, were taken in August to Yeravada jail to meet Gandhiji and discuss the possibilities of a settlement. Nothing came of the talks, but the gesture did ensure that some sections of political opinion would attend the Round Table Conference in London in November. The proceedings in London, the first ever conducted between the British and Indians as equals, at which virtually every delegate reiterated that a constitutional discussion to which the Congress was not a party was a meaningless exercise, made it clear that if the Government's strategy of survival was to be based on constitutional advance, then an olive branch to the Congress was imperative. The British Prime Minister hinted this possibility in his statement at the conclusion of the Round Table Conference. He also expressed the hope that the Congress would participate in the next round of deliberations to be held later in the year. On 25 January, the Viceroy announced the unconditional release of Gandhiji and all the other members of the Congress Working Committee, so that might be to respond to the Prime Minister's statement 'freely and fearlessly.'

After deliberating amongst itself for close to three weeks, and after long discussions with delegates who had returned from London, and with other leaders representing a cross-section of political opinion, the Congress Working Committee authorized Gandhiji to initiate discussions with the Viceroy. The fortnight-long discussions culminated on 5 March 1931 in the Gandhi-Irwin Pact, which was variously described as a 'truce' and a 'provisional settlement.'

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The Pact was signed by Gandhiji on behalf of the Congress and by Lord Irwin on behalf of the Government, a procedure that was hardly popular with officialdom as it placed the Congress on an equal footing with the Government. The terms of the agreement included the immediate release of all political prisoners not convicted for violence, the remission of all fines not yet collected, the return of confiscated lands not yet sold to third parties, and lenient treatment for those government employees who had resigned. The Government also conceded the right to make salt for consumption to villages along the coast, as also the right to peaceful and non-aggressive picketing. The Congress demand for a public inquiry into police excesses was not accepted, but Gandhiji's insistent request for an inquiry was recorded in the agreement. The Congress, on its part, agreed to discontinue the Civil Disobedience Movement. It was also understood that the Congress would participate in the next Round Table Conference.

The terms on which the Pact was signed, its timing, the motives of Gandhiji in signing the Pact, his refusal to make the Pact conditional on the commutation of the death-sentences of Bhagat Singh and his comrades, (even though he had tried his best to persuade the Viceroy to do so), have generated considerable controversy and debate among contemporaries and historians alike. The Pact has been variously seen as a betrayal, as proof of the vacillating nature of the Indian bourgeoisie and of Gandhiji succumbing to bourgeois pressure. It has been cited as evidence of Gandhiji's and the Indian bourgeoisie's fear of the mass movement taking a radical turn; a betrayal of peasants' interests because it did not immediately restore confiscated land, already sold to a third party, and so on.

However, as with arguments relating to the withdrawal of the Non-Cooperation Movement in 1922 after Chauri Chaura, these perceptions are based on an understanding which fails to grasp the basic strategy and character of the Indian national movement. For one, this understanding ignores the fact which has been stressed earlier — that mass movements are necessarily short-lived, they cannot go on for ever, the people's capacity to sacrifice, unlike that of the activists', is not endless. And signs of exhaustion there certainly were, in large and important sectors of the movement. In the towns, while the students and other young people still had energy to spare, shopkeepers and merchants were finding it difficult to bear any more losses and the support from these sections, so crucial in making the boycott a success, had begun to decline by September of 1930. In rural India as well, those areas that had begun their resistance early in the year were fairly quiet in the second half. Through sporadic incidents of resistance and attacks on and clashes with police continued, this was as true of Bengal and Bihar as it was of Andhra and Gujarat. Those areas like U.P., which began their no-rent campaigns only at the end of 1930, still had more fight left in them, but the few instances of militant resistance that carried on and the ability of one or two regions to sustain activity can hardly be cited as proof of the existence of vast reserves of energy all over the country. And what was the guarantee that when those reserves were exhausted, as they were bound to be sooner rather than later, the Government would still be willing to talk? 1931 was not 1946; and as 1932 was to show, the Government could change tack and suppress with a ferocity that could effectively crush the movement. No doubt the youth were disappointed, for they would have preferred their world to end 'with a bang' rather than 'with a whimper'; and surely the peasants of Gujarat were not happy that some of their lands did not come back to them immediately (they were returned after the Congress Ministry assumed office in Bombay in 1937). But the vast mass of the people were undoubtedly impressed that the mighty British Government had had to treat their movement and their leader as an equal and sign a pact with him. They saw this as a recognition of their own strength, and as their victory over the Government. The thousands who flocked out of the jails as a result of the pact were treated as soldiers returning from a victorious battle and not as prisoners of war returning from a humiliating defeat. They knew that a truce was not a surrender, and that the battle could be joined again, if the enemy so wanted. Meanwhile, their soldiers could rest and they could all prepare for the next round: they retained their faith in their General, and in themselves.

The Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930-31, then, marked a critically important stage in the progress of the anti-imperialist struggle. The number of people who went to jail was estimated at over 90,000 — more than three times the figure for the Non-Cooperation Movement of 1920-22. Imports of cloth from Britain had fallen by half; other imports like cigarettes had suffered a similar fate. Government income from liquor excise and land revenue had been affected. Elections to the

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Legislative Assembly had been effectively boycotted. A vast variety of social groups had been politicized on the side of Indian nationalism — if urban elements like merchants and shopkeepers and students were more active in Tamil Nadu and Punjab, and in cities in general, peasants had come to the forefront in Gujarat, U.P., Bengal, Andhra, and Bihar, and tribals in the Central Provinces, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Bengal. Workers had not been missing from the battle either — they joined numerous mass demonstrations in Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras and were in the forefront in Sholapur.

The participation of Muslims in the Civil Disobedience Movement was certainly nowhere near that in 1920-22. The appeals of communal leaders to stay away, combined with active Government encouragement of communal dissension to counter the forces of nationalism, had their effect. Still, the participation of Muslims was not insignificant, either. Their participation in the North-West Frontier Province was, as is well known, overwhelming. In Bengal, middle class Muslim participation was quite important in Senhatta, Tripura, Gaibandha, Bagura and Noakhali, and, in Dacca, Muslim students and shopkeepers as well as people belonging to the lower classes extended support to the movement. Middle and upper class Muslim women were also active. The Muslim weaving community in Bihar, and in Delhi and Lucknow the lower classes of Muslims were effectively mobilized as were many others in different parts of the country.

The support that the movement had garnered from the poor and the illiterate, both in the town and in the country, was remarkable indeed. Their participation was reflected even in the government statistics of jail-goers — and jail-going was only one of the many forms of participation. The Inspector-General of Police in Bengal, E.J. Lowman, expressed the general official bewilderment when he noted: 'I had no idea that the Congress organization could enlist the sympathy and support of such ignorant and uncultivated people.'

For Indian women, the movement was the most liberating experience to date and can truly be said to have marked their entry into the public space.

Self-Assessment

2. Choose the correct options:

(*i*) Who of the following was the first President of the Indian Trade Union Congress in 1920?

(*a*) Bipin Chandra Pal (*b*) Chittaranjan Das

(*c*) Lala Lajpat Rai (*d*) Dr. Rajendra Prasad

(*ii*) By virtue of which Act, diarchy was introduced in India?

(*a*) Government of India Act, 1909 (*b*) Government of India Act, 1919

(*c*) Government of India Act, 1935 (*d*) Government of India Act, 1947

(*iii*) Who among the following organised the defence in the trial of the I.N.A offices Capt. P.K. Sehgal, capt. Shahnawaj Khan and Capt. G. S. Dhillon?

(*a*) Bhulabhai Desai (*b*) Madan Mohan Malaviya

(*c*) Dr. Saifuddin Kitchlew (*d*) Ganesh Vaudev Mavalankar

(*iv*) Consider the following statements relating to the Civil Disobedience Movements:

(*a*) By the Gandhi-Irwin Pact, the congress agreed to suspend the civil Disobedience movement.

(*b*) By the Gandhi-Irwin Pact, the Government promised to release all political prisoners not convicted for violence.

Which of the statements given above is /are correct?

(*a*) 1 only (*b*) 2 only (c) Both 1 and 2 (*d*) Neither 1 nor 2

(*v*) Who among the following drafted the resolution on fundamental rights for the Karachi Session of Congress in 1931?

(*a*) Dr. B. R. Ambedkar (*b*) Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru

(*c*) Dr. Rajendra Prasad (*d*) Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

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10.3 Quit India Movement

'Quit India,' *'Bharat Choro'*. This simple but powerful slogan launched the legendary struggle which also became famous by the name of the 'August Revolution.' In this struggle, the common people of the country demonstrated an unparalleled heroism and militancy. Moreover, the repression that they faced was the most brutal that had ever been used against the national movement. The circumstances in which the resistance was offered were also the most adverse faced by the national movement until then — using the justification of the war effort, the Government had armed itself with draconian measures, and suppressed even basic civil liberties. Virtually any political activity, however peaceful and 'legal,' was at this time an illegal and revolutionary activity.

Why had it become necessary to launch a movement in these difficult conditions, when the possibility of brutal repression was a certainty?

For one, the failure of the Cripps Mission in April 1942 made it clear that Britain was unwilling to offer an honourable settlement and a real constitutional advance during the War, and that she was determined to continue India's unwilling partnership in the War effort. The empty gesture of the 'Cripps offer' convinced even those Congressmen like Nehru and Gandhiji, who did not want to do anything to hamper the anti-fascist War effort (and who had played a major role in keeping in check those who had been spoiling for a fight since 1939), that any further silence would be tantamount to accepting the right of the British Government to decide India's fate without any reference to the wishes of her people. Gandhiji had been as clear as Nehru that he did not want to hamper the anti-fascist struggle, especially that of the Russian and Chinese people. But by the spring of 1942 he was becoming increasingly convinced of the inevitability of a struggle. A fortnight after Cripps' departure, Gandhiji drafted a resolution for the Congress Working Committee calling for Britain's withdrawal and the adoption of non-violent non-cooperation against any Japanese invasion. Congress edged towards Quit India while Britain moved towards arming herself with special powers to meet the threat. Nehru remained opposed to the idea of a struggle right till August 1942 and gave way only at the very end.

Apart from British obduracy, there were other factors that made a struggle both inevitable and necessary. Popular discontent, a product of rising prices and war-time shortages, was gradually mounting. High-handed government actions such as the commandeering of boats in Bengal and Orissa to prevent their being used by the Japanese had led to considerable anger among the people.

The popular willingness to give expression to this discontent was enhanced by the growing feeling of an imminent British collapse. The news of Allied reverses and British withdrawals from South-East Asia and Burma and the trains bringing wounded soldiers from the Assam-Burma border confirmed this feeling.

Combined with this was the impact of the manner of the British evacuation from Malaya and Burma. It was common knowledge that the British had evacuated the white residents and generally left the subject people to their fate. Letters from Indians in South-East Asia to their relatives in India were full of graphic accounts of British betrayal and their being left at the mercy of the dreaded Japanese. Was it not only to be expected that they would repeat the performance in India, in the event of a Japanese occupation? In fact, one major reason for the leadership of the national movement thinking it necessary to launch a struggle was their feeling that the people were becoming demoralized and, that in the event of a Japanese occupation, might not resist at all. In order to build up their capacity to resist Japanese aggression, it was necessary to draw them out of this demoralized state of mind and convince them of their own power. Gandhiji, as always, was particularly clear on this aspect.

The popular faith in the stability of British rule had reached such a low that there was a run on the banks and people withdrew deposits from post-office savings accounts and started hoarding gold, silver and coins. This was particularly marked in East U.P. and Bihar, but it also took place in Madras Presidency.

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So convinced was Gandhiji that the time was now ripe for struggle that he said to Louis Fischer in an interview in the beginning of June: 'I have become impatient ... I may not be able to convince the Congress ... I will go ahead nevertheless and address myself directly to the people.' He did not have to carry out this threat and, as before, the Congress accepted the Mahatma's expert advice on the timing of a mass struggle.

Though Gandhiji himself had begun to talk of the coming struggle for some time now, it was at the Working Committee meeting at Wardha on 14 July, 1942 that the Congress first accepted the idea of a struggle. The All-India Congress Committee was then to meet in Bombay in August to ratify this decision.

Do or Die: The historic August meeting at Gowalia Tank in Bombay was unprecedented in the popular enthusiasm it generated. Huge crowds waited outside as the leaders deliberated on the issue. And the feeling of anticipation and expectation ran so high that in the open session, when the leaders made their speeches before the many thousands who had collected to hear them, there was pin-drop silence.

Gandhiji's speech, delivered in his usual quiet and unrhetorical style, recount many who were in the audience, had the most electrifying impact. He first made it clear that 'the actual struggle does not commence this moment. You have only placed all your powers in my hands. I will now wait upon the Viceroy and plead with him for the acceptance of the Congress demand. That process is likely to take two or three weeks.' But, he added: 'you may take it from me that I am not going to strike a bargain with the Viceroy for ministries and the like. I am not going to be satisfied with anything short of complete freedom. Maybe, he will propose the abolition of salt tax, the drink evil, etc. But I will say: "Nothing less than freedom." He followed this up with the now famous exhortation: 'Do or Die.' To quote: 'Here is a *mantra,* a short one, that I give you. You may imprint it on your hearts and let every breath of yours give expression to it. The *mantra* is: "Do or Die." We shall either free India or die in the attempt; we shall not live to see the perpetuation of our slavery.'

Gandhiji's speech also contained specific instructions for different sections of the people. Government servants would not yet be asked to resign, but they should openly declare their allegiance to the Congress, soldiers were also not to leave their posts, but they were to 'refuse to fire on our own people.' The Princes were asked to 'accept the sovereignty of your own people,' instead of paying homage to a foreign power.' And the people of the Princely States were asked to declare that they '(were) part of the Indian nation and that they (would) accept the leadership of the Princes, if the latter cast their lot with the People, but not otherwise.' Students were to give up studies if they were sure they could continue to remain firm till independence was achieved. On 7 August, Gandhiji had placed the instructions he had drafted before the Working Committee, and in these he had proposed that peasants 'who have the courage, and are prepared to risk their all' should refuse to pay the land revenue. Tenants were told that 'the Congress holds that the land belongs to those who work on it and to no one else.' Where the *zamindari* system prevails . if the *zamindar* makes common cause with the ryot, his portion of the revenue, which may be settled by mutual agreement, should be given to him. But if a *zamindar* wants to side with the Government, no tax should be paid to him.' These instructions were not actually issued because of the preventive arrests, but they do make Gandhiji's intentions clear.

The Government, however, was in no mood to either negotiate with the Congress or wait for the movement to be formally launched. In the early hours of 9 August, in a single sweep, all the top leaders of the Congress were arrested and taken to unknown destinations. The Government had been preparing for the strike since the outbreak of the War itself, and since 1940 had been ready with an elaborate Revolutionary Movement Ordinance. On 8 August, 1940, the Viceroy, Linlithgow, in a personal letter to the Governors made his intentions clear: 'I feel very strongly that the only possible answer to a 'declaration of war' by any section of Congress in the present circumstances must be a declared determination to crush the organization as a while.' For two years, Gandhiji had avoided walking into the trap set for him by refusing to make a rash and premature strike and had carefully built up the tempo through the Individual Civil Disobedience Movement, organizational revamping and a consistent propaganda campaign. But now, the Government was unwilling to allow him any more time to pursue his strategy. In anticipation of the AICC's passing

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the Quit India resolution, instructions for arrests and suppression had gone out to the provinces.

The sudden attack by the Government produced an instantaneous reaction among the people. In Bombay, as soon as the news of arrests spread, lakhs of people flocked to Gowalia Tank where a mass meeting had been scheduled and there were clashes with the authorities. There were similar disturbances on 9 August in Ahmedabad and Poona. On the 10th, Delhi and many towns in U.P. and Bihar, including Kanpur, Allahabad, Varanasi and Patna followed suit with *hartals,* public demonstrations and processions in defiance of the law. The Government responded by gagging the press. The *National Herald* and *Harijan* ceased publication for the entire duration of the struggle, others for shorter periods.

Meanwhile, many provincial and local level leaders who had evaded arrest returned to their homes through devious routes and set about organizing resistance. As the news spread further in the rural areas, the villagers joined the townsmen in recording their protest. For the first six or seven weeks after 9 August, there was a tremendous mass upsurge all over the country. People devised a variety of ways of expressing their anger. In some places, huge crowds attacked police stations, post offices, *kutcheries* (courts), railway stations and other symbols of Government authority. National flags were forcibly hoisted on public buildings in defiance of the police. At other places, groups of *satyagrahis* offered arrest in *tehsil* or district headquarters. Crowds of villagers, often numbering a few hundreds or even a couple of thousand, physically removed railway tracks. Elsewhere, small groups of individuals blew up bridges and removed tracks, and cut telephone and telegraph wires. Students went on strike in schools and colleges all over the country and busied themselves taking out processions, writing and distributing illegal news-sheets: hundreds of these *'patrikas'* came out all over the country. They also became couriers for the emerging underground networks. Workers too struck work: in Ahmedabad, the mills were closed for three and a half months, workers in Bombay stayed away from work for over a week following the 9 August arrests, in Jamshedpur there was a strike for thirteen days and workers in Ahmednagar and Poona were active for several months.

Atmosphere of Revolution: The reaction to the arrests was most intense in Bihar and Eastern U.P., where the movement attained the proportions of a rebellion. From about the middle of August, the news reached the rural areas through students and other political activists who fanned out from the towns. Students of the Banaras Hindu University decided to go to the villages to spread the message of Quit India. They raised slogans of *'Thana jalao'* (Burn the police station), *'Station phoonk do'* (Burn the railway stations) *'Angrez bhag gaya'* (Englishmen have fled). They hijacked trains and draped them in national flags. In rural areas, the pattern was of large crowds of peasants descending on the nearest *tehsil* or district town and attacking all symbols of government authority. There was government firing and repression, but the rebellion only gathered in momentum. For two weeks, Tirhut division in Bihar was totally cut off from the rest of the country and no Government authority existed. Control was lost over Patna for two days after firing at the Secretariat. Eighty percent of the police stations were captured or temporarily evacuated in ten districts of North and Central Bihar. There were also physical attacks on Europeans. At Fatwa, near Patna, two R.A.F. officers were killed by a crowd at the railway station and their bodies paraded through the town. In Monghyr, the crews of two R.A.F. planes that crashed at Pasraha on 18 August and Ruihar on 30 August were killed by villagers. Particularly important centres of resistance in this phase were Azamgarh, Ballia and Gorakhpur in East U.P. and Gaya, Bhagalpur, Saran, Purnea, Shahabad, Muzaffarpur and Champaran in Bihar.

According to official estimates, in the first week after the arrests of the leaders, 250 railway stations were damaged or destroyed, and over 500 post offices and 150 police stations were attacked. The movement of trains in Bihar and Eastern U.P., was disrupted for many weeks. In Karnataka alone, there were 1600 incidents of cutting of telegraph lines, and twenty-six railway stations and thirty-two post offices were attacked. Unarmed crowds faced police and military firing on 538 occasions and they were also machine-gunned by low-flying aircraft. Repression also took the form of taking hostages from the villages, imposing collective fines running to a total of Rs 90 lakhs (which were often realized on the spot by looting the people's belongings), whipping of suspects and burning of entire villages whose inhabitants had run away and could not be

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caught. By the end of 1942, over 60,000 persons had been arrested. Twenty-six thousand people were convicted and 18,000 detained under the Defence of India Rules. Martial law had not been proclaimed, but the army, though nominally working under the orders of the civilian authorities, often did what it wanted to without any reference to the direct officers. The repression was as severe as it could have been under martial law.

The brutal and all-out repression succeeded within a period of six or seven weeks in bringing about a cessation of the mass phase of the struggle. But in the meantime, underground networks were being consolidated in various parts of the country. An all-India underground leadership with prominent members such as Achyut Patwardhan, Aruna Asaf Ali, Ram Manohar Lohia, Sucheta Kripalani, Chootubhai Puranik, Biju Patnaik, R.P. Goenka and later, after his escape from jail, Jayaprakash Narayan had also begun to emerge. This leadership saw the role of the underground movement as being that of keeping up popular morale by continuing to provide a line of command and a source of guidance and leadership to activists all over the country. They also collected and distributed money as well as material like bombs, arms, and dynamite to underground groups all over the country. They, however, did not see their role as that of directing the exact pattern of activities at the local level. Here, the local groups retained the initiative. Among the places in which local underground organizations were active were Bombay, Poona, Satara, Baroda and other parts of Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Andhra, U.P., Bihar and Delhi. Congress Socialists were generally in the lead, but also active were Gandhian ashramites, Forward Bloc members and revolutionary terrorists, as well as other Congressmen.

Those actually involved in the underground activity may have been few but they received all manner of support from a large variety of people. Businessmen donated generously. Sumati Morarjee, who later became India's leading woman industrialist, for example, helped Achyut Patwardhan to evade detection by providing him with a different car every day borrowed from her unsuspecting wealthy friends. Others provided hide-outs for the underground leaders and activists. Students acted as couriers. Simple villagers helped by refusing information to the police. Pilots and train drivers delivered bombs and other material across the country. Government officials, including those in the police, passed on crucial information about impending arrests. Achyut Patwardhan testifies that one member of the three-man high level official committee formed to track down the Congress underground regularly informed him of the goings on in that committee.

The pattern of activity of the underground movement was generally that of organizing the disruption of communications by blowing up bridges, cutting telegraph and telephone wires and derailing trains. There were also a few attacks on government and police officials and police informers. Their success in actually disrupting communications may not have been more than that of having nuisance value, but they did succeed in keeping up the spirit of the people in a situation when open mass activity was impossible because of the superior armed might of the state.

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Dissemination of news was a very important part of the activity, and considerable success was achieved on this score, the most dramatic being the Congress Radio operated clandestinely from different locations in Bombay city, whose broadcast could be heard as far as Madras. Ram Manohar Lohia regularly broadcast on this radio, and the radio continued till November 1942 when it was discovered and confiscated by the police.

Gandhiji's Fast

In February 1943, a striking new development provided a new burst of political activity. Gandhiji commenced a fast on 10 February in jail. He declared the fast would last for twenty-one days. This was his answer to the Government which had been constantly exhorting him to condemn the violence of the people in the Quit India Movement. Gandhiji not only refused to condemn the

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people's resort to violence but unequivocally held the Government responsible for it. It was the 'leonine violence' of the state which had provoked the people, he said. And it was against this violence of the state, which included the unwarranted detention of thousands of Congressmen, that Gandhiji vowed to register his protest, in the only way open to him when in jail, by fasting.

The popular response to the news of the fast was immediate and overwhelming. All over the country, there were *hartals,* demonstrations and strikes. Calcutta and Ahmedabad were particularly active. Prisoners in jails and those outside went on sympathetic fasts. Groups of people secretly reached Poona to offer *satyagraha* outside the Aga Khan Palace where Gandhiji was being held in detention. Public meetings demanded his release and the Government was bombarded with thousands of letters and telegrams from people from all walks of life — students and youth, men of trade and commerce, lawyers, ordinary citizens, and labour organizations.

Did u know? From across the seas, the demand for his release was made by newspapers such as the *Manchester Guardian, New Statesmen, Nation, News Chronicle, Chicago Sun,* as well as by the British Communist Party, the citizens of London and Manchester, the Women's International League, the Australian Council of Trade Unions and the Ceylon State Council. The U.S. Government, too, brought pressure to bear.

A Leaders' Conference was held in Delhi on 19-20 February and was attended by prominent men, politicians and public figures. They all demanded Gandhiji's release. Many of those otherwise unsympathetic to the Congress felt that the Government was going too far in its obduracy. The severest blow to the prestige of the Government was the resignation of the three Indian members of the Viceroy's Executive Council, M.S. Aney, N.R. Sarkar and H.P. Mody, who had supported the Government in its suppression of the 1942 movement, but were in no mood to be a party to Gandhiji's death.

But the Viceroy and his officials remained unmoved. Guided by Winston Churchill's statement to his Cabinet that 'this our hour of triumph everywhere in the world was not the time to crawl before a miserable old man who had always been our enemy,' they arrogantly refused to show any concern for Indian feeling. The Viceroy contemptuously dismissed the consequences of Gandhiji's possible death: 'Six months unpleasantness, steadily declining in volume, little or nothing at the end of it.' He even made it sound as if he welcomed the possibility: 'India would be far more reliable as a base for operations. Moreover, the prospect of a settlement will be greatly enhanced by the disappearance of Gandhi, who had for years torpedoed every attempt at a settlement.'

While an anxious nation appealed for his life, the Government went ahead with finalizing arrangements for his funeral. Military troops were asked to stand by for any emergency. 'Generous' provision was made for a plane to carry his ashes and for a public funeral and a half-day holiday in offices. But Gandhiji, as always, got the better of his opponents, and refused to oblige by dying.

The fast had done exactly what it had been intented to do. The public morale was raised, the anti-British feeling heightened, and an opportunity for political activity provided. A symbolic gesture of resistance had sparked off widespread resistance and exposed the Government's high-handedness to the whole world. The moral justification that the Government had been trying to provide for its brutal suppression of 1942 was denied to it and it was placed clearly in the wrong.

Parallel Government

A significant feature of the Quit India Movement was the emergence of what came to be known as parallel governments in some parts of the country. The first one was proclaimed in Ballia, in East U.P., in August 1942 under the leadership of Chittu Pande, who called himself a Gandhian. Though it succeeded in getting the Collector to hand over power and release all the arrested Congress leaders, it could not survive for long and when the soldiers marched in, a week after the parallel government was formed, they found that the leaders had fled.

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In Tamluk in the Midnapur district of Bengal, the *Jatiya Sarkar* came into existence on 17 December, 1942 and lasted till September 1944. Tamluk was an area where Gandhian constructive work had made considerable headway and it was also the scene of earlier mass struggles. The *Jatiya Sarkar* undertook cyclone relief work, gave grants to schools and organized an armed *Vidyut Vahini*. It also set up arbitration courts and distributed the surplus paddy of the well-to-do to the poor. Being located in a relatively remote area, it could continue its activities with comparative ease.

Satara, in Maharashtra, emerged as the base of the longest-lasting and effective parallel government. From the very beginning of the Quit India Movement, the region played an active role. In the first phase from August 1942, there were marches on local government headquarters, the ones on Karad, Tasgaon and Islampur involving thousands. This was followed by sabotage, attacks on post offices, the looting of banks and the cutting of telegraph wires. Y.B. Chavan, who had contacts with Achyut Patwardhan and other underground leaders, was the most important leader. But by the end of 1942, this phase came to an end with the arrest of about two thousand people. From the very beginning of 1943, the underground activists began to regroup, and by the middle of the year, succeeded in consolidating the organization. A parallel government or *Prati Sarkar* was set up and Nani Patil was its most important leader. This phase was marked by attacks on Government collaborators, informers and *talatis* or lower-level officials and Robin Hood-style robberies. *Nyayadan Mandals* or people's courts were set up and justice dispensed. Prohibition was enforced, and 'Gandhi marriages' celebrated to which untouchables were invited and at which no ostentation was allowed. Village libraries were set up and education encouraged. The native state of Aundh, whose ruler was pro-nationalist and had got the constitution of his state drafted by Gandhiji, provided invaluable support by offering refuge and shelter to the *Prati Sarkar* activists. The *Prati Sarkar* continued to function till 1945.

The Quit India Movement marked a new high in terms of popular participation in the national movement and sympathy with the national cause. As in earlier mass struggles, the youth were in the forefront of the struggle. Students from colleges and even schools were the most visible element, especially in the early days of August (probably the average age of participants in the 1942 struggle was even lower than that in earlier movements). Women, especially college and school girls, played a very important role. Aruna Asaf Ali and Sucheta Kripalani were two major women organizers of the underground, and Usha Mehta an important member of the small group that ran the Congress Radio. Workers were prominent as well, and made considerable sacrifice by enduring long strikes and braving police repression in the streets.

Peasants of all strata, well-to-do as well as poor, were the heart of the movement especially in East U.P. and Bihar, Midnapur in Bengal, Satara in Maharashtra, but also in other parts including Andhra, Gujarat and Kerala. Many smaller *zamindars* also participated, especially in U.P. and Bihar. Even the big *zamindars* maintained a stance of neutrality and refused to assist the British in crushing the rebellion. The most spectacular of these was the Raja of Darbhanga, one of the biggest *zamindars,* who refused to let his armed retainers be used by the Government and even instructed his managers to assist the tenants who had been arrested. A significant feature of the pattern of peasant activity was its total concentration on attacking symbols of British authority and a total lack of any incidents of anii-*zamindar* violence, even when, as in Bihar, East U.P., Satara, and Midnapur, the breakdown of Government authority for long periods of time provided the opportunity. Government officials, especially those at the lower levels of the police and the administration, were generous in their assistance to the movement. They gave shelter, provided information and helped monetarily. In fact, the erosion of loyalty to the British Government of its own officers was one of the most striking aspects of the Quit India struggle. Jail officials tended to be much kinder to prisoners than in earlier years, and often openly expressed their sympathy.

While it is true that Muslim mass participation in the Quit India Movement was not high, yet it is also true that even Muslim League supporters gave help by providing shelter to underground workers and did not act as informers. Also, there was a total absence of any communal clashes, a sure sign that though the movement may not have aroused much support from among the majority of the Muslim masses, it did not arouse their hostility either.

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The powerful attraction of the Quit India Movement and its elemental quality is also demonstrated by the fact that hundreds of Communists at the local and village levels participated in the movement despite the official position taken by the Communist Party. Though they sympathized with the strong anti-fascist sentiments of their leaders, yet they felt the irresistible pull of the movement and, for at least a few days or weeks, joined in it along with the rest of the Indian people.

The debate on the Quit India Movement has centered particularly on two issues. First, was the movement a spontaneous outburst, or an organized rebellion? Second, how did the use of violence by the people in this struggle square with the overall Congress policy of non-violent struggle?

First, the element of spontaneity in the movement of 1942 was certainly larger than in the earlier movements, though even in 1919-22, as well as in 1930-31 and 1932, the Congress leadership allowed considerable room for popular initiative and spontaneity. In fact, the whole pattern of the Gandhian mass movements was that the leadership chalked out a broad programme of action and left its implementation at the local level to the initiative of the local and grass roots level political activists and the masses. Even in the Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930, perhaps the most organized of the Gandhian mass movements, Gandhiji signalled the launching of the struggle by the Dandi March and the breaking of the salt law; the leaders and the people at the local levels decided whether they were going to stop payment of land revenue and rent, or offer *satyagraha* against forest laws, or picket liquor shops, or follow any of the other items of the programme. Of course, in 1942, even the broad programme had not yet been spelt out clearly since the leadership was yet to formally launch the movement. But, in a way, the degree of spontaneity and popular initiative that was actually exercised had been sanctioned by the leadership itself. The resolution passed by the AICC on 8 August 1942 clearly stated: 'A time may come when it may not be possible to issue instruction or for instructions to reach our people, and when no Congress committees can function. When this happens, every man and woman who is participating in this movement must function for himself or herself within the four corners of the general instructions issued. Every Indian who desires freedom and strives for it must be his own guide.'

Apart from this, the Congress had been ideologically, politically and organizationally preparing for the struggle for a long time. From 1937 onwards, the organization had been revamped to undo the damage suffered during the repression of 1932-34. In political and ideological terms as well, the Ministries had added considerably to Congress support and prestige. In East U.P. and Bihar, the areas of the most intense activity in 1942 were precisely the ones in which considerable mobilization and organizational work had been carried out from 1937 onwards. In Gujarat, Sardar Patel had been touring Bardoli and other areas since June 1942 warning the people of an impending struggle and suggesting that no-revenue campaigns could well be a part of it. Congress Socialists in Poona had been holding training camps for volunteers since June 1942. Gandhiji himself, through the Individual Civil Disobedience campaign in 1940-41, and more directly since early 1942, had prepared the people for the coming battle, which he said would be 'short and swift.'

In any case, in a primarily hegemonic struggle as the Indian national movement was, preparedness for struggle cannot be measured by the volume of immediate organizational activity but by the degree of hegemonic influence that the movement has acquired over the people.

How did the use of violence in 1942 square with the Congress policy of non-violence? For one, there were many who refused to use or sanction violent means and confined themselves to the traditional weaponry of the Congress. But many of those, including many staunch Gandhians, who used 'violent means' in 1942 felt that the peculiar circumstances warranted their use. Many maintained that the cutting of telegraph wires and the blowing up of bridges was all right as long as human life was not taken.

Others frankly admitted that they could not square the violence they used, or connived at, with their belief in non-violence, but that they did it all the same. Gandhiji refused to condemn the violence of the people because he saw it as a reaction to the much bigger violence of the state. In Francis Hutchins' view, Gandhiji's major objection to violence was that its use prevented mass participation in a movement, but that, in 1942, Gandhiji had come round to the view that mass participation would not be restricted as a result of violence.

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The great significance of this historic movement was that it placed the demand for independence on the immediate agenda of the national movement. After 'Quit India,' there could be no retreat. Any future negotiations with the British Government could only be on the manner of the transfer of power. Independence was no longer a matter of bargain. And this became amply clear after the War.

With Gandhiji's release on 6 May 1944, on medical grounds, political activity regained momentum. Constructive work became the main form of Congress activity, with a special emphasis on the reorganization of the Congress machinery. Congress committees were revived under different names — Congress Workers Assemblies or Representative Assemblies of Congressmen — rendering the ban on Congress committees ineffective. The task of training workers, membership drives and fund collection was taken up. This re-organization of the Congress under the 'cover' of the constructive programme was viewed with serious misgivings by the Government which saw it as an attempt to rebuild Congress influence and organization in the villages in preparation for the next round of struggle. A strict watch was kept on these developments, but no repressive action was contemplated and the Viceroy's energies were directed towards formulating an offer (known as the Wavell Offer or the Simla Conference) which would pre-empt a struggle by effecting an agreement with the Congress before the War with Japan ended. The Congress leaders were released to participate in the Simla Conference in June 1945. That marked the end of the phase of confrontation that had existed since August 1942.

Before we end this chapter, a brief look at the Indian National Army is essential. The idea of the INA was first conceived in Malaya by Mohan Singh, an Indian officer of the British Indian Army, when he decided not to join the retreating British army and instead went to the Japanese for help. The Japanese had till then only encouraged civilian Indians to form anti-British organizations, but had no conception of forming a military wing consisting of Indians.

Indian prisoners of war were handed over by the Japanese to Mohan Singh who then tried to recruit them into an Indian National Army. The fall of Singapore was crucial, for this brought 45,000 Indian POWs into Mohan Singh's sphere of influence. By the end of 1942, forty thousand men expressed their willingness to join the INA. It was repeatedly made clear at various meetings of leaders of the Indian community and of Indian Army officers that the INA would go into action only on the invitation of the Indian National Congress and the people of India. The INA was also seen by many as a means of checking the misconduct of the Japanese against Indians in South-East Asia and a bulwark against a future Japanese occupation of India.

The outbreak of the Quit India Movement gave a fillip to the INA as well. Anti-British demonstrations were organized in Malaya. On 1 September 1942, the first division of the INA was formed with 16,300 men. The Japanese were by now more amenable to the idea of an armed Indian wing because they were contemplating an Indian invasion. But, by December 1942, serious differences emerged between the Indian army officers led by Mohan Singh and the Japanese over the role that the INA was to play. Mohan Singh and Niranjan Singh Gill, the senior-most Indian officer to join the INA, were arrested. The Japanese, it turned out, wanted only a token force of 2,000 men, while Mohan Singh wanted to raise an Indian National Army of 20,000.

The second phase of the INA began when Subhas Chandra Bose was brought to Singapore on 2 July 1943, by means of German and Japanese submarines. He went to Tokyo and Prime Minister Tojo declared that Japan had no territorial designs on India. Bose returned to Singapore and set up the Provisional Government of Free India on 21 October 1943. The Provisional Government then declared war on Britain and the United States, and was recognised by the Axis powers and their satellites. Subhas Bose set up two INA headquarters, in Rangoon and in Singapore, and began to reorganize the INA. Recruits were sought from civilians, funds were gathered, and even a women's regiment called the Rani Jhansi regiment was formed. On 6 July 1944, Subhas Bose, in a broadcast on Azad Hind Radio addressed to Gandhiji, said: 'India's last war of independence has begun . . . Father of our Nation! In this holy war of India's liberation, we ask for your blessing and good wishes.'

One INA battalion commanded by Shah Nawaz was allowed to accompany the Japanese Army to the Indo-Burma front and participate in the Imphal campaign. But the discriminatory treatment which included being denied rations, arms and being made to do menial work for the Japanese units, completely demoralized the INA men. The failure of the Imphal campaign, and the steady Japanese retreat thereafter, quashed any hopes of the INA liberating the nation. The retreat which began in mid-1944 continued till mid-1945 and ended only with the final surrender to the British in South-East Asia. But, when the INA men were brought back home and threatened with serious punishment, a powerful movement was to emerge in their defence.

Self-Assessment

3. Answer the following questions:

(*i*) By which revolution the slogan 'Quit India' was known?

(*ii*) What has the result of the failure of the Cripps Mission in April 1942?

(*iii*) On which date working committee was held at Wardha?

(*iv*) Which university students decided to spread the message of Quit India?

10.4 Indian Independence and Partition

The contradictory nature of the reality of 15 August 1947 continues to intrigue historians and torment people on both sides of the border to this day. A hard-earned, prized freedom was won after long, glorious years of struggle but a bloody, tragic Partition rent asunder the fabric of the emerging free nation. Two questions arise. Why did the British finally quit? Why was Partition accepted by the Congress?

The imperialist answer is that independence was simply the fulfilment of Britain's self-appointed mission to assist the Indian people to self-government. Partition was the unfortunate consequence of the age old Hindu-Muslim rift, of the two communities' failure to agree on how and to whom power was to be transferred. The radical view is that independence was finally wrested by the mass actions of 1946-47 in which many Communists participated, often as leaders. But the bourgeois leaders of the Congress, frightened by the revolutionary upsurge struck a deal with the imperialist power by which power was transferred to them and the nation paid the price of Partition.

These visions of noble design or revolutionary intent, frustrated by traditional religious conflict or worldly profit, attractive as they may seem, blur, rather than illumine, the sombre reality. In fact, the Independence-Partition duality reflects the success-failure dichotomy of the anti-imperialist movement led by the Congress. The Congress had a two-fold task: structuring diverse classes, communities, groups and regions into a nation and securing independence from the British rulers for this emerging nation. While the Congress succeeded in building up nationalist consciousness *sufficient* to exert pressure on the British to quit India, it could not complete the task of welding the nation and particularly failed to integrate the Muslims into this nations. It is this contradiction— the success and failure of the national movement — which is reflected in the other contradiction — Independence, but with it Partition.

The final Round of the British Raj

The success of the nationalist forces in the struggle for hegemony over Indian society was fairly evident by the end of the War. The British rulers had won the war against Hitler, but lost the one in India. The space occupied by the national movement was far larger than that over which the Raj cast its shadow. Hitherto unpoliticized areas and apolitical groups had fallen in line with the rest of the country in the agitation over the INA trials. Men in the armed forces and bureaucracy openly attended meetings, contributed money, voted for the Congress and let it be known that they were doing so. The militancy of the politicized sections was evident in the heroic actions of 1942 and in the fearlessness with which students and others expressed their solidarity with INA and RIN men. The success of the nationalist movement could be plotted on a graph of swelling crowds, wide reach, and deep intensity of nationalist sentiment and the nationalist fervour of the people.

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A corresponding graph could also be drawn of the demoralization of the British officials and the changing loyalties of Indian officials and loyalists, which would tell the same story of nationalist success, but differently. In this tale, nationalism would not come across as a force, whose overwhelming presence left no place for the British. Rather, it would show the concrete way in which the national movement eroded imperialist hegemony, gnawed at the pillars of the colonial structure and reduced British political strategy to a mess of contradictions.

An important point to be noted is that British rule was maintained in part on the basis of the consent or at least acquiescence of many sections of the Indian people. The social base of the colonial regime was among the *zamindars* and upper classes etc., the 'loyalists' who received the main share of British favours and offices. These were the Indians who manned the administration, supported government policy and worked the reforms the British reluctantly and belatedly introduced. The British also secured the consent of the people to their rule by successfully getting them to believe in British justice and fairplay, accept the British officer as the *mai-bap* of his people, and appreciate the prevalence of *Pax Brittanica*. Few genuinely believed in '*Angrezi Raj ki Barkaten*', but it sufficed for the British if people were impressed by the aura of stolidity the Raj exuded and concluded that its foundations were unshakable. The Raj to a large extent ran on prestige and the embodiment of this prestige was the district officer who belonged to the Indian Civil Service (ICS), the 'heaven-born service' much vaunted as 'the steel frame of the Raj.'

When the loyalists began to jump overboard, when prestige was rocked, when the district officer and secretariat official left the helm, it became clear that the ship was sinking, and sinking fast. It was the result of years of ravage wrought from two quarters — the rot within and the battering without.

Paucity of European recruits to the ICS, combined with a policy of Indianization (partly conceded in response to popular demand), ended British domination of the ICS as early as the First World War. By 1939 British and Indian members had achieved parity. Overall recruitment was first cut in order to maintain this balance, and later stopped in 1943. Between 1940 and 1946, the total number of ICS officials fell from 1201 to 939, that of British ICS officials from 587 to 429 and Indian ICS officials from 614 to 510. By 1946, only 19 British ICS officials were available in Bengal for 65 posts. Besides, the men coming in were no longer Oxbridge graduates from aristocratic families whose fathers and uncles were 'old India hands' and who believed in the destiny of the British nation to govern the 'child-people' of India. They were increasingly grammar school and polytechnic boys for whom serving the Raj was a career, not a mission. The War had compounded the problem. By 1945, war-weariness was acute and long absences from home were telling on morale. Economic worries had set in because of inflation. Many were due to retire, others were expected to seek premature retirement. It was a vastly-depleted, war-weary bureaucracy, battered by the 1942 movement, that remained.

However, much more than manpower shortage, it was the coming to the fore of contradictions in the British strategy of countering nationalism that debilitated the ICS and the Raj. The British had relied over the years on a twin policy of conciliation and repression to contain the growing national movement. But after the Cripps Offer of 1942, there was little left to be offered as a concession except transfer of power — full freedom itself. But the strategy of the national movement, of a multi-faceted struggle combining non-violent mass movement with working constitutional reforms proved to be more than a match for them. When non-violent movements were met with repression, the naked force behind the government stood exposed, whereas if government did not clamp down on 'sedition,' or effected a truce (as in 1931 when the Gandhi-Irwin Pact was signed) or conceded provincial autonomy under the Government of India Act 1935, it was seen to be too weak to wield control and its authority and prestige were undermined. On the other hand, the brutal repression of the 1942 movement offended the sensibilities of both liberals and loyalists. So did the government's refusal to release Gandhi, even when he seemed close to death during his 21 day fast in February-March 1943, and its decision to go ahead with the INA trials despite fervent appeals from liberals and loyalists to abandon them. The friends of the British were upset when the Government appeared to be placating its enemies — as in 1945-46, when it was believed that the Government was wooing the Congress into a settlement and into joining the government. The powerlessness of those in authority dismayed loyalists. Officials stood by, while the violence of Congress speeches rent the air. This shook the faith,of the loyalists in the might of the 'Raj.'

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Loyalists' Crisis

If the loyalists' crisis was one of faith, the services' dilemma was that of action. Action could be decisive only if policy was clear-cut — repression or conciliation — not both. The policy mix could not but create problems when the same set of officials had to implement both poles of policy. This dilemma first arose in the mid-1930s when officials were worried by the prospect of popular ministries as the Congressmen they repressed during the Civil Disobedience Movement were likely to become their political masters in the provincial Ministries. This prospect soon became a reality in eight provinces.

Constitutionalism wrecked services morale as effectively as the mass movement before it, though this is seldom realized. If fear of authority was exorcised by mass non-violent action, confidence was gained because of 'Congress Raj.' People could not fail to notice that the British Chief Secretary in Madras took to wearing *khadi* or that the Revenue Secretary in Bombay, on tour with the Revenue Minister, Morarji Desai, would scurry across the railway platform from his first-class compartment to the latter's third-class carriage so that the Honourable Minister may not be kept waiting. Among Indian officials, disloyalty was not evident, but where loyalty to the Raj was paraded earlier, 'it was the done thing to parade one's patriotism and, if possible, a third cousin twice removed who had been to jail in the civil disobedience movement.'

But most importantly, the likelihood of Congress returning to power became a consideration with officials when dealing with subsequent Congress agitations. There was no refusal to carry out orders, but in some places this consideration resulted in half-hearted action against the individual disobedience movement in U.P. in 1940 and even against the 1942 rebels in East U.P. and Bihar. But action was generally harsh in 1942 and this was to create concrete entanglements between repression and conciliation at the end of the War when Congressmen were released and provincial Ministries were again on the cards. Morale of officials nosedived when Congressmen's demands for enquiries and calls for revenge were not proceeded against on the ground that some latitude had to be allowed during electioneering. The previous Viceroy, Linlithgow, had pledged that there would be no enquiries, but the services had little faith in the Government's ability to withstand Congress pressure. The then Viceroy, Wavell, confessed that enquiries were the most difficult issue posed by the formation of provincial Ministries.

By the end of the War, the portents were clear to those officials and policy-makers who understood the dynamics of power and authority. The demand for leniency to INA men from within the army and the revolt in a section of the RIN further conveyed to the far-sighted officials, as much as a full-scale mutiny would to others more brashly confident, that the storm brewing this time may prove irrepressible. The structure was still intact, but it was feared that the services and armed forces may not be reliable if Congress started a mass movement of the 1942 type after the elections, which provincial Ministries would aid, not control. The Viceroy summed up the prospect: 'We could still probably suppress such a revolt' but 'we have nothing to put in its place and should be driven to an almost entirely official rule, for which the necessary numbers of efficient officials do not exist.'

Once it was recognized that British rule could not survive on the old basis for long, a graceful withdrawal from India, to be effected after a settlement had been reached on the modalities of transfer of power and the nature of the post-imperial relationship between Britain and India, became the overarching aim of British policy-makers. The British Government was clear that a settlement was a must both for good future relations and to bury the ghost of a mass movement. Since failure could not be afforded, the concessions had to be such as would largely meet Congress demands. With the Congress demand being that the British quit India, the Cabinet Mission went out to India in March 1946 to negotiate the setting up of a national government and to set into motion a machinery for transfer of power. It was not an empty gesture like the Cripps Mission in 1942 — the Cabinet Mission was prepared for a long stay.

The situation seemed ripe for a settlement as the imperialist rulers were cognisant of the necessity of a settlement and the nationalist leaders were willing to negotiate with them. But rivers of blood were to flow before Indian independence, tacitly accepted in early 1946, became a reality in mid

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1947. By early 1946 the imperialism nationalism conflict, being resolved in principle, receded from the spotlight. The stage was then taken over by the warring conceptions of the post-imperial order held by the British, the Congress and the Muslim League.

The Congress demand was for transfer of power to one centre, with minorities' dernands being worked out in a framework ranging from autonomy to Muslim provinces to self-determination on secession from the Indian Union — but after the British left. The British bid was for a united India, friendly with Britain and an active partner in Commonwealth defence. It was believed that a divided India would lack depth in defence, frustrate joint defence plans and be a blot on Britain's diplomacy. Pakistan was not seen by Britain as her natural future ally, as the Government's policy of fostering the League ever since its inception in 1906 and the alignment today between Pakistan and the Western imperialist bloc may suggest.

British policy in 1946 clearly reflected this preference for a united India, in sharp contrast to earlier declarations. Attlee's 15 March 1946 statement that a 'minority will not be allowed to place a veto on the progress of the majority' was a far cry from Wavell's allowing Jinnah to wreck the Simla Conference in June-July 1945 by his insistence on nominating all Muslims. The Cabinet Mission was convinced that Pakistan was not viable and that the minorities' autonomy must somehow be safeguarded within the framework of a united India. The Mission Plan conceived three sections, A — comprising Madras, Bombay, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, CP. and Orissa; B — consisting of Punjab, N WFP and Sind; and C — of Bengal and Assam — which would meet separately to decide on group constitutions. There would be a common centre controlling defence, foreign affairs and communications. After the first general elections a province could come out of a group. After ten years a province could call for a reconsideration of the group or union constitution. Congress wanted that a province need not wait till the first elections to leave a group, it should have the option not to join it in the first place. It had Congress-ruled provinces of Assam and NWFP (which were in Sections C and B respectively) in mind when it raised this question. The League wanted provinces to have the right to question the union constitution now, not wait for ten years. There was obviously a problem in that the Mission Plan was ambivalent on whether grouping was compulsory or optional. It declared that grouping was optional but sections were compulsory. This was a contradiction, which rather than removing, the Mission deliberately quibbled about in the hope of somehow reconciling the irreconcileable.

The Congress and League interpreted the Mission Plan in their own way, both seeing it as a confirmation of their stand. Thus, Patel maintained that the Mission's Plan was against Pakistan, that the League's veto was gone and that one Constituent Assembly was envisaged. The League announced its acceptance of the Plan on 6 June in so far as the basis of Pakistan was implied in the Mission's plan by virtue of the compulsory grouping. Nehru asserted the Congress Working Committee's particular interpretation of the plan in his speech to the AICC on 7 July 1946: 'We are not bound by a single thing except that we have decided to go into the Constituent Assembly.' The implication was that the Assembly was sovereign and would decide rules of procedure. Jinnah seized the opportunity provided by Nehru's speech to withdraw the League's acceptance of the Mission Plan on 29th July, 1946.

The dilemma before the Government was whether to go ahead and form the Interim Government with the Congress or await League agreement to the plan. Wavell, who had opted for the second course at the Simla Conference an year earlier, preferred to do the same again. But His Majesty's Government, especially the Secretary of State, argued that it was vital to get Congress cooperation. Thus, the Interim Government was formed on 2nd September 1946 with Congress members alone with Nehru as *de facto* head. This was against the League's insistence that all settlements be acceptable to it. The British in 1946, in keeping with their strategic interests in the post-independence Indian subcontinent, took up a stance very different from their earlier posture of encouraging communal forces and denying the legitimacy of nationalism and the representative nature of the Congress. Continuance of rule had demanded one stance, withdrawal and post-imperial links dictated a contrary posture.

However, Jinnah had no intention of allowing the British to break with their past. His thinly veiled threat to Attlee that he should 'avoid compellinglhe Muslims to shed their blood . . . (by a)

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surrender to the Congress' had already been sent out and the weapon of Direct Action forged. Jinnah had become 'answerable to the wider electorate of the streets.' With the battle cry, *Lekar rahenge Pakistan, Larke lenge Pakistan*, Muslim communal groups provoked communal frenzy in Calcutta on 16 August 1946. Hindu communal groups retaliated in equal measure and the cost was 5000 lives lost. The British authorities were worried that they had lost control over the 'Frankenstein monster' they had helped to create but felt it was too late to tame it. They were frightened into appeasing the League by Jinnah's ability to unleash civil war. Wavell quietly brought the League into the Interim Government on 26 October 1946 though it had not accepted either the short or long term provisions of the Cabinet Mission Plan and had not given up its policy of Direct Action. The Secretary of State argued that without the League's presence in the Government civil war would have been inevitable. Jinnah had succeeded in keeping the British in his grip.

The Congress demand that the British get the League to modify its attitude in the Interim Government or quit was voiced almost from the time the League members were sworn in. Except Liaqat Ali Khan all the League nominees were second-raters, indicating that what was at stake was power, not responsibility to run the country. Jinnah had realized that it was fatal to leave the administration in Congress hands and had sought a foothold in the Government to fight for Pakistan. For him, the Interim Government was the continuation of civil war by other means. League Ministers questioned actions taken by Congress members, including appointments made, and refused to attend the informal meetings which Nehru had devised as a means of arriving at decisions without reference to Wavell. Their disruptionist tactics convinced Congress leaders of the futility of the Interim Government as an exercise in Congress-League cooperation. But they held on till 5th February 1947 when nine members of the Interim Government wrote to the Viceroy demanding that the League members resign. The League's demand for the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly that had met for the first time on 9th December 1946 had proved to be the last straw. Earlier it had refused to join the Constituent Assembly despite assurances from His Majesty's Government in their 6th December 1946 statement that the League's interpretation of grouping was the correct one. A direct bid for Pakistan, rather than through the Mission Plan, seemed to be the card Jinnah now sought to play.

This developing crisis was temporarily defused by the statement made by Attlee in Parliament on 20 February, 1947. The date for British withdrawal from India was fixed as 30 June 1948 and the appointment of a new Viceroy, Lord Mountbatten, was announced. The hope was that the date would shock the parties into agreement on the main question and avert the constitutional crisis that threatened. Besides, Indians would be finally convinced that the British were sincere about conceding independence, however, both these hopes were introduced into the terminal date notion after it had been accepted. The basic reason why the Attlee Government accepted the need for a final date was because they could not deny the truth of Wavell's assessment that an irreversible decline of Government authority had taken place. They could dismiss the Viceroy, on the ground that he was pessimistic, which they did in the most discourteous manner possible. The news was common gossip in New Delhi before Wavell was even informed of it. But they could not dismiss the truth of what he said. So the 20 February statement was really an acceptance of the dismissed Viceroy, Wavell's reading of the Indian situation.

The anticipation of freedom from imperial rule lifted the gloom that had set in with continuous internal wrangling. The statement was enthusiastically received in Congress circles as a final proof of British sincerity to quit. Partition of the country was implied in the proviso that if the Constituent Assembly was not fully representative (i.e. if Muslim majority provinces did not join) power would be transferred to more than one central Government. But even this was acceptable to the Congress as it meant that the existing Assembly could go ahead and frame a constitution for the areas represented in it. It offered a way out of the existing deadlock, in which the League not only refused to join the Constituent Assembly but demanded that it be dissolved. Nehru appealed to Liaqat Ali Khan: 'The British are fading out of the picture and the burden of this decision must rest on all of us here. It seems desirable that we should face this question squarely and not speak to each other from a distance.' There seemed some chance of fulfilment of Attlee.'s hopes that the date would 'force the two political parties in India to come together.'

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This was an illusory hope, for Jinnah was more convinced than ever that he only had to bide his time in order to reach his goal. This is precisely what Conservative members of Parliament had warned would happen, in the contentious debate that followed the 20th February statement. Godfrey Nicolson had said of Cripps' speech — 'if ever there was a speech which was a direct invitation to the Muslim League to stick their toes in and hold out for Pakistan, that was one.' The Punjab Governor, Evan Jenkins, was equally emphatic — 'the statement will be regarded as the prelude to the final communal showdown,' with everyone out to 'seize as much power as they can — if necessary by force.' Jenkins' prophecy took immediate shape with the League launching civil disobedience in Punjab and bringing down the Unionist Akali- Congress coalition ministry led by Khizr Hayat Khan. Wavell wrote in his diary on 13th March 1947 — 'Khizr's resignation was prompted largely by the statement of February 20.'

This was the situation in which Mountbatten came to India as Viceroy. He was the last Viceroy and charged with the task of winding up the Raj by 30th June 1948. Mountbatten has claimed to have introduced the time limit into the 20 February settlement: 'I made the great point about it. I had thought of the time limit, and I had great difficulty in bringing him (Attlee) upto it. I think the time limit was fundamental. 1 believe if I'd gone out without a time limit, I'd still be there.' This is so obviously untrue that it should need no refutation, but Lapierre and Collins in *Freedom at Midnight* and others have passed off as history Mountbatten's self-proclamations of determining history single-handedly. The idea of a fixed date was originally Wavell's, 31 March 1948 being the date by which he expected a stage of responsibility without power to set in. Attlee thought mid-1948 should be the date aimed at. Mountbatten insisted it be a calendar date and got 30th June 1948.

Mountbatten's claim of having plenipotentiary powers, such that he need make no reference back to London, is equally misleading. It is true that he had more independence than the Viceroys preceding him and his views were given due consideration by the Labour Government. Yet he referred back to London at each stage of the evolution of his Plan, sent his aide Ismay to London and finally went himself to get Attlee and his Cabinet to agree to the 3rd June Plan.

Mountbatten had a clear cut directive from His Majesty's Government, he did not write his own ticket, as he has claimed. He was directed to explore the options of unity and division till October, 1947 after which he was to advise His Majesty's Government on the form transfer of power should take. Here again he soon discovered that he had little real choice. The broad contours of the scenario that was to emerge were discernible even before he came out. Mountbatten found out within two months of his arrival that more flogging would not push the Cabinet Mission Plan forward, it was a dead horse. Jinnah was obdurate that the Muslims would settle for nothing less than a sovereign state. Mountbatten found himself unable to move Jinnah from this stand: 'He gave the impression that he was not listening. He was impossible to argue with. He was, whatever was said, intent on his Pakistan.'

The British could keep India united only if they gave up their role as mediators trying to effect a solution Indians had agreed upon. Unity-needed positive intervention in its favour, including putting down communal elements with a firm hand. This they chose not to do. Attlee wrote later — 'We would have preferred a United India. We couldn't get it, though we tried hard.' They in fact took the easy way out. A serious attempt at retaining unity would involve identifying with the forces that wanted a unified India and countering those who opposed it. Rather than doing that, they preferred to woo both sides into friendly collaboration with Britain on strategic and defence issues. The British preference for a united Indian subcontinent that would be a strong ally in Commonwealth defence was modified to two dominions, both of which would be Britain's allies and together serve the purpose a united India was expected to do. The poser now was, how was friendship of *both* India and Pakistan to be secured?

Mountbatten's formula was to divide India but retain maximum unity. The country would be partitioned but so would Punjab and Bengal, so that the limited Pakistan that emerged would meet both the Congress and League's positions to some extent. The League's position on Pakistan was conceded to the extent that it would be created, but the Congress position on unity would be taken into account to make Pakistan as small as possible. Since Congress were asked to concede

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their main point i.e. a unified India, all their other points would be met. Whether it was ruling out independence for the princes or unity for Bengal or Hyderabad's joining up with Pakistan instead of India, Mountbatten firmly supported Congress on these issues. He got His Majesty's Government to agree to his argument that Congress goodwill was vital if India was to remain in the Commonwealth.

The Mountbatten Plan, as the 3rd June, 1947 Plan came to be known, sought to effect an early transfer of power on the basis of Dominion Status to two successor states, India and Pakistan. Congress was willing to accept Dominion Status for a while because it felt it must assume full power immediately and meet boldly the explosive situation in the country. As Nehru put it, 'Murder stalks the streets and the most amazing cruelties are indulged in by both the individual and the mob.' Besides Dominion Status gave breathing time to the new administration as British officers and civil service officials could stay on for a while and let Indians settle in easier into their new positions of authority. For Britain, Dominion Status offered a chance of keeping India in the Commonwealth, even if temporarily, a prize not to be spurned. Though Jinnah offered to bring Pakistan into the Commonwealth, a greater store was laid by India's membership of the Commonwealth, as India's economic strength and defence potential were deemed sounder and Britain had a greater value of trade and investment there.

The rationale for the early date for transfer of power, 15th August 1947, was securing Congress agreement to Dominion Status. The additional benefit was that the British could escape responsibility for the rapidly deteriorating communal situation. As it is, some officials were more than happy to pack their bags and leave the Indians to stew in their own juice. As Patel said to the Viceroy, the situation was one where 'you won't govern yourself, and you won't let us govern.' Mountbatten was to defend his advancing the date to 15th August, 1947 on the ground that things would have blown up under their feet had they not got out when they did. Ismay, the Viceroy's Chief of Staff, felt that August, 1947 was too late, rather than too early. From the British point of view, a hasty retreat was perhaps the most suitable action. That does not make it the inevitable option, as Mountbatten and Ismay would have us believe. Despite the steady erosion of government authority, the situation of responsibility without power was still a prospect rather than a reality. In the short term the British could assert their authority, but did not care to, as Kripalani, then Congress President, pertinently pointed out to Mountbatten. Moreover, the situation, rather than warranting withdrawal of authority, cried out for someone to wield it.

If abdication of resposibility was callous, the speed with which it was done made it worse. The seventy-two day timetable, 3rd June to 15th August 1947, for both transfer of power and division of the country, was to prove disastrous. Senior officials in India like the Punjab Governor, Jenkins, and the Commander-in-Chief, Auchinleck, felt that peaceful division could take a few years at the very least. As it happened, the Partition Council had to divide assets, down to typewriters and printing presses, in a few weeks. There were no transitional institutional structures within which the knotty problems spilling over from division could be tackled. Mountbatten had hoped to be common Governor-General of India and Pakistan and provide the necessary link but this was not to be as Jinnah wanted the position himself. Hence even the joint defence machinery set up failed to last beyond December 1947 by which time Kashmir had already been the scene of a military conflict rather than a political settlement.

The Punjab massacres that accompanied Partition were the final indictment of Mountbatten. His loyal aide, Ismay, wrote to his wife on 16 September 1947: 'Our mission was so very nearly a success: it is sad that it has ended up such a grim and total failure.' The early date, 15th August 1947, and the delay in announcing the Boundary Commission Award, both Mountbatten's decisions, compounded the tragedy that took place. A senior army official, Brigadier Bristow, posted in Punjab in 1947, was of the view that the Punjab tragedy would not have occurred had partition been deferred for a year or so. Lockhart, Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army from 15 August to 31 December 1947, endorsed this view: 'Had officials in every grade in the civil services, and all the personnel of the armed services, been in position in their respective new countries before Independence Day, it seems there would have been a better chance of preventing widespread disorder.' The Boundary Commission Award was ready by 12th August, 1947 but Mountbatten

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decided to make it public after Independence Day, so that the responsibility would not fall on the British. Independence Day in Punjab and Bengal saw strange scenes. Flags of both India and Pakistan were flown in villages between Lahore and Amritsar as people of both communities believed that they were on the right side of the border. The morrow after freedom was to find them aliens in their own homes, exiled by executive fiat.

Congress and Partition

Why and how did the Congress come to accept Partition? That the League should assertively demand it and get its Shylockian pound of flesh, or that the British should concede it, being unable to get out of the web of their own making, seems explicable. But why the Congress wedded to a belief in one Indian nation, accepted the division of the country, remains a question difficult to answer. Why did Nehru and Patel advocate acceptance of the 3rd June Plan and the Congress Working Committee and AICC pass a resolution in favour of it? Most surprising of all, why did Gandhi acquiesce? Nehru and Patel's acceptance of Partition has been popularly interpreted as stemming from their lust for quick and easy power, which made them betray the people. Gandhiji's counsels are believed to have been ignored and it is argued that he felt betrayed by his disciples and even wished to end his life, but heroically fought communal frenzy single handedly — 'a one man boundary force,' as Mountbatten called him.

It is forgotten that Nehru, Patel and Gandhiji in 1947 were only accepting what had become inevitable because of the long-term failure of the Congress to draw in the Muslim masses into the national movement and stem the surging waves of Muslim communalism, which, especially since 1937, had been beating with increasing fury. This failure was revealed with stark clarity by the 1946 elections in which the League won 90 per cent Muslim seats. Though the war against Jinnah was lost by early 1946, defeat was conceded only after the final battle was mercilessly waged in the streets of Calcutta and Rawalpindi and the village lanes of Noakhali and Bihar. The Congress leaders felt by June 1947 that only an immediate transfer of power could forestall the spread of Direct Action and communal disturbances. The virtual collapse of the Interim Government also made Pakistan appear to be an unavoidable reality. Patel argued in the AICC meeting on 14th June, 1947 that we have to face up to the fact that Pakistan was functioning in Punjab, Bengal and in the Interim Government. Nehru was dismayed at the turning of the Interim Government into an arena of struggle. Ministers wrangled, met separately to reach decisions and Liaquat Ali Khan as Finance Member hamstrung the functioning of the other ministries. In the face of the Interim Government's powerlessness to check Governors from abetting the League and the Bengal provincial Ministry's inaction and even complicity in riots, Nehru wondered whether there was any point in continuing in the Interim Government while people were being butchered. Immediate transfer of power would at least mean the setting up of a government which could exercise the control it was now expected to wield, but was powerless to exercise.

There was an additional consideration in accepting immediate transfer of power to two dominions. The prospect of balkanisation was ruled out as the provinces and princes were not given the option to be independent — the latter were, in fact, much to their chagrin, cajoled and coerced into joining one or the other dominion. This was no mean achievement. Princely states standing out would have meant a graver blow to Indian unity than Pakistan was.

The acceptance of Partition in 1947 was, thus, only the final act of a process of step by step concession to the League's intransigent championing of a sovereign Muslim state. Autonomy of Muslim majority provinces was accepted in 1942 at the time of the Cripps Mission. Gandhiji went a step further and accepted the right of self-determination of Muslim majority provinces in his talks with Jinnah in 1944. In June 1946, Congress conceded the possibility of Muslim majority provinces (which formed Group B and C of the Cabinet Mission Plan) setting up a separate Constituent Assembly, but opposed compulsory grouping and upheld the right of NWFP and Assam not to join their groups if they so wished. But by the end of the year, Nehru said he would accept the ruling of the Federal Court on whether grouping was compulsory or optional. The Congress accepted without demur the clarification by the British Cabinet in December, 1946 that grouping was compulsory. Congress officially referred to Partition in early March 1947 when a

resolution was passed in the Congress Working Committee that Punjab (and by implication Bengal) must be partitioned if the country was divided. The final act of surrender to the League's demands was in June 1947 when Congress ended up accepting Partition under the 3rd June Plan,

The brave words of the leaders contrasted starkly with the tragic retreat of the Congress. While loudly asserting the sovereignty of the Constituent Assembly, the Congress quietly accepted compulsory grouping and abandoned NWFP to Pakistan. Similarly the Congress leaders finally accepted Partition most of all because they could not stop communal riots, but their words were all about not surrendering to the blackmail of violence. Nehru wrote to Wavell on 22nd August 1946: 'We are not going to shake hands with murder or allow it to determine the country's policy.'

Unred hopes

What was involved here was a refusal to accept the reality that the logic of their past failure could not be reversed by their present words or action. This was hardly surprising at the time, for hardly anybody had either anticipated the quick pace of the unfolding tragedy or was prepared to accept it as irrevocable. It is a fact that millions of people on both sides of the new border refused to accept the finality of Partition long after it was announced, and that is one major reason why the transfer of population became such a frenzied, last-minute affair. Wishful thinking, clinging to fond hopes and a certain lack of appreciation of the dynamics of communal feeling characterized the Congress stand, especially Nehru's. The right of secession was conceded by the Congress as it was believed that 'the Muslims would not exercise it but rather use it to shed their fears.' It was not realised that what was in evidence in the mid-1940s was not the communalism of the 1920s or even 1930s when minority fears were being assiduously fanned, but an assertive 'Muslim nation,' led by an obdurate leader, determined to have a separate state by any means. The result was that each concession of the Congress, rather than cutting the ground from under the communalists' feet, consolidated their position further as success drew more Muslims towards them. Jinnah pitched his claim high, seeing that Congress was yielding. Hindu communalism got a chance to grow by vaunting itself as the true protector of Hindu interests, which, it alleged, the Congress was sacrificing at the altar of unity.

Another unreal hope was that once the British left, differences would be patched up and a free India built by both Hindus and Muslims. This belief underestimated the autonomy of communalism by this time — it was no longer merely propped up by the British, in fact it had thrown away that crutch and was assertively independent, defying even the British. Yet another fond hope was that Partition was temporary — it had became unavoidable because of the present psyche of Hindus and Muslims but was reversible once communal passions subsided and sanity returned. Gandhiji often told people that Pakistan could not exist for long if people refused to accept Partition in their hearts. Nehru wrote to Cariappa: 'But of one thing I am convinced that ultimately there will be a united and strong India. We have often to go through the valley of the shadow before we reach the sun-lit mountain tops.'

The most unreal belief, given what actually happened, was the one that Partition would be peaceful. No riots were anticipated, no transfers of population planned, as it was assumed that once Pakistan was conceded, what was there to fight over? Nehru continued to believe as always in the goodness of his people, despite the spate of riots which plagued India from August 1946 onwards. The hope was that madness would be exorcised by a clean surgical cut. But the body was so diseased, the instruments used infected, that the operation proved to be terribly botchy.Worse horrors were to accompany Partition than those that preceded it.

what about Gandhiji? Gandhiji's unhappiness and helplessness have often being pointed out. His inaction has been explained in terms of his forced isolation from the Congress decision making councils and his inability to condemn his disciples, Nehru and Patel, for having succumbed to the lust for power, as they had followed him faithfully for many years, at great personal sacrifice.

In our view, the root of Gandhiji's helplessness was neither Jinnah's intransigence nor his disciples' alleged lust for power, but the communalisation of his people. At his prayer meeting on 4th June 1947 he explained that Congress accepted Partition because the people wanted it: 'The demand

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has been granted because you asked for it. The Congress never asked for it. But the Congress can feel the pulse of the people. It realized that the Khalsa as also the Hindus desired it.' It was the Hindus' and Sikhs' desire for Partition that rendered him ineffective, blind, impotent. The Muslims already considered him their enemy. What was a mass leader without masses who would follow his call? How could he base a movement to fight communalism on a communalised people? He could defy the leaders' counsels, as he had done in 1942, when he saw clearly that the moment was right for a struggle. But he could not 'create a situation,' as he honestly told N.K. Bose, who asked him to do so. His special ability, in his own words, only lay in being able to 'instinctively feel what is stirring in the hearts of the masses' and 'giving a shape to what was already there.' In 1947, there were no 'forces of good' which Gandhiji could 'seize upon' to 'build up a programme' — 'Today I see no sign of such a healthy feeling. And, therefore, I shall have to wait until the time comes.' But political developments did not wait till a 'blind man. . . groping in the dark all alone' found a way to the light. The Mountbatten Plan confronted him and Gandhiji saw the inevitability of Partition in the ugly gashes left by riots on the country's face and in the *rigor mortis* the Interim Government had fallen into. He walked bravely into the AICC meeting on 14 June, 1947 and asked Congressmen to accept Partition as an unavoidable necessity in the given circumstances, but to fight it in the long run by not accepting it in their hearts. He did not accept it in his heart and kept alive, like Nehru, his faith in his people. He chose to plough a lonely furrow, walking barefoot through the villages of Noakhali, bringing confidence by his presence to the Muslims in Bihar and preventing riots by persuasion and threats of a fast in Calcutta. *Ekla Cholo* had long been his favourite song — 'if no one heeds your call, walk alone, walk alone.' He did just that.

15th August 1947, dawned revealing the dual reality of Independence and Partition. As always, between the two of them, Gandhiji and Nehru mirrored the feelings of the Indian people. Gandhiji prayed in Calcutta for an end to the carnage taking place. His close follower, Mridula Sarabhai, sat consoling a homeless, abducted 15-year-old girl in a room somewhere in Bombay. Gandhiji's prayers were reflective of the goings on in the dark, the murders, abductions and rapes. Nehru's eyes were on the light on the horizon, the new dawn, the birth of a free India. 'At the stroke of the midnight hour when the world sleeps India shall awake to light and freedom.' His poetic words, 'Long years ago, we made a tryst with destiny,' reminded the people that their angry bewilderment today was not the only truth. There was a greater truth — that of a glorious struggle, hard-fought and hard-won, in which many fell martyrs and countless others made sacrifices, dreaming of the day India would be free. That day had come. The people of India saw that too, and on 15 August — despite the sorrow in their hearts for the division of their land danced in the streets with abandon and joy.

10.5 Summary

- The programme of non-cooperation included within its ambit the surrender of titles and honours, boycott of government affiliated schools and colleges, law courts, foreign cloth, and could be extended to include resignation from government service and mass civil disobedience including the non-payment of taxes. National schools and colleges were to be set up, panchayats were to be established for settling disputes, hand-spinning and weaving was to be encouraged and people were asked to maintain Hindu-Muslim unity, give up untouchability and observe strict non-violence.
- The educational boycott was particularly successful in Bengal, where the students in Calcutta triggered off a province-wide strike to force the managements of their institutions to disaffiliate themselves from the Government. C.R. Das played a major role in promoting the movement and Subhas Bose became the principal of the National Congress in Calcutta. The Swadeshi spirit was revived with new vigour, this time as part of a nation-wide struggle. Punjab, too, responded to the educational boycott and was second only to Bengal, Lala Lajpat Rai playing a leading part here despite his initial reservations about this item of the programme. Others areas that were active were Bombay, U.P., Bihar, Orissa and Assam, Madras remained lukewarm.

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- The Tilak Swaraj Fund was oversubscribed, exceeding the target of rupees one crore. *Charkhas* were popularized on a wide scale and *khadi* became the uniform of the national movement. There was a complaint at a students meeting Gandhiji addressed in Madurai that *khadi* was too costly. Gandhiji retorted that the answer lay in wearing less clothes and, from that day, discarded his *dhoti* and *kurta* in favour of a *langot*. For the rest of his life, he remained a 'half-naked fakir.'
- The next dramatic event was the visit of the Prince of Wales which began on 17 November, 1921. The day the Prince landed in Bombay was observed as a day of *hartal* all over the country.
- The Prince of Wales was greeted with empty streets and downed shutters wherever he went. Emboldened by their successful defiance of the Government, non-cooperators became more and more aggressive. The Congress Volunteer Corps emerged as a powerful parallel police, and the sight of its members marching in formation and dressed in uniform was hardly one that warmed the Government's heart.
- In May 1921, it had tried, through the Gandhi-Reading talks, to persuade Gandhiji to ask the Ali brothers to withdraw from their speeches those passages that contained suggestions of violence; this was an attempt to drive a wedge between the Khilafat leaders and Gandhiji, but it failed.
- Its fate was decided by the action of members of a Congress and Khilafat procession in Chauri Chaura in Gorakhpur district of U.P. on 5 February 1922. Irritated by the behaviour of some policemen, a section of the crowd attacked them. The police opened fire. At this, the entire procession attacked the police and when the latter hid inside the police station, set fire to the building. Policemen who tried to escape were hacked to pieces and thrown into the fire. In all twenty-two policemen were done to death. On hearing of the incident, Gandhiji decided to withdraw the movement. He also persuaded the Congress Working Committee to ratify his decision and thus, on 12 February 1922, the Non-Cooperation Movement came to an end.
- The Lahore Congress of 1929 had authorized the Working Committee to launch a programme of civil disobedience including non-payment of taxes. It had also called upon all members of legislatures to resign their seats.
- Gandhiji, along with a band of seventy-eight members of the Sabarmati Ashram, among whom were men belonging to almost every region and religion of India, was to march from his headquarters in Ahmedabad through the villages of Gujarat for 240 miles. On reaching the coast at Dandi, he would break the salt laws by collecting salt from the beach. The deceptively innocuous move was to prove devastatingly effective.
- Gandhiji began his march, staff in hand, at the head of his dedicated band, there was something in the image that deeply stirred the imagination of the people. News of his progress, of his speeches, of the teeming crowds that greeted and followed the marchers, of the long road.
- 300 village officials in Gujarat who resigned their posts in answer to his appeal, was 'carried day after day by newspapers to readers across the country and broadcast live by thousands of Congress workers to eager listeners. By the time Gandhiji reached Dandi, he had a whole nation, aroused and expectant, waiting restlessly for the final signal. On 6 April 1930, by picking up a handful of salt, Gandhiji inaugurated the Civil Disobedience Movement, a movement that was to remain unsurpassed in the history of the Indian national movement for the country-wide mass participation it unleashed.
- Once the way was cleared by Gandhiji's ritual beginning at Dandi, the defiance of salt laws started all over the country. In Tamil Nadu, C. Rajagopalachari, led a salt march from Trichinopoly to Vedaranniyam on the Tanjore coast. By the time he was arrested on 30 April he had collected enough volunteers to keep the campaign going for quite some time. In Malabar, K. Kelappan, the hero of the Vaikom *Satvagraha*, walked from Calicut to Payannur to break the salt law. A band of *Satyagrahis* walked all the way from Sylhet in Assam to Noakhali on the Bengal Coast to make salt.

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- The Government's failure to arrest Gandhiji for breaking the salt law was by the local level leaders to impress upon the people that 'the Government is afraid of persons like ourselves,' and that since the starting of the, salt *Satyagraha* the Government 'has disappeared and hidden itself somewhere and that Gandhi Government has already been established.'
- There was a massive wave of protest at Gandhiji's arrest. In Bombay, the crowd that spilled out into the streets was so large that the police just withdrew. Its ranks were swelled by thousands of textile and railway workers. Cloth-merchants went on a six-day *hartal*. There were clashes and firing in Calcutta and Delhi. But it was in Sholapur, in Maharashtra, that the response was the fiercest.
- On May 21, with Sarojini Naidu, the first Indian woman to become President of the Congress, and Imam Saheb, Gandhiji's comrade of the South African struggle, at the helm, and Gandhiji's son, Manilal, in front ranks, a band of 2000 marched towards the police cordon that had sealed off the Dharasana salt works. As they came close, the police rushed forward with their steel-tipped lathis and set upon the non-resisting *Satyagrahis* till they fell down.
- Eastern India became the scene of a new kind of no-tax campaign — refusal to pay the *chowkidara* tax. *Chowkidars*, paid out of the tax levied specially on the villages, were guards who supplemented the small police force in the rural areas in this region.
- The police did not even spare Vallabhbhai Patel's eighty-year-old mother, who sat cooking in her village house in Karamsad; her cooking utensils were kicked about and filled with kerosene and stone. Vallabhbhai, on his brief sojourns out of jail throughout 1930, continued to provide encouragement and solace to the hard-pressed peasants of his native land.
- Defiance of forest laws assumed a mass character in Maharashtra, Karnataka and the Central Provinces, especially in areas with large tribal populations who had been the most seriously affected by the colonial Government's restrictions on the use of the forest.
- U.P. was the setting of another kind of movement — a no-revenue, no-rent campaign. The no-revenue part was a call to the *zamindars* to refuse to pay revenue to the Government, the no-rent a call to the tenants not to pay rent to the *zamindars.*
- The fortnight-long discussions culminated on 5 March 1931 in the Gandhi-Irwin Pact, which was variously described as a 'truce' and a 'provisional settlement.'
- The Pact was signed by Gandhiji on behalf of the Congress and by Lord Irwin on behalf of the Government, a procedure that was hardly popular with officialdom as it placed the Congress on an equal footing with the Government.
- Cripps Mission in April 1942 made it clear that Britain was unwilling to offer an honourable settlement and a real constitutional advance during the War, and that she was determined to continue India's unwilling partnership in the War effort. The empty gesture of the 'Cripps offer' convinced even those Congressmen like Nehru and Gandhiji, who did not want to do anything to hamper the anti-fascist War effort (and who had played a major role in keeping in check those who had been spoiling for a fight since 1939), that any further silence would be tantamount to accepting the right of the British Government to decide India's fate without any reference to the wishes of her people. Gandhiji had been as clear as Nehru that he did not want to hamper the anti-fascist struggle, especially that of the Russian and Chinese people. But by the spring of 1942 he was becoming increasingly convinced of the inevitability of a struggle.
- In February 1943, a striking new development provided a new burst of political activity. Gandhiji commenced a fast on 10 February in jail. He declared the fast would last for twenty-one days. This was his answer to the Government which had been constantly exhorting him to condemn the violence of the people in the Quit India Movement. Gandhiji not only refused to condemn the people's resort to violence but unequivocally held the Government responsible for it.
- The contradictory nature of the reality of 15 August 1947 continues to intrigue historians and torment people on both sides of the border to this day. A hard-earned, prized freedom was won after long, glorious years of struggle but a bloody, tragic Partition rent asunder the fabric of the emerging free nation.

Notes

10.6 Key-Words

1. Repression : A state of forcible subjugation
2. Draconian measures : Exceedingly harsh, very severe
3. Kutcheries : Courts

10.7 Review Questions

1. What is the importance of Non-cooperation Movement in Indian Freedom Struggle? Discuss.
2. Why did Nehru and Patel advocate acceptance of the 3rd June Plan and the Congress working committee and AICC pass a resolution in favour of it?
3. Highlights the merits and demerits of civil disobedience movement.
4. Discuss the characteristics of Quit India Movement.
5. India got independence but in partition. Discuss.

Answers: Self-Assessment

1. (*i*) 1920 (*ii*) 9 June 1920 (*iii*) 30,000 Pounds
   (*iv*) 8 June 1920 (*v*) November, 1921
2. (*i*) (*c*) (*ii*) (*b*) (*iii*) (*a*) (*iv*) (*c*) (*v*) (*b*)
3. (*i*) August Revolution .
   (*ii*) Britain was unwilling to offer an honourable settlement and a real constitutional advance during the war.
   (*iii*) 14 July, 1942. (*iv*) Banaras Hindu University.

10.8 Further Readings

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Notes

Unit 11: India Independent to 1964

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Objectives

After studying this unit students will be able to:

- Discuss the process in the development of a parliamentary, secular and democratic republic.
- Understand the philosophy of Jawaharlal Nehru on the Development of Socialist Society.
- Explain the planning and State Controlled Industrialisations.

Introduction

The years from 1951 to 1964 were those of maturity and achievement. They were also years marked by high hopes and aspirations, optimism and confidence. Jawaharlal Nehru could declare in April 1953:

I shall not rest content unless every man, woman and child in the country has a fair deal and has a minimum standard of living . . . Five or six years is too short a time for judging a nation. Wait for another ten years and you will see that our Plans will change the entire picture of the country so completely that the' world will be amazed.

And reflecting the mood of the country, he wrote in June 1955:

Even though we have a multitude of problems, and difficulties surround us and often appear to overwhelm, there is the air of hope in this country, a faith in our future and a certain reliance on the basic principles that have guided us thus far. There is the breath of the dawn, the feeling of the beginning of a new era in the long and chequered history of India.

These were also the years when India was more or less stable, when its political system took on its distinct form, the country began to progress in all directions, and above all there was the beginning of the massive reconstruction of the polity and the economy. People experienced an advance towards the basic objectives of democracy, civil liberties, secularism, a scientific and international outlook, economic development and planning, with socialism at the end of the road. There was, of course, some discontent among the intelligentsia regarding the slow pace of development, especially with regard to the problems of poverty and employment, and the slow and unsatisfactory progress of land reforms. Among the several areas of progress and achievement, though marked by certain weaknesses and limitations, were (*a*) the consolidation of the nation and the solution of the language and tribal problems, (*b*) the initiation of the process of independent and planned economic development, (*c*) the evolution of an independent and innovative foreign policy, (*d*) the initiation

of the electoral process, (*e*) the rooting of democracy, (*f*) the setting in place of an administrative structure, (*g*) the development of science and technology, and (*h*) the beginnings of the welfare state.

11.1 A Parliamentary, Secular and Democratic Republic

The President

The executive power is vested by the constitution in the President of India but in the words of Ambedkar, he is a constitutional head who 'occupies the same position as the King under the English Constitution. He is the head of the State but not of the Executive. He represents the nation but does not rule the nation.' The head of the executive is in fact the prime minister at the head of the council of ministers which is responsible to parliament. India's parliamentary form of government bears the closest resemblance to the British system, with the difference of course that India has no hereditary monarchy but an elected President as its symbolic head of state. The alternative of a Presidential form of government of the American type was rejected by the framers of the constitution as unsuited to Indian conditions.

The Indian constitution thus formally confers an enormous range of powers on the President, but these are to be exercised in accordance with the advice of the cabinet. But the President is by no means a figurehead and the political situation may provide many occasions for an activist President. This tension between his formal and real powers has been visible from the time of the first President, Dr Rajendra Prasad. Having serious reservations about the Hindu Code Bill, he tried to argue in September 1951 that the President had a greater role to play. Nehru promptly sought the opinion of Alladi Krishnaswamy Ayyar, the constitutional expert, in Madras and M.C. Setalvad, the Attorney-General. Fortunately for Indian democracy, both the experts were categorical that acceptance of President Rajendra Prasad's arguments would upset the whole constitutional structure and could lead to the President assuming dictatorial powers. Rajendra Prasad was thus persuaded to exercise a more limited role in keeping with his own earlier hope expressed in the Constituent Assembly debates that 'the convention under which in England the King acts always on the advice of his Ministers will be established in this country also and the President ... will become a constitutional President in all matters'.

The danger of a President actually using his powers is least likely when a single party commands a clear majority. But the potential for presidential activism occurs in the event of fractured electoral verdicts or splits in the ruling party, leading to unstable coalition governments. The first time this happened was in 1979 when the Janata government led by Morarji Desai fell because of a split in the ruling party. The President, Neelam Sanjiva Reddy, used his discretion in refusing Morarji Desai's request to form a new government, asking Charan Singh to prove his majority by seeking a vote of confidence by a fixed date and consulting other party leaders before accepting the new prime minister, Charan Singh's advice to dissolve the Lok Sabha. President Venkataraman acted in a similar fashion when he invited Chandra Shekhar to form the government after the resignation of V.P. Singh in November 1990. He took a whole week to accept Chandra Shekhar's advice to dissolve the Lok Sabha in March 1991 and even played around with the idea of a National Government with himself at its head.

In recent years, these worries about the President's role have intensified because of the fact that the last time any party secured a clear majority in the national elections was in 1984-85 when Rajiv Gandhi came to power after Indira Gandhi's assassination. The elections of 1989, 1991, 1996 and 1998 all created ample opportunities and need for presidential intervention. For example, in March 1998, after the election results showed that when the BJP staked its claim to form the government on the ground that it was the single largest party and had enough support from other parties to win the confidence vote in the Lok Sabha, President K.R. Narayanan insisted that Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the leader of the BJP, furnish proof in writing that his party did indeed enjoy the support of its allies. This resulted in an embarrassing wait of a few days for the prospective prime minister because one of his critical allies, J. Jayalalithaa of the AIADMK (whose desertion finally led to the collapse of the BJP government in April 1999) had many 'second thoughts' and drove

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hard bargains in well-advertised secret meetings before finally consenting to send the crucial missive extending the AIADMK's support to the BJP. The President's role was critical in the entire episode. He could have refused to wait endlessly for the letter of support and invited the leader of the next largest party or group, thus denying the BJP's claims which were in any case based on a wafer-thin majority. It is evident then that unstable or ambiguous political situations provide room for exercise of presidential discretion and hence potential abuse or misuse of powers.

However, even in otherwise stable situations, it has happened that presidents have, on occasion, either because of personal ambition or out of a sense of duty to the constitution, exercised discretionary power. The most vivid example is that of President Zail Singh, who was the first to use the President's power to return a bill to parliament. He also wrote at the same time to the prime minister that he was not being kept informed of important developments and this was preventing him from performing his constitutional duty of ensuring that the government was being run in accordance with the letter and spirit of the constitution. There was much speculation that he might actually dismiss the prime minister. Later in the same year, 1987, when the Bofors scandal about kickbacks in defence purchases broke, it seems that Zail Singh did actually discuss with political leaders of many hues the possibility of dismissing Rajiv Gandhi as prime minister. In the end, none of it ensued, but it is clear that the potential for the President stepping outside the conventional limits of his powers exists even when a prime minister enjoys majority support in parliament.

Did u know? It is to be remembered that the Congress under Rajiv Gandhi had the largest majority ever in the Lok Sabha.

Another area of debate relates to the President's role in the dismissal of state governments and imposition of President's Rule. February 1998, in the midst of the Lok Sabha elections, the governor of U.P., Romesh Bhandari, dismissed the BJP-led government of Kalyan Singh and swore in another man as chief minister. The High Court reinstated Kalyan Singh and the governor sent a report to the Centre recommending dissolution of the Assembly and imposition of President's Rule. The cabinet, after long deliberation, accepted the governor's report and prime minister I.K. Gujral recommended it to the President. But President Narayanan returned it for reconsideration to the cabinet, in a clear expression of disagreement. The governor of Uttar Pradesh accordingly resigned and Kalyan Singh continued as chief minister of Uttar Pradesh with his ragtag coalition of defectors, criminals, and others.

The 44th Amendment has given him the authority to ask the council of ministers to reconsider its advice, but if the council reiterates its position, the President must accept the advice. But, as seen in the case of President Narayanan and the U.P. issue, the President's sending back the advice for reconsideration is taken very seriously and is unlikely to be ignored.

In other- areas, the powers of the President are quite clearly defined. When a bill is presented to him, under Article 111, he may withhold his assent and, if he desires, return it to parliament for reconsideration. If both houses again pass it and send it back to him, he is obliged to give his assent. In the case of money bills, however, he has no discretion. In any case, he has no absolute power of veto.

The 44th Amendment in 1978 also made it explicit that the President can declare an Emergency only after receiving in writing the decision of the cabinet advising him to make the proclamation. During the period of Emergency as well, he is to act on the advice of the cabinet. It is very clear that almost all his powers, including those of appointing various high functionaries such as judges of the higher courts, governors, ambassadors, the Attorney-General, the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India, etc., are to be exercised on the advice of the cabinet. The same is true of his powers as Supreme Commander of the armed forces, and of his powers to issue ordinances when parliament is not in session.

The President is elected for five years, is eligible for re-election, and can be removed through impeachment for violation of the constitution. He is elected by elected members of both houses of parliament and of state legislative assemblies by a method of proportional representation through single transferable vote. Each Member of Parliament (MP) or Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) has a single transferable vote, with a value corresponding to the population represented by him.

The Vice-President

If the President dies in office, or is unable to perform his duties because of absence, illness or any other cause, or is removed or resigns, the Vice-President is enjoined upon by Article 65 to act as the President. This has happened on two occasions when Presidents— Dr Zakir Hussain and Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed—died in office and Vice-Presidents V.V. Giri and B.D. Jatti had to step in. For this reason, the choice of Vice-President has to be made with great care.

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In normal times, the main function of the Vice-President, who is elected for five years by both houses of parliament, but is not a member of any legislature, is to act as the chairperson of the Rajya Sabha.

The Council of Ministers and the Prime Minister

The real executive power vests under the constitution in the council of ministers headed by the prime minister. The President appoints as prime minister the leader of the party that has a majority in the Lok Sabha or, if no party has a clear majority, a person who has the confidence of the majority of the members of the Lok Sabha. Other ministers are selected by the prime minister and appointed by the President. Ministers may be appointed without being members of parliament, but they must become members of any one house either by election or nomination within six months. The council of ministers is collectively responsible to the Lok Sabha and has to resign as soon as it loses the confidence of the Lok Sabha.

The prime minister is, in Nehru's words, the 'linchpin of Government'. Almost all the powers formally vested in the President are in fact exercised by the prime minister, who is the link between, the President, the cabinet, and, the parliament. The position of the prime minister in India has acquired its pre-eminence at least partly from the fact that the first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, who retained his office for almost seventeen years, had such enormous prestige and influence that some of it rubbed off on to the office itself. Indira Gandhi was also so powerful after her election victory and the Bangladesh war in 1971 that the prime minister's position within the political system acquired enormous weight. The prime minister has full powers to choose ministers as well as recommend their dismissal. This gives the prime minister enormous powers of patronage.

The constitution does not mention different categories of ministers such as cabinet ministers, ministers of state and deputy ministers, except in Article 352 where the cabinet is defined as the council consisting of ministers of cabinet rank. In effect, however, the cabinet rank ministers who meet regularly in cabinet meetings chaired by the prime minister, are the most important as all important decisions are taken in cabinet meetings.

The constitution does not allow the possibility of breakdown of constitutional machinery and direct President's Rule at the Centre as it does in the states. There must always be a council of ministers. Even when a vote of no-confidence is passed and the council of ministers resign, they are asked by the President to continue till the new one is in place.

A new constitutional controversy arose with the refusal of the BJP-led government, which was voted out of office on 17 April 1999, to act in the spirit of a caretaker as had been the convention. Despite protests by Opposition parties, the government rejected any notion of caretaker status with the argument that there was no such provision in the constitution. However, it is arguable

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that this stance ignored well-established practice and was self-serving. The Chief Election Commissioner's advice to the government that it should act keeping in mind that the country was already in election mode even though the statutory period of restraint had not yet begun also fell on deaf years. (Though the Lok Sabha was dissolved in April 1999, fresh elections were delayed till September and October due to the monsoon and revision of electoral rolls.) The government at one stroke transferred eight secretary-level (the highest rank in the bureaucracy) officials, including the Home Secretary, who is responsible for law and order, on 3 May 1999, after the Lok Sabha had been dissolved. This, despite the fact that one of the most important conventions evolved for ensuring fair elections is that officials are not transferred once elections are announced. Sadly, the letter of the constitution was used to defy constitutional practice.

Did u know? President Narayanan clearly had to exercise a difficult choice here. There were claims and counter-claims about the extent of support enjoyed by the Kalyan Singh ministry, there were defections and return-defections and allegations of monetary and other inducements. Nonetheless, the President decided that since the U.P. ministry had demonstrated its majority support, however unfairly acquired, on the floor of the house, he had no right to dismiss it. His critics argue that demonstration of majority support is not the only criterion on which to decide whether the constitutional machinery in a state has broken down and support achieved through intimidation or inducement can be questioned.

The Parliament

The Indian parliament has two houses—the upper house being called the Rajya Sabha or the Council of States and the lower house the Lok Sabha or the House of the People. The Rajya Sabha has 250 members, of whom 238 are elected by elected members of the state legislative assemblies or Vidhan Sabhas via a system of proportional representation by means of single transferable vote, while another 12 are nominated by the President, on the advice of the government, to represent different fields such as education, social work, media, sports, etc. Every two years, one-third of the members of the Rajya Sabha retire; but individual members' terms are for six years, so that the Rajya Sabha is a permanent body. The Vice-President of India is the chairperson and a deputy chairperson is elected by Rajya Sabha members from amongst themselves.

The Lok Sabha is directly elected by the people for five years. It may be dissolved before its term is over. In case an Emergency is in force, the Lok Sabha can extend its term for one year at a time but not beyond six months after the Emergency has ended. In practice, only once has the Lok Sabha's term been extended for a year in 1976 when prime minister Indira Gandhi had declared the Emergency.

All Indian citizens, eighteen or above, are eligible to vote. The winning candidate is the one that is first past the post, that is, the one who gets the maximum number of votes. There is no rule that the winner must get at least 50 per cent of the votes, as is the practice in many other countries, though many thoughtful observers have been urging that this system is adopted to ensure the representative nature of the candidate elected and encourage candidates to look beyond vote-banks to wider sections of voters. There is no proportional representation.

Constituencies are territorial and single-member, and divided among states roughly in proportion to the population. A certain number are reserved for Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes in proportion to their population in that particular state. This means that if, say, in Andhra Pradesh, 40 per cent of the population is Scheduled Castes and 10 per cent Scheduled Tribes, then in 40 per cent of Lok Sabha seats in Andhra Pradesh only Scheduled Caste candidates can contest and in another 10 per cent only Scheduled Tribe candidates can contest. All the voters residing in that constituency would elect these candidates—there are no separate electorates as there were before independence.

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In recent years, pressure has built up for reservation of one-third of constituencies for women and a bill on those lines was also introduced in parliament in 1998, but it remains caught up in the web of claims and counter-claims of caste and religious groups who are demanding reservation within reservation, on the ground that else only upper-caste, elite, Hindu women will corner the seats reserved for women. Whatever the final outcome, the controversy has demonstrated clearly the self-propelling dynamic of the principle of reservation.

However desirable the objective, once the principle is accepted, it is virtually impossible to prevent further claims to the same benefits by other groups. The practice of reservation has also shown that it is almost impossible to reverse. The constitution had envisaged reservations as a short-term measure lasting ten years; no government has ever seriously considered not extending them every ten years, and it is now nearly fifty years! On the contrary, demands for and acceptance of reservation have only increased. Even the question— whether reservation, which per se perpetuates certain group identities, can become a barrier to the concept of citizenship as embodied in the constitution—is difficult to ask in the prevailing political climate. Disadvantaged groups, and certainly their leaders, are easily convinced that reservation is the panacea for all ills, perhaps because it enables rapid upward mobility for some visible and vocal sections of the groups or because a bird in hand is considered to be better than the invisible one in the bush of the future.

The maximum number of seats in the Lok Sabha is 552. Of these, 550 represent territorial constituencies, and two go to nominated members from the Anglo-Indian community. Members must be at least twenty-five years of age. The Lok Sabha is chaired by the speaker, and in his absence by the deputy speaker, both of whom are elected by members from amongst themselves. By convention, the speaker's post goes to the majority party and the deputy speaker's to the Opposition. But again, in recent years, fractured verdicts, unstable coalitions, claims of rival groups within and outside the government, have upset established conventions. There were fairly well-established conventions that the election of the speaker and deputy speaker would be kept free of contest to assure their non-partisan image and the speaker should be a person of considerable ability and influence capable of asserting his authority in the house. But in 1998, the BJP-led government first backed out of a promise to support a Congress nominee, P.A. Sangma, as a consensus candidate and then had elected an unknown face, Balayogi, to please its alliance partner, the Telugu Desam party. This was unfortunate, for the constitution entrusts great responsibility to the speaker: within and in all matters relating to the Lok Sabha, the speaker's word is final.

The parliament has extensive legislative powers and bills may be introduced in any house. To become law, bills must be passed by both houses, and then receive presidential assent. The President may, however, send the bills back to parliament or the government for reconsideration. If they are passed again, the President cannot withhold assent. Money-bills, however, must be introduced first in the Lok Sabha, and on the President's recommendation. They go to the Rajya Sabha, and if not returned with suggestions in fourteen days, are taken as passed. Recommendations of the Rajya Sabha may or may not be accepted by the Lok Sabha in the case of money-bills.

The constitution thus clearly envisaged parliament as an institution with great dignity and accorded privileges to its members commensurate with that position. Unfortunately, in recent years, the conduct of some members and parties who have disturbed even the President's address, indulged in unnecessary walkouts, shouting, even physical scuffles, has lowered the dignity of the parliament and delayed necessary legislative business. This has led to a popular disgust with members of parliament and a common feeling that parliament is just a big waste of taxpayers' money.

A Secular State

The constitution declares India to be a sovereign, socialist, secular and democratic republic. Even though the terms secular (and socialist) were added only by the 42nd Amendment in 1976, the spirit embodying the constitution was secular. In 1973 the Supreme Court held the secular character of the constitution to be one of the basic features of the constitution. Further, the Fundamental Rights include prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion and right to freedom of religion including freedom of conscience and free profession, practise and propagation of religion, freedom to manage religious affairs, freedom to pay taxes for promotion of any particular religion and

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freedom of attendance at religious instruction or religious worship in certain educational institutions, cultural and educational rights including protection of interests of minorities and their right to establish and administer educational institutions.

The debate over the meaning of the term secular in the Indian context has been a heated one. Some people have argued that the Western context from which the term secular is borrowed is a very different one. In the West, the outcome of the struggle between the Church and the state led to the separation of the two; the Church was allowed to decide on religious rituals, the state was to regulate secular affairs. In India, the concept of secularism evolved as part of the struggle of nationalist forces against communal forces that wanted to use religion for political purposes and divide the emerging nation on the basis of religion.

Nehru put it best:

We call our State a secular one. The/word 'secular', perhaps, is not a very happy one and yet for want of a better, we have used it. What exactly does it mean? It does not obviously mean a society where religion itself is discouraged. It means freedom of religion and conscience, including freedom for those who may have no religion. It means free play for all religions, subject only to their not interfering with each other or with the basic conceptions of our State.

Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, the renowned scholar of Indian philosophy, who was President of India from 1962 to 1967, placed secularism within the Indian tradition:

We hold that no religion should be given preferential status of unique distinction . . . No group of citizens shall arrogate to itself rights and privileges that it denies to others. No person should suffer any form of disability or discrimination because of his religion but all alike should be free to share to the fullest degree in the common life . . . Secularism as here defined is in accordance with the ancient religious tradition of India.

Nehru's commitment to secularism was unsurpassed and all-pervasive. Communalism went against his grain, and he fought it vigorously throughout his life. He helped secularism acquire deep roots among the Indian people; and he prevented the burgeoning forth of communalism when conditions were favourable for it. Though on almost all issues he believed in consensus and compromise, communalism was the exception, for as he said in 1950, any compromise on communalism 'can only mean a surrender of our principles and a betrayal of the cause of India's freedom'.

Keeping in view India's specific situation, Nehru defined secularism in the dual sense of keeping the state, politics and education separate from religion, making religion a private matter for the individual, and of showing equal respect for all faiths and providing equal opportunities for their followers. He defined communalism as the ideology which treated Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs or Christians as homogeneous groups in regard to political and economic matters, as 'politics under some religious garb, one religious group being incited to hate another religious group'.

Nehru was one of the first to try to understand the socio-economic roots of communalism, and he came to believe that it was primarily a weapon of reaction, even though its social base was formed by the middle classes. He also most perceptibly described communalism as the Indian form of fascism. In contrast, he regarded secularism as an essential condition for democracy.

He also did not distinguish between Hindu, Muslim, Sikh or Christian communalisms. They were, he said, different forms of the same ideology and had, therefore, to be opposed simultaneously. While he was very clear that secularism meant giving full protection to the minorities and removing their fears, at the same time, he was as opposed to minority communalisms as to the communalism of the religious majority. He also argued most convincingly that secularism had to be the sole basis for national unity in a multi-religious society and that communalism was, therefore, clearly a danger to national unity and was anti-national.

There was, however, a major lacuna in Nehru's approach to the problem of communalism, which can be seen as a certain economistic, deterministic and reductionist bias. Believing that planning and economic development and the spread of education, science and technology would automatically weaken communal thinking and help form a secular consciousness, he ignored the need for struggle against communalism as an ideology. As a result he paid little attention to the

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content of education or to the spread of science and a scientific approach among the people. While very active himself, he failed to use the Congress as an organization to take his own brilliant understanding of communalism to the people. He also compromised with his own stand when he permitted the Congress in Kerala to enter into an alliance with the Muslim League and Christian communal groups in 1960. Further, he was unable to persuade the state governments to take strong administrative steps against the instigators or perpetrators of communal violence. Sadly, sorrow over the large-scale communal violence marked the last years of his life.

The Years of Hope and Achievement, 1951 – 1964

Democratic Republic

The entrenchment of democracy—an achievement which has endured so that it is now taken for granted. The process had begun with the framing of the constitution after 1947 and its promulgation on 26 January 1950. Democracy took a giant step forward with the first general election held in 1951-52 over a four-month period. These elections were the biggest experiment in democracy anywhere in the world. The elections were held on the basis of universal adult franchise, with all those twenty-one years of age or older having the right to vote. There were over 173 million voters, most of them poor, illiterate, and rural, and having had no experience of elections. The big question at the time was how would the people respond to this opportunity.

Many were sceptical about such an electorate being able to exercise its right to vote in a politically mature and responsible manner. Some said that democratic elections were not suited to a caste-ridden, multi-religious, illiterate and backward society like India's and that only a benevolent dictatorship could be effective politically in such a society. The coming elections were described by some as 'a leap in the dark' and by others as 'fantastic' and as 'an act of faith'.

India's electoral system was developed according to the directives of the constitution. The constitution created an Election Commission, headed by a Chief Election Commissioner, to conduct elections. It was to be independent of the executive or the parliament or the party in power.

Establishment of Democratic Institutions

Building on the traditions of the national movement, the Indian leaders, and above all Nehru, further strengthened the foundations of democracy in the country by the manner of their political functioning. They gave due importance to the institutional aspects of the democratic system so that gradually attachment of people to parliamentary institutions grew. They adhered not only to the spirit but also to the forms of democratic institutions and procedures. Nehru, in particular, despite holding complete sway saw to it that political power was widely dispersed and diffused.

Civil liberties were put on a firm footing with the Press having free play, even when it criticized the government severely. The independence of the courts was carefully nurtured, even when they turned down an important piece of popular legislation, namely, agrarian reform.

Nehru treated parliament with respect and made every effort to sustain its dignity, prestige and power, even though his party enjoyed an overwhelming majority in it. He tried to make it a major forum for expression of public opinion, and made it a point to sit through the Question Hour and to attend parliamentary debates. The Opposition too played its part by respecting parliament and irs procedures, functioning without fear in its portals, and keeping the standard of parliamentary debates at a high level. Moreover, parliamentary committees such as the Estimates Committee began to play an important role as critics and watchdogs of the government administration.

Under Nehru's leadership the cabinet system evolved in a healthy manner and functioned effectively. The effort was to make the cabinet the chief agent of collective policy-making. Nehru treated his cabinet colleagues with courtesy and respect. C.D. Deshmukh, India's Finance Minister from 1950 to 1956, remarked later in his autobiography: 'Nehru as head of the Cabinet was gentle, considerate and democratic, never forcing a decision on his colleagues . . . decisions were taken by a consensus and never, as far as I can remember in my time, by vote.'

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Despite the dominance of the Congress party the role of the Opposition was strengthened during the period. Nehru gave full play and respect to the Opposition parties and was quite responsive to their criticism. He once defined democracy as follows: 'In the ultimate analysis, it is a manner of thinking, a manner of action, a manner of behaviour to your neighbour and to your adversary and opponent.' The Opposition parties, though small numerically, were able to take advantage of the fact that the Congress was not a monolithic party and encompassed within itself several political and ideological trends. They were able to influence the government policies by influencing the different ideological strands in the Congress. Nehru also respected and promoted internal democracy and debate within the Congress party and encouraged it to accommodate new social forces and trends.

Federalism, provided for in the constitution, also was established as a firm feature of Indian polity during the Nehru years, with a genuine devolution of power to the states. Respecting the states' autonomy, Nehru would not impose decisions on the state governments or interfere with their policies, though he took care to inform them of his own thinking and occasionally advise or even insist on their acceptance of a particular policy. He also permitted the state Congress parties to choose their party and government leaders. He relied upon the state leaders and governments to understand better their own intricate problems. In the process, he was willing to put up with a great deal. In fact, one reason why Nehru would not go too far in forcing the states to effect land reforms the way he conceived them was because land reforms were a State subject and he would not ride roughshod over the states' rights and powers even for a favourite cause of his. Nehru would guide and advise and urge but would not step out of constitutional boundaries; he would observe constitutional niceties in spirit and form. In fact, a major reason for the weaknesses of the agricultural, educational, health and other social welfare programmes lay in the Centre's dependence on the states for their implementation, for these were State subjects.

At the same time, Nehru did not permit any weakening of the prestige or authority of the central government. He always maintained a sharp distinction between the centralization of power or centre's domination of the states and a strong centre needed for nation-building and maintenance of the unity and independence of the country as also to keep under check disruptive and divisive forces.

A major reason that led to the development of harmonious relations between the Centre and the states and which kept in check centrifugal forces was the fact that the same party ruled in both places. The leading role of the Centre was also facilitated by the fact that some of the tallest men and women in Indian politics held office in the cabinet as well as the Congress Working Committee.

The tradition of the supremacy of the civil government over the armed forces was fully established during these years. The Indian armed forces had been traditionally non-political and had accepted civilian control and leadership. But the continuation of this role by them was not guaranteed. Nehru, in particular, was worried about the possibility of the armed forces intervening in politics and the government in case of exceptional circumstances, as happened in nineteenth-century France and Germany and in many Third World countries. To avoid such a possibility in India he took several steps in this regard. He kept the size of the armed forces relatively small, refusing to permit their expansion even after large-scale US military aid to Pakistan began in 1954. The expenditure on the defence forces was also kept extremely low, less than 2 per cent of the national income. Abandoning the British colonial practice of recruiting men in the army on the criterion of 'martial' classes, the armed forces were given a heterogeneous character, with almost every region and section of society being represented in them. India was thus protected from the danger of militarism in its formative years. The small size of the armed forces and of expenditure on them were also prompted by two other considerations: avoidance of diversion of scarce resources from economic development; and given the absence of domestic defence industries, to avoid dependence on foreign powers and the possibility of their intervention in India's internal and foreign affairs.

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Self-Assessment

1. Choose the Correct option

(*i*) How many members are in Rajya Sabha?

(*a*) 250 (*b*) 255 (*c*) 260 (*d*) 274.

(*ii*) The president nominates ..... members in Rajya Sabha on the advice of the Government.

(*a*) 5 (*b*) 10 (*c*) 12 (*d*) 15

(*iii*) In case an Emergency in force, the Lok Sabha can extend its term for ..... at a time.

(*a*) 3 months (*b*) 6 months (*c*) 10 months (*d*) 1 year

(*iv*) The maximum numbers of seat in Lok Sabha is ..... .

(*a*) 550 (*b*) 552 (*c*) 555 (*d*) 556.

(*v*) The Lok Sabha member must be at least ..... of age.

(*a*) 18 years (*b*) 25 years (*c*) 30 years (*d*) 35 years

11.2 Jawaharlal Nehru's Vision of a Developed Socialist Society

The vision of the founding fathers of the Republic went beyond national integration and political stability. Indian society had to move towards social change. Article 36 of the constitution in the section on the Directive Principles of State Policy states: 'The state shall strive to promote the welfare of the people by securing and protecting as effectively as may be a social order in which justice, economic and political, shall inform all institutions of the national life.' This conception of the new social order was encompassed in 1955 by the phrase 'socialistic pattern of society' officially accepted by the Congress at its Avadi session and later incorporated as its objective in the Second and Third Five Year Plans. Consequently, several important measures of social reforms, which some have described as the beginning of a welfare state, were taken during the Nehru years. Very important measures in this respect were those of land reforms, the initiation of planned economic development and rapid expansion of the public sector. In addition far-reaching labour legislation was undertaken, including recognition of collective bargaining, the right to form trade unions and to go on strike, security of employment, and provision of health and accident insurance. There were also moves towards a more equitable distribution of wealth through progressive and steep income tax and excise tax policies. Expansion of education and health and other social services was also sought.

Nehru and other leaders were also keen to ensure that Indian social organization underwent change, leading to the social liberation of the hitherto socially backward and suppressed sections of society. As Nehru put it in 1956: 'We have not only striven for and achieved a political revolution, not only are we striving hard for an economic revolution but . . . we are equally intent on social revolution; only by way of advance on these three separate lines and their integration into one great whole, will the people of India progress.'

The constitution had already incorporated a provision abolishing untouchability. The government supplemented this provision by passing the Anti-Untouchability Law in 1955 making the practice of untouchability punishable and a cognizable offence. The government also tried to implement the clauses of the constitution regarding reservations in educational institutions and government employment in favour of Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) and other weaker sections of society. Other necessary measures were taken to raise their social status, such as the provision of special facilities in the form of scholarships, hostels accommodation, grants, loans, housing, healthcare and legal aid services. A Commissioner of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes was appointed to monitor the effective implementation of all such measures and constitutional provisions. However, in spite of all these steps, the SCs and STs continued to be backward and caste oppression was still widely prevalent, especially in rural areas, where the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes also formed a large part of the landless agricultural labour, and therefore also suffered from class oppression. There was also hardly any effort to eradicate the ideology of the caste system or to remove caste inequality and caste oppression so that casteism began to spread from the upper castes to the backward castes and from the rural to the urban areas.

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Participating actively in the national movement for years, women's groups and organizations were demanding revision of laws regarding women's rights in the family, and in Nehru they had a firm supporter. Already, before independence, Nehru had made his position on this issue clear and quoted Charles Fourier, the French philosopher: 'One could judge the degree of civilisation of a country by the social and political position of its women.'

A major step forward in this direction was taken when the Hindu Code Bill was moved in parliament in 1951. The bill faced sharp opposition from conservative sectors of society, especially from the Jan Sangh and other Hindu communal organizations. Even though actively supported by the vocal members of the Congress party and women MPs and other women activists, Nehru decided to postpone enactment of the bill in order to mobilize greater support for it. He was, however, firm in his determination to pass the bill and made it an issue in the elections of 1951-52.

After coming back to power, the government passed the bill in the form of four separate acts which introduced monogamy and the right of divorce to both men and women, raised the age of consent and marriage, and gave women the right to maintenance and to inherit family property. A revolutionary step was thus taken for women's liberation, though its practice would take decades to take full effect. An important lacuna in this respect was that a uniform civil code covering the followers of all religions was not enacted. This would have involved changes in Muslim personal law regarding monogamy and inheritance. There was strong opposition to this from the Muslim orthodoxy. The process of social reform among Muslims had in the modern period lagged far behind that among Hindus and consequently social change had been quite slow even among middle-class Muslim women. Nehru was not willing to alarm the Muslim minority which was, he believed, even otherwise under pressure. He would make changes in Muslim personal law and enact a uniform civil code but only when Muslims were ready for it.

Education

The founding fathers were fully aware of the need for better and wider education as an instrument of social and economic progress, equalization of opportunity and the building up of a democratic society. This was all the more urgent because in 1951 only 16.6 per cent of the total population was literate and the percentage was much lower, being only 6 per cent, in the case of rural families. To remedy this situation, the constitution directed that by 1961 the state should provide free and compulsory education to every child up to the age of fourteen. Later, this target was shifted to 1966.

The government provided large sums for developing primary, secondary, higher and technical education: while the expenditure on education was Rs 198 million in 1951-52, by 1964-65 it had increased to Rs 1,462.7 million, that is, by more than seven times. Since education was primarily a State subject, Nehru urged the state governments not to reduce expenditure on primary education, whatever the nature of financial stringency. If necessary, he suggested, even expenditure on industrial development could be reduced. He told the National Development Council in May 1961: 'I have come to feel that it [education] is the basis of all and, on no account unless actually our heads are cut off and we cannot function, must we allow education to suffer.'

The Nehru years witnessed rapid expansion of education, especially in the case of girls. Between 1951 and 1961 school enrolment doubled for boys and tripled for girls. From 1950-51 to 1965-66 the number of boys enrolled in classes I to V increased from 13.77 million to 32.18 million. The relevant figures for girls were 5.38 million and 18.29 million. The progress was equally rapid in the case of secondary education. Between 1950-51 and 1965-66 enrolment increased from 1.02 million to 4.08 million (by nearly four times) in the case of boys and from 0.19 million to 1.2 million (by nearly 6.5 times) in the case of girls. The number of secondary schools increased from 7,288 to 24,477 during these years.

At the time of independence there were eighteen universities with a total student enrolment of nearly 300,000. By 1964, the number of universities had increased to fifty-four, the number of colleges to about 2,500 and the number of undergraduate and postgraduate students, excluding

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intermediate students, to 613,000. The number of girls students increased six-fold and constituted 22 per cent of the total. However, the progress in primary education, though recognizable, did not match the needs or the intentions especially as the number of eligible students was growing fast because of the high rate of population growth. The constitutional target of free and compulsory education to all children was first shifted from 1961 to 1966 and then to a distant future. By the end of the Third Plan in 1965-66 only 61 per cent of the children between the ages of six and fourteen were in school, the figure for girls being only 43 per cent. Consequently, widespread illiteracy continued; as late as 1991 only 52 per cent of Indians were literate.

In 1965, 5 per cent of the rural population was not served by any school at all. Moreover, the facilities provided in the existing schools were very poor, with the majority of schools having no pucca building, blackboards or drinking water. Nearly 40 per cent of primary schools had only one teacher to take three or four classes. A particular malady of primary schooling was the high rate of dropouts. Nearly half of those enrolled in class I would have left school by the time they reached class IV and been rapidly reduced to virtual illiteracy again. Moreover, the dropout rate was higher in the case of girls than boys. Clearly, there was no equal opportunity in education and therefore also hardly any equalization of opportunity in work and employment for the poor and those in the rural areas who constituted the vast majority of the Indian people.

A major weakness that crept in was the decline in educational standards. Despite recognition of the problem, except for the technology sector, the educational system was left untouched and unreformed and the quality of education continued to deteriorate, first in schools and then in colleges and universities. The ideological content of education also continued to be the same as in the colonial period.

Nehru was aware of the unsatisfactory progress in education and near the end of his prime ministership began to put greater emphasis on its development, especially of primary education, which, he now stressed, should, be developed at any cost. 'In the final analysis,' he wrote to the chief ministers in 1963, 'right education open to all is perhaps the basic remedy for most of our ills.' Also, 'In spite of my strong desire for the growth of our industry, I am convinced that it is better to do without some industrial growth than to do without adequate education at the base.'

Community Development Programme

Two major programmes for rural uplift, namely, the Community Development programme and Panchayati Raj, were introduced in 1952 and 1959. They were to lay the foundations of the welfare state in the villages. Though designed for the sake of agricultural development, they had more of a welfare content; their basic purpose was to change the face of rural India, to improve the quality of life of the people.

The Community Development programme was instituted on a limited scale in 1952 covering 55 development blocks, each block consisting of about 100 villages with a population of 60,000 to 70,000. By the mid-1960s most of the country was covered by a network of community blocks, employing more than 6,000 Block Development Officers (BDOs) and over 600,000 Village Level Workers (VLWs or Gram Sewaks) to help implement the programme. The programme covered all aspects of rural life from improvement in agricultural methods to improvement in communications, health and education.

The emphasis of the programme was on self-reliance and self-help by the people, popular participation and responsibility. It was to be basically a people's movement for their own welfare. As Nehru stated at the very outset of the programme in 1952, the basic objective was 'to unleash forces from below among our people'. While it was 'necessary to plan, to direct, to organize and to coordinate; but it [was] even more necessary to create conditions in which a spontaneous growth from below [was] possible'. While material achievements were expected, the programme was much more geared 'to build up the community and the individual and to make the latter a builder of his own village centre and of India in the larger sense'. 'The primary matter is the human being involved,' he added. Another major objective was to uplift the backward sections:

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'We must aim at progressively producing a measure of equality in opportunity and other things.' In 1952 and in the later years, Nehru repeatedly referred to the Community Development programme and the accompanying National Extension Service as representing 'new dynamism' and a 'great revolution' and as 'symbols of the resurgent spirit of India'.

The programme achieved considerable results in extension work: better seeds, fertilizers, and so on, resulting in agricultural development in general and greater food production, in particular, construction of roads, tanks and wells, school and primary health centre buildings, and extension of educational and health facilities. Initially, there was also a great deal of popular enthusiasm, which, however, petered out with time. It soon became apparent that the programme had failed in one of its basic objectives—that of involving the people as full participants in developmental activity. Not only did it not stimulate self-help, it increased expectations from and reliance on the government. It gradually acquired an official orientation, became part of the bureaucratic framework and came to be administered from above as a routine activity with the BDOs becoming replicas of the traditional sub-divisional officers and the Village Level Workers becoming administrative underlings. As Nehru put it later, in 1963, while the entire programme was designed to get the peasant 'out of the rut in which he has been living since ages past', the programme itself 'has fallen into a rut'.

The weaknesses of the programme had come to be known as early as 1957 when the Balwantrai Mehta Committee, asked to evaluate it, had strongly criticized its bureaucratization and its lack of popular involvement. As a remedy, the Committee recommended the democratic decentralization of the rural and district development administration. On the Committee's recommendation, it was decided to introduce, all over the country, an integral system of democratic self-government with the village panchayat at its base. The new system, which came to be known as Panchayati Raj and was implemented in various states from 1959, was to consist of a three-tier, directly elected village or gram panchayats, and indirectly elected block-level panchayat samitis and district-level zilla parishads. The Community Development programme was to be integrated with the Panchayati Raj; considerable functions, resources and authority were to be devolved upon the three-tiered samitis to carry out schemes of development. Thus, the Panchayati Raj was intended to make up a major deficiency of the Community Development programme by providing for popular participation in the decision-making and implementation of the development process with the officials working under the guidance of the three-level samitis. Simultaneously, the countryside was covered by thousands of cooperative institutions such as cooperative banks, land mortgage banks and service and market cooperatives, which were also autonomous from the bureaucracy as they were managed by elected bodies.

Nehru's enthusiasm was once again aroused as Panchayati Raj and cooperative institutions represented another radical step for change in society. They would transfer responsibility for development and rural administration to the people and accelerate rural development. They would thus act as instruments for the empowerment of the people and would not only lead to greater self-reliance, but would also act as an educative tool, for bringing about a change in the outlook of the people. Above all, they would initiate the process of creating better human beings.

However, these hopes were belied. Though adopting Panchayati Raj in one form or another, the state governments showed little enthusiasm for it, devolved no real power on the panchayati samitis, curbed their powers and functions and starved them of funds. The bureaucracy too did not slacken its grip on rural administration at different levels. Panchayats were also politicized and used by politicians to gather factional support in the villages. As a result, though foundations of a system of rural local self-government were laid, democratic decentralization as a whole was stunted and could not perform the role assigned to it by the Balwantrai Mehta Committee and Jawaharlal Nehru.

Moreover, the benefits of community development, new agricultural inputs and the extension services were mostly garnered hythe rich peasants and capitalist farmers, who also came to dominate the Panchayati Raj institutions.

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The basic weakness of the Community Development programme, the Panchayati Raj and the cooperative movement was that they ignored the class division of the rural society where nearly half the population was landless or had marginal holdings and was thus quite powerless.

The village was dominated socially and economically by the capitalist farmers and the rich and middle peasantry; and neither the dominant rural classes nor the bureaucrats could become agents of social transformation or popular participation.

11.3 Planning and State Controlled Industrializations

Apart from extreme poverty, illiteracy, a ruined agriculture and industry, the structural distortions created by colonialism in the Indian economy and society (such as the rupture of the link between various sectors of the Indian economy and their getting articulated with the metropolitan economy in a dependent manner) made the future transition to self-sustained growth much more difficult.

It is this legacy of colonial structuring which independent India had to undo so that conditions could be created for rapid industrial development. The task of attempting a modern industrial transformation, two hundred years after the first industrial revolution and nearly a hundred years after several other countries had industrialized, was a stupendous one. Besides this handicap created by colonialism and the several built-in disadvantages faced by the latecomer, India had to confront political and economic conditions which had changed radically. New and innovative strategies were called for if success was to be achieved.

While undertaking this difficult and complex task, India, unlike many other post-colonial societies, had certain advantages. First, a small but independent (Indian owned and controlled) industrial base had emerged in India between 1914 and 1947. This was achieved, amongst other things, by the Indian capitalist class seizing the opportunities created during this period by the weakening of the imperialist stranglehold during the two world wars and the Great Depression of the 1930s. By the time India gained political independence in 1947 Indian entrepreneurs had successfully competed with European enterprise in India and with foreign imports, in the process capturing about 75 per cent of the market for industrial produce in India. Indian capitalists had also acquired dominance over the financial sphere, i.e., banking, life insurance, etc.

By independence, therefore, India had, 'in spite of and in opposition to colonialism', developed an *independent* economic base from which to attempt a take-off into rapid independent industrialization. She did not, like many other post-colonial countries, get pushed into a neo-colonial situation where, while formal political independence was achieved, the erstwhile colony's economy continued to be essentially dominated by metropolitan interests.

A mature indigenous entrepreneurial class, which could serve as the *agency* for carrying out a substantial part of the post-independence planned development was an asset to India. Further, a high degree of concentration and consolidation had led, during the colonial period itself, to the emergence of large business conglomerates like the Birlas, Tatas, Singhanias, Dalmia-Jains, etc., with interests in different areas like trade, banking, transport, industry and so on. Such conglomerates, like the *zaibatsu* in Japan or the *chaebol* in South Korea, were extremely important in enabling late entrants to world capitalism to successfully compete with the already established foreign capital and especially multinational corporations. The absence of the *agency* of a mature, indigenous entrepreneurial class was sorely felt in many of the post-colonial African states and can be seen as a critical drawback even today, for example in most parts of the former Soviet Union.

Second, India was fortunate to have a broad societal consensus on the nature and path of development to be followed after independence. For example, the Gandhians, the Socialists, the

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capitalists as well as the Communists (barring brief sectarian phases), were all more or less agreed on the following agenda: a multi-pronged strategy of economic development based on self-reliance; rapid industrialization based on import-substitution, including of capital goods industries; prevention of imperialist or foreign capital domination; land reforms involving tenancy reforms, abolition of zamindari, introduction of cooperatives, especially service cooperatives, for marketing, credit, etc., growth to be attempted along with equity, i.e., the growth model was to be reformist with a welfare, pro-poor orientation; positive discrimination or reservation, for a period, in favour of the most oppressed in Indian society, the Scheduled Castes and Tribes; the state to play a central role in promoting economic development, including through direct state participation in the production process, i.e., through the public sector, and so on.

Most important, there was agreement that India was to make this unique attempt at planned rapid industrialization within a democratic and civil libertarian framework. All the industrialized countries of the world did not have democracy and civil liberties during the initial period of their transition to industrialism or period of 'primitive accumulation'. Nehru and others including the capitalists were acutely aware that they had chosen an uncharted path. Yet, they were committed to it. Nobody in India ever argued for a variant of the model followed in parts of Latin America, East Asia, etc., where an authoritarian government in partnership with the capitalists would push through a process of rapid development in a hothouse fashion. It is this consensus, a product of the nature of the national movement in India, which enabled India, virtually alone among the post-colonial developing nations, to build, retain and nurture a functioning democracy.

Planning and the Public Sector

As early as the late nineteenth century, in the economic thinking of the early nationalists such as M.G. Ranade and Dadabhai Naoroji, the state was assigned a critical role in the economic development of India. This trend of seeking state intervention and not leaving economic forces entirely to the market got further crystallized and acquired widespread acceptance in the inter-war period, partly due to the influence of Keynesian economic ideas, the experience of the New Deal in the US and the Soviet experiment. In 1934, N.R. Sarkar, the president of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), the leading organization of Indian capitalists, proclaimed: 'The days of undiluted laissez-faire are gone for ever.' Voicing the views of the leadership of the capitalist class, he added that, for a backward country like India, a comprehensive plan of economic development covering all aspects of the economy, agriculture, industry, power, banking, finance, and so on, chalked out and coordinated by a high-powered 'National Planning Commission', was essential for India to make a structural break with the past and achieve her full growth potential. In 1938, under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru, the greatest champion of planned economic development for India, the National Planning Committee (NPC) was set up, which through its deliberations over the next decade, drew up a comprehensive plan of development, its various subcommittees producing twenty-nine volumes of recommendations.

Apart from the general recognition of the need for state planning, there was a wide consensus emerging around the notion that the role of the state would not only involve the proper use of fiscal, monetary and other instruments of economic policy and state control and supervision over the growth process, but would also have to include a certain amount of direct participation in the production process through the public sector. The famous Karachi Resolution of Congress in 1931 (as amended by the AICC) envisaged that 'the State shall own or control key industries and services, mineral resources, railways, waterways, shipping and other means of public transport'. Indian business leaders were also, along with Nehru and the NPC, among the early proponents of the public sector and partial nationalization. The critical reason for business support to the public sector was elaborated in the *Plan of Economic Development for India*, popularly called the Bombay Plan, authored by business leaders in 1945. The Bombay Plan saw the key cause of India's dependence on the advanced countries to be the absence of an indigenous capital goods industry. Anticipating a basic element of the Second Plan strategy, the Bombay Plan declared, 'We consider it essential that this lack (of capital goods industries) should be remedied in as short a time as

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possible. Apart from its importance as a means of quickening the pace of industrial development in India, it would have the effect of ultimately reducing our dependence on foreign countries for the plant and machinery required by us and, consequently, of reducing our requirement of external finance.' It was felt that in the development of capital goods industries and other basic and heavy industries, which required huge finances and had a long time lag for returns, the public sector would have to play a critical role. While Nehru and the left nationalists on the one hand and the capitalists on the other were agreed on this issue of the need for the public sector to reduce external dependence, they differed on its scope and extent. The former saw planning and the public sector as a step in the socialist direction, whereas the latter saw it as an instrument of promoting independent capitalism and of pre-empting socialism by helping combine equity with growth. This tension between the two approaches was to persist for some time, particularly in the early years.

In 1947, for example, when the Economic Programme Committee appointed by the AICC and headed by Jawaharlal Nehru not only laid down the areas, such as defence, key industries and public utilities which were to be started under the public sector but also added that 'in respect of existing undertakings the process of *transfer from private to public ownership should commence after a period of five years*', the capitalists were alarmed and howls of protest ensued. Signs of accommodation were seen in the 1948 Industrial Policy Resolution (IPR) which, while delineating specific areas for the public and the private sectors, added that the question of nationalizing any existing industry would be reviewed after ten years and dealt with on the basis of circumstances prevailing at that time. Even after the Indian parliament in December 1954 accepted 'the socialist pattern of society as the objective of social and economic policy' and Congress in its Avadi session (1955) elaborated the sharp leftward swing on these lines, the 1956 IPR and the Second Plan, while considerably expanding the scope of the public sector, made no mention of nationalizing existing industries. In fact, the model projected was of a 'mixed economy' where the public and the private sectors were not only to coexist but were to be complementary to each other and the private sector was to be encouraged to grow with as much freedom as possible within the broad objectives of the national plan. It is another matter that the great emphasis on heavy and capital goods industries in the Second Plan by itself led to a major shift towards the public sector as these were areas which, it was commonly agreed, could be basically developed by this sector.

It may be noted that Nehru refused to push his own ideological positions beyond a point, much to the disappointment of sections of the left, still under the influence of a Stalinist type of orthodox Marxism or, 'Stalin-Marxism'. In the evolution of Nehru's thought, from as early as the late 1930s, socialism had become inseparable from democracy. Therefore, any step in that direction, such as planning and the public sector, had to be introduced in a democratic manner, capable of carrying society along in the effort. Planning for Nehru had to be *consensual*, and not a *command* performance, even if it meant toning down many of his objectives.

This was the perspective with which the Planning Commission (established on 15 March 1950) functioned, despite the enormous *de facto* power it exercised with Nehru himself as its chairperson. The First Plan (1951-56) essentially tried to complete projects at hand and to meet the immediate crisis situation following the end of the war. Independence had come along with the dislocation caused by Partition, including the massive problem of refugees resulting from the largest mass migration in history in the space of a few years. It is with the Second Plan (1956-61) that the celebrated Nehru—Mahalanobis (Professor P.C. Mahalanobis played a leading role in drafting the Second Plan) strategy of development was put into practice and it was continued in the Third Plan (1961-66). A basic element of this strategy was the rapid development of heavy and capital goods industries in India, mainly in the public sector. (Three steel plants were set up in the public sector within the Second Plan period.) Import substitution in this area was seen as an imperative not only because it was thought to be critical for self-reliance and reduction of external dependence but also because it was assumed that Indian exports could not grow fast enough to enable the import of the necessary capital goods and machinery—an export pessimism which has been criticized in later years, though it was quite commonly accepted at that time. The model also saw some foreign aid and investment as essential in the initial phase to finance the massive step-up in investment though

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the objective was to do away with this need as soon as possible by rapidly increasing domestic savings. (In fact, in the initial years after independence, Nehru had tried to woo foreign investments into India, much to the chagrin of, as yet not too confident, Indian capitalists.)

Another critical element of the Nehru-Mahalanobis strategy was the emphasis on growth with equity. Hence, the issue of concentration and distribution in industry and agriculture was given a lot of attention though perhaps not with commensurate success. It may be added that the strategy did not posit equity against growth but assumed that higher growth enabled higher levels of equity and was critical for meeting the challenge of poverty; utmost attention was therefore given to rapid growth.

State supervision of development along planned lines, dividing activity between the public and the private sectors, preventing rise of concentration and monopoly, protecting small industry, ensuring regional balance, canalizing resources according to planned priorities and targets, etc.—all this involved the setting up of an elaborate and complicated system of controls and industrial licensing, which was done through the Industries Development and Regulation Act (IDRA) of 1951. Further, the balance of payments crisis and acute shortage of foreign exchange that occurred in 1956-57, at the very start of the Second Plan, led to the imposition of stringent import and foreign exchange controls. The seeds of the Kafkaesque web of licence quota rules and regulations were thus laid and in later years it was found that it was not easy to dismantle a system that had acquired a vicious stranglehold over the Indian economy. The bureaucracy-politician nexus and certain sections of business that were beneficiaries of the system resisted such a change.

Achievements

Considerable progress on several fronts was made during the first phase of the development effort, spanning the first three Five-Year Plans, i.e., by the mid-1960s. The overall economy performed impressively compared to the colonial period. India's national income or Gross National Product (GNP) grew at an average rate of about 4 per cent per annum, between 1951 and 1964—65 excluding the last year of the Third Plan, i.e., 1965-66, which saw an unprecedented drought and a war). This was roughly four times the rate of growth achieved during the last half century of colonial rule. The rate of growth achieved by India after independence compared favourably with the rates achieved by the advanced countries at a comparable stage, i.e., during their early development. To quote eminent economist Professor K.N. Raj:

Japan is generally believed to be a country which grew rapidly in the latter part of the 19th and the first quarter of the 20th century; yet the rate of growth of national income in Japan was slightly less than 3 per cent per annum in the period 1893-1912 and did not go up to more than 4 per cent per annum even in the following decade. Judged by criteria such as these the growth rate achieved in India in the last decade and a half (1950-65) is certainly a matter for some satisfaction.

Stepping up the rate of growth required a substantial increase in the investment rate. An important achievement in this period was the rise in the savings and investment rates. On the basis of rather rudimentary data, the draft outline of the Fourth Plan estimated that domestic savings and total investment in the Indian economy were both 5.5 per cent of national income in 1950-51, rising to savings of 10.5 per cent and investment of 14 per cent in 1965-66. The gap between domestic savings and investment in later years was met partly by liquidating the foreign exchange reserves (mainly the huge sterling balances, about Rs 16 billion, that England owed India in 1947, because of the forced credit England had extracted from India during the war) and partly through foreign borrowing and aid. It has been estimated that the total investment in 1965-66 was nearly five times the 1951-52 level in nominal terms and more than three times in real terms.

11.3.1 Agrarian Reforms

On the agrarian front, the comprehensive land reform measures initiated soon after independence, the setting up of a massive network for agricultural extension and community development work at the village level, the large infrastructural investment in irrigation, power, agricultural research, and so on, had created the conditions for considerable agricultural growth in this period. During

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the first three Plans (again leaving out 1965-66), Indian agriculture grew at an annual rate of over 3 per cent, a growth rate 7.5 times higher than that achieved during the last half century or so of the colonial period. The growth rates achieved compared very favourably with what was achieved by other countries in a comparable situation, say China or Japan. For example, Japan achieved a growth rate of less than 2.5 per cent between 1878 and 1912 and an even lower growth rate till 1937. What was particularly creditable was that India, unlike most other countries (such as China, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Soviet Union, Britain, etc.) achieved its land reforms and agricultural growth in the context of civil liberties and a modern democratic structure. However, the commendable agricultural growth achieved during this period was hot sufficient to meet the growing demand of agricultural produce, necessitating increasing imports of foodgrains throughout the first three Plans. Since 1956, India had to rely heavily on food imports from the US under the controversial PL-480 scheme. It was only after the process of the Green Revolution took off, since the late sixties, that this dependence on imports ceased.

Industry, during the first three Plans, grew even more rapidly than agriculture, at a compounded growth rate of 7.1 per cent per annum between 1951 and 1965. The industrial growth was based on rapid import substitution, initially, of consumer goods and particularly, since the Second Plan, of capital goods and intermediate goods. The emphasis on the latter since the Second Plan was reflected in the fact that 70 per cent of Plan expenditure on industry went to the metal, machinery and chemical industries in the Second Plan and 80 per cent in the Third Plan. Consequently, 'the *three-fold* increase in aggregate index of industrial production between 1951 and 1969 was the result of a 70 per cent increase in consumer goods industries, a *quadrupling* of the intermediate goods production and a *tenfold increase* in the output of capital goods,' a stupendous growth of the capital goods sector by any standards. Tables 11.1 and 11.2 reflect this growth pattern (over a longer period) in which intermediate and capital goods industries like basic metals, chemicals, transport equipment and electrical and non-electrical machinery grew very rapidly and much faster than consumer goods industries like textiles, particularly between 1951 and 1971.

Table 11.1: Indices of Industrial Production in India: 1951-1979

1960 = 100 (for 1951-1971) and 1970 = 100 (for 1978-79)

Industrial Group	1951	1961	1971	1978-79
General	55	109	153	186
Textiles	80	103	106	110
Basic Metals	47	119	209	144
Machinery	22	121	373	208
Electrical Machinery	26	110	405	162

Source: India: A Reference Annual, GOI, *New Delhi*, 1980, *p*. 312, *cited in* B.L.C. *Jobnson,* Development in South Asia, *Harmondsworth*, 1983, *p*. 136.

This growth pattern went a long way in reducing India's near-total dependence on the advanced countries for basic goods and capital equipment, which was necessary for investment or creation of new capacity. At independence, to make any capital investment, virtually the entire equipment had to be imported. For example, in 1950, India met 89.8 per cent of its needs for even machine tools through imports. In contrast to this, the share of imported equipment in the total fixed investment in the form of equipment in India had come down to 43 per cent in 1960 and a mere 9 per cent in 1974, whereas the value of the fixed investment in India increased by about two and a half times over this period. In other words, by the mid-1970s, India could meet indigenously more than 90 per cent of her equipment requirements for maintaining her rate of investment. This was a major achievement, and it considerably increased India's autonomy from the advanced countries in determining her own rate of capital accumulation or

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Table 11.2: Rates of Growth in Indian Manufacturing: 195-52 to 1982-83 (per cent)

Industry Group	1951-52 to 1959-60	1960-61 to 1969-70	1970-71 to 1982-83
Textiles	2.98	0.70	5.36
Rubber, Petroleum and Plastic Products	17.54	10.40	3.82
Chemical Products	7.90	8.39	5.76
Basic Metal and Alloys	6.52	7.01	5.46
Non-electrical Machinery	21.02	17.00	16.09
Electrical Machinery	17.64	14.01	6.17
Transport Equipment	14.83	7.66	3.34

Estimates are trend growth rates based in semi-log functions and relate to the factory sector of Indian manufacturing.

Source: Selected from Sukhamoy Chakravarty, Development Planning: The Indian Experience, *Delhi*, 1987, *Table* 13, *p*. 111.

growth. It was this, and the food security India was able to achieve once the process of the Green Revolution took off, which explains India's ability to retain an independent foreign policy, by withstanding enormous external pressures.

Dependence on external resources, foreign aid or foreign private investment, was kept quite low. Net aid utilized by India was only 0.4 per cent of Net National Product at factor cost during the First Plan, rising to 2.25 and 3.17 per cent during the Second and Third Plan and again falling drastically since the end-1960s. Also, external resources came mainly as official aid, and according to one estimate net aid and net foreign private investment came in the ratio of 6:1 between 1948 and 1961. More than 71 per cent of the foreign aid in the First Plan was used for wheat loans, whereas in the Second and Third Plans foreign aid was used overwhelmingly, nearly 98 per cent, to fund iron and steel projects and general industrial development, transport and communication and power. Overall, in the first three Plans, industry, transport and power utilized about 95 per cent of the foreign aid. (The counterpart funds generated by the PL-480 food aid from the US were allocated to the above areas.) Soviet aid came in the Second Plan priority areas, i.e., core and basic industries and that too in the public sector.

The weight of the public sector in the overall economy increased rapidly, and it captured the 'commanding heights' of the economy, further marginalizing the presence of an already small foreign sector. (In India, unlike certain Latin American countries, the public sector did not grow in collaboration with foreign private capital or multinational corporations.) The total paid-up capital in government companies as a proportion of the total paid-up capital in the entire corporate sector rose from 3.4 per cent in 1951 to 30 per cent in 1961. In the early 1970s the proportion had risen to about 50 per cent and by 1978 it had reached a whopping 75 per cent.

Apart from industry and agriculture, the early planners gave utmost priority to the development of infrastructure, including education and health, areas greatly neglected in the colonial past. The average actual Plan expenditure on transport and communication during each of the first three Plans was about Rs 13 billion, accounting for an average of about 26 per cent of the total Plan expenditure in each Plan. The corresponding figures for social/community services and power were Rs 9.4 billion and 19.9 per cent and Rs 6.16 billion and 10.6 per cent respectively. Over time, Plan investment in these areas (and in irrigation) was to prove critical both in stepping up private investment and improving its productivity, as was seen so clearly in the case of agriculture with the coming in of the Green Revolution.

Table 11.3 shows the rapid per capita increase in the availability of some of the infrastructural and social benefits as they grew several times faster than the population. In 1965-66, as compared to 1950-51, installed capacity of electricity was 4.5 times higher, the number of town and villages electrified was 14 times higher, hospital beds 2.5 times higher, enrolment in schools was a little

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less than three times higher and, very importantly, admission capacity in technical education (engineering and technology) at the degree and diploma levels was higher by 6 and 8.5 times respectively. The population had increased only by a little over one-third during the same period.

Jawaharlal Nehru and the early Indian planners were acutely aware of India's backwardness in science and technology (an area left consciously barren in the colonial period) and therefore made massive efforts to overcome this shortcoming. Nehru's 'temples of modern (secular) India' consisted not only of steel and power

Table 11.3 Growth in Infrastructure, Health and Education

Item	Unit	1950-51	1960-61	1965-66	Percentage change between 1950-51 and 1965-66
Electricity: Installed capacity	Million KW.	2.3	5.6	10.2	393.5
Towns and villages electrified	'000	3.7	24.2	52.3	1,313.5
Railways: Freight carried	Million tonnes	93	156	205	120.4
Surfaced roads	'000 *km*	156	235	284	82.0
Hospital beds	'000	113	186	300	165.5
Enrolment in schools	Million	23.5	44.7	67.7	188.1
Technical Education: Engineering and technology (admission capacity)					
(*i*) Degree level	1000	4.1	13.8	24.7	502.4
(*ii*) Diploma level	1000	5.9	25.8	49.9	745.8
Population	Millions	357	430	490	37.3

Source: *J. Bhagwati and P. Desai*, India: Planning for Industrialisation, *London*, 1970, p. 74.

plants, irrigation dams, etc., but included institutions of higher learning, particularly in the scientific field. During the First Plan itself, high-powered national laboratories and institutes were set up by the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research for conducting fundamental and applied research in each of the following areas: physics, chemistry, fuel, glass and ceramics, food technology, drugs, electro-chemistry, roads, leather and building. In 1948 the Atomic Energy Commission was set up, laying the foundations of the creditable advances India was to make in the sphere of nuclear science and related areas. This was in addition to the unprecedented increase in the educational opportunities in science and technology in the universities and institutes. National expenditure on scientific research and development kept growing rapidly with each Plan. For example, it increased from Rs. 10 million in 1949 to Rs 4.5 billion in 1977. Over roughly the same period India's scientific and technical manpower increased more than 12 times from 190, 000 to 2.32 million. A spectacular growth by any standards, placing India, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, as the second country in the world in terms of the absolute size of scientific and technical manpower. This was a major achievement despite the fact that the quality of education

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in general, and particularly in the university system, tended to deteriorate over time and there was massive brain drain, mainly to the US, of a significant part of the best talent produced in the country. Yet, it is an achievement of considerable significance, as increasingly today 'knowledge' is becoming the key factor of production and there is a global awareness of the necessity to focus on education and human resource development. That India can even think of participating in the globalization process in today's world of high technology, with any degree of competitiveness and equality, is largely due to the spadework done since independence, particularly the great emphasis laid on human resource development in the sphere of science and technology.

In the enthusiasm to support the very necessary economic reforms being undertaken by India today (since 1991), it has become fashionable in some circles to run down the economic achievements of the earlier periods, particularly the Nehruvian era. Nothing could be more short-sighted and a historical. It is the Nehruvian era that created the basic physical and human infrastructure, which was a precondition for independent modern development. Today's possibilities are a function of the achievements of the earlier period; they have not arisen despite them.

Also, the Nehruvian phase has to be seen in the global historical context of that period. As Dr Manmohan Singh, India's prime minister and brilliant economist, who as finance minister inaugurated the structural adjustment programme for India in 1991, was to acknowledge: 'In 1960, if you had asked anybody which country would be on top of the league of the third world in 1996 or 1997, India was considered to be the front runner. There was a consensus among a wide variety of economists, including prominent ones in the West—W.W. Rostow, Rosenstein-Rodan, Wilfred Mandelbaum, George Rosen, Ian Little, Brian Reddaway to name just a few—that the direction of the Indian planning effort was a very positive one with great potential. (It was common to eulogize the democratic Indian path as opposed to the model followed by totalitarian China.) There was, in fact, a dialectical relationship between the evolution of contemporary development theory and the Indian experience.

Surely, over time, changes needed to be made, learning from the experience of this novel effort to bring about industrial transformation in the modern (mid-twentieth century) environment of a post-colonial backward country, while fully maintaining a functioning democracy. Clearly, some of the policy instruments—industrial licensing, price and distribution controls, import restrictions shielding inefficient domestic producers, dependence on an increasingly inefficient public sector, etc.—needed to be given up or amended. Also, changes in the nature of world capitalism called for novel ways of seeking economic opportunity, which, *inter alia*, involved a greater opening up to the world economy. However, the possibility of such a change got short-circuited by a series of crises faced by India in the mid-1960s and changes in the international and internal political situation which forced her to move further in a protectionist, inward-looking and dirigiste direction.

11.4 Summary

- The Indian constitution thus formally confers an enormous range of powers on the President, but these are to be exercised in accordance with the advice of the cabinet. But the President is by no means a figurehead and the political situation may provide many occasions for an activist President.
- However, even in otherwise stable situations, it has happened that presidents have, on occasion, either because of personal ambition or out of a sense of duty to the constitution, exercised discretionary power.
- The 44th Amendment has given him the authority to ask the council of ministers to reconsider its advice, but if the council reiterates its position, the President must accept the advice.
- In other- areas, the powers of the President are quite clearly defined. When a bill is presented to him, under Article 111, he may withhold his assent and, if he desires, return it to parliament for reconsideration. If both houses again pass it and send it back to him, he is obliged to give his assent. In the case of money bills, however, he has no discretion. In any case, he has no absolute power of veto.

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- The council of ministers is collectively responsible to the Lok Sabha and has to resign as soon as it loses the confidence of the Lok Sabha.
- The prime minister is, in Nehru's words, the 'linchpin of Government'. Almost all the powers formally vested in the President are in fact exercised by the prime minister, who is the link between, the President, the cabinet, and, the parliament.
- Indira Gandhi was also so powerful after her election victory and the Bangladesh war in 1971 that the prime minister's position within the political system acquired enormous weight. The prime minister has full powers to choose ministers as well as recommend their dismissal. This gives the prime minister enormous powers of patronage.
- The Indian parliament has two houses—the upper house being called the Rajya Sabha or the Council of States and the lower house the Lok Sabha or the House of the People. The Rajya Sabha has 250 members, of whom 238 are elected by elected members of the state legislative assemblies or Vidhan Sabhas via a system of proportional representation by means of single transferable vote, while another 12 are nominated by the President.
- The Lok Sabha is directly elected by the people for five years. It may be dissolved before its term is over. In case an Emergency is in force, the Lok Sabha can extend its term for one year at a time but not beyond six months after the Emergency has ended. In practice, only once has the Lok Sabha's term been extended for a year in 1976 when prime minister Indira Gandhi had declared the Emergency.
- The constitution had envisaged reservations as a short-term measure lasting ten years; no government has ever seriously considered not extending them every ten years, and it is now nearly fifty years! On the contrary, demands for and acceptance of reservation have only increased.
- The maximum number of seats in the Lok Sabha is 552. Of these, 550 represent territorial constituencies, and two go to nominated members from the Anglo-Indian community. Members must be at least twenty-five years of age. The Lok Sabha is chaired by the speaker, and in his absence by the deputy speaker, both of whom are elected by members from amongst themselves.
- The parliament has extensive legislative powers and bills may be introduced in any house. To become law, bills must be passed by both houses, and then receive presidential assent.
- The constitution declares India to be a sovereign, socialist, secular and democratic republic. Even though the terms secular (and socialist) were added only by the 42nd Amendment in 1976, the spirit embodying the constitution was secular.
- Nehru's commitment to secularism was unsurpassed and all-pervasive. Communalism went against his grain, and he fought it vigorously throughout his life. He helped secularism acquire deep roots among the Indian people; and he prevented the burgeoning forth of communalism when conditions were favourable for it.
- Nehru was one of the first to try to understand the socio-economic roots of communalism, and he came to believe that it was primarily a weapon of reaction, even though its social base was formed by the middle classes.
- a major lacuna in Nehru's approach to the problem of communalism, which can be seen as a certain economistic, deterministic and reductionist bias. Believing that planning and economic development and the spread of education, science and technology would automatically weaken communal thinking and help form a secular consciousness, he ignored the need for struggle against communalism as an ideology.
- The entrenchment of democracy—an achievement which has endured so that it is now taken for granted. The process had begun with the framing of the constitution after 1947 and its promulgation on 26 January 1950. Democracy took a giant step forward with the first general election held in 1951-52 over a four-month period.

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- Civil liberties were put on a firm footing with the Press having free play, even when it criticized the government severely. The independence of the courts was carefully nurtured, even when they turned down an important piece of popular legislation, namely, agrarian reform.
- He tried to make it a major forum for expression of public opinion, and made it a point to sit through the Question Hour and to attend parliamentary debates. The Opposition too played its part by respecting parliament and irs procedures, functioning without fear in its portals, and keeping the standard of parliamentary debates at a high level.
- Federalism, provided for in the constitution, also was established as a firm feature of Indian polity during the Nehru years, with a genuine devolution of power to the states. Respecting the states' autonomy, Nehru would not impose decisions on the state governments or interfere with their policies, though he took care to inform them of his own thinking and occasionally advise or even insist on their acceptance of a particular policy.
- A major reason that led to the development of harmonious relations between the Centre and the states and which kept in check centrifugal forces was the fact that the same party ruled in both places. The leading role of the Centre was also facilitated by the fact that some of the tallest men and women in Indian politics held office in the cabinet as well as the Congress Working Committee.
- Nehru and other leaders were also keen to ensure that Indian social organization underwent change, leading to the social liberation of the hitherto socially backward and suppressed sections of society. As Nehru put it in 1956: 'We have not only striven for and achieved a political revolution, not only are we striving hard for an economic revolution but . . . we are equally intent on social revolution; only by way of advance on these three separate lines and their integration into one great whole, will the people of India progress.'
- The founding fathers were fully aware of the need for better and wider education as an instrument of social and economic progress, equalization of opportunity and the building up of a democratic society. This was all the more urgent because in 1951 only 16.6 per cent of the total population was literate and the percentage was much lower, being only 6 per cent, in the case of rural families.
- The Nehru years witnessed rapid expansion of education, especially in the case of girls. Between 1951 and 1961 school enrolment doubled for boys and tripled for girls. From 1950-51 to 1965-66 the number of boys enrolled in classes I to V increased from 13.77 million to 32.18 million.
- At the time of independence there were eighteen universities with a total student enrolment of nearly 300,000. By 1964, the number of universities had increased to fifty-four, the number of colleges to about 2,500 and the number of undergraduate and postgraduate students, excluding intermediate students, to 613,000. The number of girls students increased six-fold and constituted 22 per cent of the total.
- Two major programmes for rural uplift, namely, the Community Development programme and Panchayati Raj, were introduced in 1952 and 1959. They were to lay the foundations of the welfare state in the villages. Though designed for the sake of agricultural development, they had more of a welfare content; their basic purpose was to change the face of rural India, to improve the quality of life of the people.
- The Community Development programme was instituted on a limited scale in 1952 covering 55 development blocks, each block consisting of about 100 villages with a population of 60,000 to 70,000.
- The weaknesses of the programme had come to be known as early as 1957 when the Balwantrai Mehta Committee, asked to evaluate it, had strongly criticized its bureaucratization and its lack of popular involvement. As a remedy, the Committee recommended the democratic decentralization of the rural and district development administration.

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- The new system, which came to be known as Panchayati Raj and was implemented in various states from 1959, was to consist of a three-tier, directly elected village or gram panchayats, and indirectly elected block-level panchayat samitis and district-level zilla parishads.
- In 1938, under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru, the greatest champion of planned economic development for India, the National Planning Committee (NPC) was set up, which through its deliberations over the next decade, drew up a comprehensive plan of development, its various subcommittees producing twenty-nine volumes of recommendations.
- The famous Karachi Resolution of Congress in 1931 (as amended by the AICC) envisaged that 'the State shall own or control key industries and services, mineral resources, railways, waterways, shipping and other means of public transport'. Indian business leaders were also, along with Nehru and the NPC, among the early proponents of the public sector and partial nationalization.
- In 1947, for example, when the Economic Programme Committee appointed by the AICC and headed by Jawaharlal Nehru not only laid down the areas, such as defence, key industries and public utilities which were to be started under the public sector but also added that 'in respect of existing undertakings the process of *transfer from private to public ownership should commence after a period of five years*'.
- Even after the Indian parliament in December 1954 accepted 'the socialist pattern of society as the objective of social and economic policy'.
- This was the perspective with which the Planning Commission (established on 15 March 1950) functioned, despite the enormous *de facto* power it exercised with Nehru himself as its chairperson. The First Plan (1951-56) essentially tried to complete projects at hand and to meet the immediate crisis situation following the end of the war.
- It is with the Second Plan (1956-61) that the celebrated Nehru—Mahalanobis (Professor P.C. Mahalanobis played a leading role in drafting the Second Plan) strategy of development was put into practice and it was continued in the Third Plan (1961-66).
- Another critical element of the Nehru-Mahalanobis strategy was the emphasis on growth with equity. Hence, the issue of concentration and distribution in industry and agriculture was given a lot of attention though perhaps not with commensurate success.
- State supervision of development along planned lines, dividing activity between the public and the private sectors, preventing rise of concentration and monopoly, protecting small industry, ensuring regional balance, canalizing resources according to planned priorities and targets, etc.—all this involved the setting up of an elaborate and complicated system of controls and industrial licensing, which was done through the Industries Development and Regulation Act (IDRA) of 1951.
- What was particularly creditable was that India, unlike most other countries (such as China, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Soviet Union, Britain, etc.) achieved its land reforms and agricultural growth in the context of civil liberties and a modern democratic structure. However, the commendable agricultural growth achieved during this period was hot sufficient to meet the growing demand of agricultural produce, necessitating increasing imports of foodgrains throughout the first three Plans.

11.5 Key-Words

1. Impeachment : To make an accusation against a formal document charging a public official with mis conduct in office.
2. Proportional Representation : An electoral system in which parties gain seats in proportion to the number of votes cast for them.

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11.6 Review Questions

1. Discuss the parliamentary arrangement of India.
2. What do you mean by Secular, Democratic Republic.
3. What is the philosophy of Nehru on Developed Socialist society? Discuss.
4. Explain the planning and State-Controlled Industrialisation.
5. Briefly describe the agrarian reforms upto 1964. by the Government.

Answers: Self-Assessment

(*i*) (*a*) (*ii*) (*c*) (*iii*) (*d*) (*iv*) (*b*) (*v*) (*b*)

11.7 Further Readings

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Notes

Unit 12: Border Conflict with China

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Objectives

After studying this unit students will be able to:

- Discuss Border Conflict with China

Introduction

China and its neighbours have long been involved in a number of border disputes, many of them dating back to the end of World War II or the Civil War that followed. Asserting Chinese sovereignty over borderlands in contention—everywhere from Tibet to Taiwan to the South China Sea—has long been the top priority for Chinese nationalists, an obsession that overrides all other concerns.

Tensions over those conflicts rose sharply in the late summer of 2010, complicating China's attempts to present the country's rise as a booj for the whole region. The disputes have also handed the United States an opportunity to reassert itself—one the Obama administration has been keen to take advantage of, potentially creating wedges between China and its neighbors.

In the 1962 Sino-Indian War, China seized a Switzerland-sized area, Aksai Chin (Aksayqin), and overran Arunachal Pradesh (an Indian state the size of Austria). There are also other, smaller pockets of disputed area. The PRC withdrew from virtually all of Arunachal Pradesh to the Line of Actual Control (LAC), which approximates the McMahon Line that is found in a 1914 agreement initialed by British, Tibetan, and Chinese representatives. Chinese and Indian forces clashed in the Sumdorong Chu valley of Arunachal Pradesh in 1986-87. Relations began to thaw in 1988.

On 7th September, 1993, China and India signed an accord to reduce tensions along their border and to respect the LAC. During November, 1996, China and India agreed to delimit the LAC and institute confidence-building measures (CBMs) along the frontier. The agreement pledged nonaggression, prior notification of large troop movements, a 10 km no-fly zone for combat aircraft, and exchange of maps to resolve disagreements about the precise location of the LAC. In August 1997 the sides ratified the CBM agreement. There seems to have been little substantive progress, except for a series of high-level visits. The most recent, on 27th April, was the first visit by a PRC Chief of Staff to India. However, two weeks before the visit the new Indian Defense Minister, George Fernandes, accused the PRC of repeated violations of Indian territory, including the construction of a helipad on "Indian" territory in the disputed zone, and of aiding Pakistan's nuclear and missile programs. On 3rd May he publicly labeled China as India's number one threat and alleged that the PRC was stockpiling nuclear weapons in Tibet, expanding naval activity off the Burmese coast, and conducting surveillance against India from Burma's Coco Islands. After the visit of General Fu Quanyou and PRC protests, Fernandes said that his characterisation of China as India's troops along the frontier with China would not be reduced. Such a statement calls into question part of the agreed CBMs. China and India have yet to address their fundamental and

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very large land boundary disputes. Moreover, their bilateral relations are complicated by the issues of Tibet (Xizang), Sikkim, and Kashmir. India plays host to the Dalai Lama and a large number of tibetan refugees. They present an implicit threat to Chinese control of Tibet, which it invaded in 1950. On its maps, the PRC continues to portray Sikkim, which was absorbed by India in 1974, as an independent country. In addition to the Aksai Chin, China and India dispute another section of Kashmir (the area west of Aksai Chin).

12.1 Border Conflict with China

India adopted a policy of friendship towards China from the very beginning. The Congress had been sympathetic to China's struggle against imperialism and had sent a medical mission to China in the 1930s as well as given a call for boycott of Japanese goods in protest against Japanese occupation of China. India was the first to recognize the new People's Republic of China on 1st January 1950. Nehru had great hopes that the two countries with their common experience of suffering at the hands of colonial powers and common problems of poverty and underdevelopment would join hands to give Asia its due place in the world. Nehru pressed for representation for Communist China in the UN Security Council, did not support the US position in the Korean war, and tried his best to bring about a settlement in Korea. In 1950, when China, occupied Tibet, India was unhappy that it had not been taken into confidence, but did not question China's rights over Tibet since at many times in Chinese history Tibet had been subjugated by China. In 1954, India and China signed a treaty in which India recognized China's rights over Tibet and the two countries agreed to be governed in their mutual relations by the principles of Panch Sheel. Differences over border delineation were discussed at this time but China maintained that it had not yet studied the old Kuomintang maps and these could be sorted out later.

Relations continued to be close and Nehru went to great lengths to project China and Chou En-lai at the Bandung Conference. In 1959, however, there was a big revolt in Tibet and the Dalai Lama fled Tibet along with thousands of refugees. He was given asylum in India but not allowed to set up a government-in-exile and dissuaded from carrying on political activities. Nevertheless, the Chinese were unhappy. Soon after, in October 1959, the Chinese opened fire on an Indian patrol near the Kongka pass in Ladakh, killing five Indian policemen and capturing a dozen others. Letters were exchanged between the two governments, but a common ground did not emerge. Then, Chou En-lai was invited for talks to Delhi in April 1960, but not much headway could be made and it was decided to let officials sort out the details first.

12.2 The 1962 Chinese Attack

On 8 September 1962, Chinese forces attacked the Thagla ridge and dislodged Indian troops, but this was taken as a minor incident. Nehru went off to London for a conference and after returning home once again left for Colombo on 12 October. A week later, the Chinese army launched a massive attack and overran Indian posts in the eastern sector in NEFA or what is now Arunachal Pradesh, The Indian army commander in NEFA fled without any effort at resistance leaving the door wide open for China to walk in. In the western sector, on 20 October, thirteen forward posts were captured by the Chinese in the Galwan valley, and the Chushul airstrip threatened. There was a great outcry in the country and a feeling of panic about Chinese intentions. It was thought that the Chinese would come rushing in to the plains and occupy Assam, and perhaps other parts as well. Nehru wrote two letters to President Kennedy on 9 November, describing the situation as 'really desperate' and asking for wide-ranging military help. He also sought Britain's assistance. Twenty-four hours later, the Chinese declared a unilateral withdrawal and, as unpredictably as it had appeared, the Chinese dragon disappeared from sight, leaving behind a heartbroken friend and a confused and disoriented people.

The Aftermath

India took a long time to recover from the blow to its self-respect, and perhaps it was only the victory over Pakistan in the Bangladesh war, in which China and the US were also supporting Pakistan, that

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restored the sense of self-worth. Nehru never really recovered from the blow, and his death in May 1964 was most likely hastened by it. Worse, at the pinnacle of his outstanding career, he had to face attacks from political opponents who would never have dared otherwise. He was forced to sacrifice Krishna Menon, his long-time associate and then Defence Minister. The policy of non-alignment, which he had nurtured with such care, seemed for a while unlikely to be able to withstand the body-blow delivered by a friend. The irony was that it was derailed by a Socialist country and not by a capitalist power. Right-wing forces and pro-West elements loudly criticized Nehru. They used the opportunity to block a constitutional amendment aimed at strengthening land ceiling legislation. The Third Plan was badly affected and resources had to be diverted for defence.

Did u know? The Congress lost three parliamentary by elections-in a row and Nehru faced in August 1963 the first noconfidence motion of his life.

India's relations with other countries were powerfully affected by the Chinese attack, as the 'China factor' loomed large in foreign policy. The US and the UK had responded positively with help in the crisis, so they could not be shrugged off once it receded.

He understood that the Chinese occupation of Tibet meant a common border with attendant conflicts. But he also saw that China could not think of expansionism as yet, as it had big problems to solve. After the revolt in Tibet, and the Dalai Lama's arrival, and the border clashes, he was well aware of the dangers, but what good would it have done to threaten China ? In an effort to checkmate the Chinese he did make diplomatic preparations, by moving closer to the Soviets. He had never bought the line that Communist China and Communist USSR would team up, and perhaps along with Indian Communists, threaten the Indian state. He did not believe that China was a tool in the hands of the Soviets, nor did he make the mistake of thinking that the Soviet Union would back Communist brothers against Indian friends, as many in India argued.

Nehru was shocked at the scale of the attack, as he had thought that there may be occassional border skirmishes here and there, but not an invasion of this nature. He erred in not anticipating the precise nature of the attack, rather than in the foreign policy he pursued. A further mistake was the panic in appealing to the US and UK for help, as next day the Chinese withdrew. Irresponsible attacks on Nehru by sections of the Press, the Opposition parties, and even members of his own party had led to this knee-jerk response.. The failure of nerve on the battlefield was compounded by that in the country at large with Nehru rather than the Chinese becoming the butt of attack! Sadly, the country showed an inability to face adversity stoically, with faith in its proven leaders, and instead fell into despair and mutual recrimination. To his credit, Nehru tried his best to retrieve the situation and get the country back to its bearings.

Most commentators are now agreed that India's defeat at China's hands in 1962 was not the result of Nehru's naive faith in Chinese friendship and Utopian pacifism and consequent neglect of India's defence preparedness. On the contrary, between 1949-50 and 1962, the strength of the Indian Armed Forces doubled from 280,000 to 550,000 and that of the Indian Air Force from seven combat squadrons in 1947 to nineteen by 1962. The war with Pakistan in 1965 was fought with the same equipment and no debacle occurred. Nehru was well aware and had been warning of the possibilities of border clashes with the Chinese since 1959. But neither the political nor the military leadership anticipated the precise nature of the Chinese attack, and were therefore taken by surprise. Apparently, the military leadership thought in terms of either border clashes or a full-scale war in the plains of Assam, but not about the possibility of a limited deep thrust and withdrawal. The Chief of Staff, General Thimayya, believed that a total war with China was unthinkable because China would have full Soviet support. He and other senior officers do not appear to have been aware of Sino-Soviet differences. Nor does he seem to have conceived of a role for the Air Force 'at a time when the Indian Air Force could have swept the skies over Arunachal Pradesh and Tibet without any opposition from the Chinese. (Nehru asked the US for an air cover without consulting his own Air Force.)

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The failure was also, it is felt, due to the lack of a proper system of higher defence command and management, and because there was no system of defence planning, and the structure of civil-military relations was flawed. The chiefs of staff were not integrated into the civilian policy-making structure, but remained theatre commanders preparing for the near-term future but not for the long-term future security environment. Despite Nehru's warnings since 1959, of trouble with China, much professional thought had not gone into the planning for a war in the Himalayas. It was a failure of logistics, of intelligence, or rather of analysis of intelligence, of coordination of different wings such as the army with the Air Force, etc. It was a failure of nerve on the part of the military commander, who had an excellent record and had been decorated earlier, but withdrew without a fight, though it is believed he could have held out for at least seven days. The Chinese, on their part, withdrew as quickly as they came, having achieved their objective of humiliating India by a quick but limited thrust deep into Indian territory. Again, the Indian side had failed to anticipate the Chinese withdrawal and had now begun planning to face a full-scale war in the plains of Assam.

Maxwell's theory of Indian aggressiveness is not treated seriously by most experts, as it is too obvious that India had no inkling, leave alone intentions, of provoking a conflict. Her prime minister and Defence Minister were out of the country, the chief of staff on leave, a senior commander on a cruise. What was India to gain from provoking a war anyway ? On the contrary, it can be shown that it was Chinese imperatives, of which Maxwell shows no awareness, that brought them to war, not Indian provocation. And the factors that propelled China in the direction of conflict were beyond Nehru's control.

Take Tibet. Every strong Chinese government had tried to integrate Tibet. But Tibet wanted independence. Nevertheless, Nehru accepted the Chinese position on Tibet in the 1954 Panch Sheel agreement without even getting a quid pro quo on the border, which was possibly a mistake. Only in 1959 did Chou Enlai claim territory in Ladakh and NEFA, this is in the wake of the Khampa revolt and the flight of the Dalai Lama to India with many refugees. China accused India of instigating the Dalai Lama and objected to the asylum. No Indian government could have refused asylum and India did not instigate the rebellion. Nehru did not allow a Tibetan government-in-exile, or any political activities. But he could not have prevented the Tibetan revolt!

Nor could Nehru succeed, despite his best efforts, in influencing US policy. The US refusal to accommodate China, her insistence that Formosa (later Taiwan) was the only legitimate China, which also meant that Communist China was denied a seat in the UN Security Council the attempt to checkmate her in Korea, and IndoChina, frustrated her and pushed her on the path to aggressive assertion. In fact, the US played no small role in making China paranoid about security and helping the extremist left elements to come to the fore in China.

The Chinese were also upset that Afro-Asian countries were following India's line of seeking friendship and assistance from both the USSR and the US, rather than the Chinese line of keeping a distance from both. By reducing India's stature, they could hope to have their line accepted.

Therefore, it is not at all unlikely that the Chinese attack on India had little to do with issues between India and China, but was a reaction to a feeling of isolation, abandonment and frustration. By attacking India, they may have wanted to topple Nehru or at least push India into the Western camp so that the USSR could have no illusions about Indian non-alignment and would have to rethink its policy of peaceful coexistence, which, the Chinese figured, was leading to their isolation. They failed on both counts. In fact, V.P. Dutt testifies that Deng Xiaoping said later to an Indian delegation of which he was a member that it was Khrushchev who was responsible for the 1962 war.

Thus, the causes of the 1962 attack were related more to China's own compulsions, that to anything that Nehru or India did or could have done. Not being able to get the recognition of the US, a UN seat, leadership of Afro-Asia, Soviet support on the nuclear issue or the border dispute with India, a leftward turn took place in Chinese politics. By humiliating India, it wanted to show that India's policy of peace and non-alignment was not feasible. Nor was the Soviet policy of peaceful coexistence. India would leave the policy of non-alignment under pressure and other countries of

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Asia and Africa would follow the Chinese lead. Thus, the cause of the Indian military humiliation could not be reduced to Indian foreign policy failure. It could 'only be characterized as one of those unforseeable random events of history.

If India's policy towards China was a failure, which other country's was a success ? The US did a complete volte-face in 1971, and the USSR began changing, at least after 1959.

The debacle of the India—China war in no way raises doubts on the correctness of Nehru's basic thrust in foreign policy. For example, non-alignment ensured that even in the India-China war, the US and the Soviet blocs were not ranged on opposite sides and India succeeded in getting greater or lesser sympathy from both. This was an unusual occurrence in the days of the Cold War. Secondly, Nehru had been right in pursuing a policy of friendship with China, even if it ended the way it did. Especially given the hostile relationship with Pakistan (which surfaced soon after independence with the conflict over Kashmir and grew into a serious threat when it was exacerbated by the US decision in 1954 to give military help to Pakistan), it was in India's interest to try its best to avoid having another hostile neighbour and thus be caught in a pincer movement. India's espousal of China's right to have a seat in the UN was not given up by Nehru even after the Indo-China war since he rightly believed that the Western powers' isolation of China only pushed China into becoming more irresponsible. Besides, as Nehru was most fond of pointing out, defence was not just a matter of weapons, it was also a function of economic development, of self-reliance; otherwise defence was only skin-deep. A newly independent poor country like India could have ill-afforded to divert her scarce resources into building up a massive military machine. On the contrary, by building up India's economic strength, Nehru enabled his successors to win impressive military victories.

Self-Assessment

Fill in the blanks:

1. ..... was the first country to recognize the new people's republic of China on 1st January 1950.
2. China occupied Tibet in ..... .
3. Dalai Lama was given asylum by India in ..... .
4. In October 1959, the Chinese opened fire on an Indian patrol near the ..... in Ladakh, killing five Indian policemen.
5. In the western sector, on 20 October ..... forward posts were captured by the Chinese in the Galwan valley.

12.3 Summary

- China and its neighbours have long been involved in a number of border disputes, many of them dating back to the end of World War II or the Civil War that followed. Asserting Chinese sovereignty over borderlands in contention—everywhere from Tibet to Taiwan to the South China Sea—has long been the top priority for Chinese nationalists, an obsession that overrides all other concerns.
- Tensions over those conflicts rose sharply in the late summer of 2010, complicating China's attempts to present the country's rise as a booj for the whole region. The disputes have also handed the United States an opportunity to reassert itself—one the Obama administration has been keen to take advantage of, potentially creating wedges between China and its neighbors.
- In the 1962 Sino-Indian War, China seized a Switzerland-sized area, Aksai Chin (Aksayqin), and overran Arunachal Pradesh (an Indian state the size of Austria). There are also other, smaller pockets of disputed area. The PRC withdrew from virtually all of Arunachal Pradesh to the Line of Actual Control (LAC), which approximates the McMahon Line that is found in a 1914 agreement initialed by British, Tibetan, and Chinese representatives. Chinese and Indian forces clashed in the Sumdorong Chu valley of Arunachal Pradesh in 1986-87. Relations began to thaw in 1988.

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- China on 1st January 1950. Nehru had great hopes that the two countries with their common experience of suffering at the hands of colonial powers and common problems of poverty and underdevelopment would join hands to give Asia its due place in the world. Nehru pressed for representation for Communist China in the UN Security Council, did not support the US position in the Korean war, and tried his best to bring about a settlement in Korea. In 1950, when China, occupied Tibet, India was unhappy that it had not been taken into confidence, but did not question China's rights over Tibet since at many times in Chinese history Tibet had been subjugated by China. In 1954, India and China signed a treaty in which India recognized China's rights over Tibet and the two countries agreed to be governed in their mutual relations by the principles of Panch Sheel. Differences over border delineation were discussed at this time but China maintained that it had not yet studied the old Kuomintang maps and these could be sorted out later.
- India took a long time to recover from the blow to its self-respect, and perhaps it was only the victory over Pakistan in the Bangladesh war, in which China and the US were also supporting Pakistan, that restored the sense of self-worth. Nehru never really recovered from the blow, and his death in May 1964 was most likely hastened by it. Worse, at the pinnacle of his outstanding career, he had to face attacks from political opponents who would never have dared otherwise.
- Thus, the causes of the 1962 attack were related more to China's own compulsions, that to anything that Nehru or India did or could have done. Not being able to get the recognition of the US, a UN seat, leadership of Afro-Asia, Soviet support on the nuclear issue or the border dispute with India, a leftward turn took place in Chinese politics. By humiliating India, it wanted to show that India's policy of peace and non-alignment was not feasible. Nor was the Soviet policy of peaceful coexistence. India would leave the policy of non-alignment under pressure and other countries of Asia and Africa would follow the Chinese lead. Thus, the cause of the Indian military humiliation could not be reduced to Indian foreign policy failure. It could 'only be characterized as one of those unforseeable random events of history.

12.4 Key-Words

1. Formosa : Later Taiwan
2. Dabacle of India : A voilent disruption, a great disaster, a complete failure.

12.5 Review Questions

1. Discuss the Border Conflict with China.
2. Write the effect of the 1962 Chinese attack.

Answers: Self-Assessment

1. India 2. 1950 3. 1959 4. Kongka Pass 5. Thirteen

12.6 Further Readings

1. V.D. Mahajan, History of Modern India, S. Chand and Co. Ltd. New Delhi.
2. Chandra, Bipin, India's Struggle for Freedom (1857–1947) Penguin, Delhi, 1996.

Notes

Unit 13: Map I

CONTENTS

Objectives
Introduction
13.1 Important Centres of the Revolt 1857
13.2 India before Independence
13.3 Summary
13.4 Key-Words
13.5 Review Questions
13.6 Further Readings

Objectives

After studying this unit students will be able to:

- understand and analyse the geographical and political conditions of India before independence through the maps of 1857 Revolt.

Introduction

The view of the British historians was that the outbreak of 1857 was a Mutiny. The fashion was originally set by the Government of the day. Earl Stanley, the then Secretary of State for India, while reporting the events of 1857 to Parliament, used the term "Mutiny" and most of the English writers on the subject followed his lead and writers like Charles Ball, G.W. Forrest, T.R. Holmes, M. Innes, J.W. Kaye, G.F. Macmunn, G.B. Malleson, C.T. Metcalfe, Earl Roberts and others used the term "Mutiny" in this connection. Sir John Lawrence was of the opinion that the Mutiny had its origin in the army and its cause was the greased cartridges and nothing else. It was not attributable to any antecedent conspiracy what-soever, although it was taken advantage of by the mutineers to increase their number. The view of Sir John Seeley was that the Mutiny was a "wholly unpatriotic and selfish sepoy mutiny with no native leadership and no popular support." The British officers conducting the trial of Bahadur Shah II held him responsible for originating the Mutiny in conspiracy with the Shah of Iran and other Muslim rulers of the Middle East. Sir Theophilius Metcalfe deposed in the trial of Bahadur Shah that six weeks before the outbreak, a seditious poster was found pasted on the walls of Jama Masjid proclaiming that the Shah of Iran would invade India and all the Muslims should be ready to join the Jehad. British historians are of the view that Nana Sahib organised the revolution long before its outbreak at Meerut. To quote Kaye, "For months, for years, indeed ever since the failure of the mission to England had been apparent, they had been quietly, spreading their network of intrigue all over the country. From one native court to another, from one extremity to another of the Great Continent of India, the agents of Nana Sahib had passed with overtures and invitations, discretely perhaps mysteriously worded, to princes and chiefs of different races and religions, but most hopeful of all to the Marathas. Nana Sahib's two most important agents were Rungo Bapoji in the South and Azimullah in the North."

There were also writers who considered the revolt of 1857 the result of a Hindu conspiracy. The Hindus were said to have a genius for conspiracy. "They possess a power of patience of foreseeing results, of carefully weighing chances, of choosing time and weapon, of profiting by circumstances,

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never losing sight of the object desired, taking advantage of every turn of fortune—all qualities invaluable for success in intrigue." It was contended that the circulation of the *Chapatis* was originated by the Hindus and the rebellion was successfully engineered by the emissaries of the Peshwa under the guidance of Nana Sahib.

The 'absentee soverieigntyship' of the British rule in India was an equally important political factor which worked on the minds of the Indian people against the British. The Pathans and the Mughals who had conquered India had, in course of time, settled in India and become Indians. The revenues collected from the people were spent this very country. In the case of the British, the Indians felt that they were being ruled from England from a distance of thousands of miles and the country was being drained of her wealth.

Administrative and Economic Causes: The annexation of Indian states produced startling economic and social effects. The Indian aristocracy was deprived of power and position. It found little chance to gain the same old position in the new administrative set-up, as under the British rule all high posts, civil and military, were reserved for the Europeans.

In the military services, the highest post attainable by an Indian was that of a Subedar on a salary of Rs. 60 or Rs. 70 and in the civil services that of Sadr Amin on a salary of Rs. 500 per month. The chances of promotion were very few. The Indians thought that British were out to reduce them to 'hewers of wood and drawers of water."

The administrative machinery of the East India Company was 'inefficient and insufficient'. The land revenue police was most unpopular. Many districts in the newly-annexed states were in permanent revolt and military had to be sent to collect the land revenue. In the district of Panipat, for example, 136 horsemen were maintained for the collection of land revenue, while only 22 were employed for the performance of police duties.

Many talukdars, the hereditary landlords (and tax-collectors for the Government) were deprived of their positions and gains. Many holders of rent-free tenures were dispossessed by the use of a *quo-warranto*—requiring the holders of such lands to produce evidence like title-deeds by which they held that land. Large estates were confiscated and sold by public auction to the highest bidders. Such estates were usually purchased by speculators who did not understand the tenants and fully exploited them. It was Coverly Jackson's policy of disbanding the native soldiers and of strict inquiry into the titles of the talukdars of Oudh that made Oudh the chief centre of the Rebellion. The Inam Commission appointed in 1852 in Bombay confiscated as many as 20,000 estates. Thus, the new land revenue settlements made by the East India Company in the newly-annexed states drove poverty in the ranks of the aristocracy without benefiting the peasantry which groaned under the weight of heavy assessments and excessive duties. The peasants whose welfare was the chief motive of the new revenue policy did not like the passing of the old ways. They fell in the clutches of unprincipled moneylenders; they often visited their dispossessed landlords and with tears in their eyes expressed their sympathy for them. The taluqdars of Oudh were the hardest hit.

The ruthless manner in which the Thomasonian system was carried into effect may be clear from the resumption of the revenue of free villages granted for the temple Lakshmi in Jhansi.

Social and Religious Causes: Like all conquering people the English rulers of India were rude and arrogant towards the subject people. However, the English were infected with a spirit of racialism. The rulers followed a policy of contempt towards the Indians and described the Hindus as barbarians with hardly any trace of culture and civilisation, while the Muslims were dubbed as bigots, cruel and faithless.

The European officers in India were very exacting and over-bearing in their social behaviour. The Indian was spoken as *nigger* and addressed as a *suar* or pig, an epithet most resented by the

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Muslims. Even the best among them like Bird and Thomason insulted " the native gentry whenever they had the opportunity of doing so".

European officers and European soldiers on their hunting sprees were often guilty of indiscriminate criminal assaults on Indians. The European juries, which alone could try such cases, acquitted European criminals with light or no punishment. Such discrimination rankled in the Indian mind like a festering sore.

It may be easy to withstand physical and political injustices but religious persecution touches tender conscience and forms complexes that are not easy to eradicate.

The Religious Disabilities Act of 1850 modified Hindu customs; a change of religion did not debar a son from inheriting the property of his heathen father. Stranger rumours were current in India that Lord Canning had been specially selected and charged with the duty of converting the Indians to Christianity. In this surcharged atmosphere even the railways and steamships began to be looked upon as indirect instruments for changing their faith. The telegraph was regarded as 'the accursed string' and the rebels once said that 'it was this accursed string that strangled them". In the words of Benjamin Disraeli: "The Legislative Council of India under the new principle had been constantly nibbling at the religious system of the native. In its theoretical system of national education the sacred scriptures had suddenly appeared in the schools". The Indian mind was getting increasingly convinced that the English were conspiring to convert them to Christianity. The activities of Christian *padris* and efforts of Dalhousie and Bethune towards woman education made Indians feel that through education the British were going to conquer their civilisation. Even 'education offices' set up by the British were styled as *shaitani daftars*.

Military Causes: Since the Afghan adventure of Lord Auckland, the discipline in the army had suffered a serious set back Lord Dalhousie had written to the Home authorities that "the discipline of the army from top to bottom officers and men alike, is scandalous". The Bengal Army was "a great brotherhood in which all the members felt and acted in union", and service in the army was hereditary. Three-fifth of the recruits of the Bengal Army were drawn from Oudh and the North-Western Provinces and most of them came from high caste Brahmin and Rajput families who were averse to accepting that part of the army discipline which treated them on par with the low caste recruits.

In 1856 Canning's government passed the General Service Enlistment Act which decreed that all future recruits for the Bengal army would have to give an undertaking to serve anywhere their service might be required by the Government. The Act did not affect old incumbent, but was unpopular because service in the Bengal army was usually hereditary.

In 1856, the Company's army consisted of 238,000 native and 45,322 British soldiers. This disproportion was rendered more serious by the defieiency of good officers in the army, most of whom were employed in administrative posts in the newly annexed states and the frontier. The distribution of the troops was also faulty, Moreover, disasters in the Crimean war had lowered the general moral of the British soldiers. All these factors made the Indian soldiers feel that if they had struck at that hour, they had reasonable chances of success. So they were waiting only for an occasion which was provided by the 'greased cartridge' incident. The greased cartridges did not create a new causes of discontent in the army, but supplied the occasion when the underground discontent came out in the open. In 1856 the Government decided to replace the old-fashioned musket, 'Brown Bess' by the 'Enfield rifle'. The training for the use of the new weapon was to be imparted at Dum Dum, Ambala and Sialkot. The loading process of the Enfield rifle involved bringing the cartridge to the mouth and biting off the top paper with mouth. In January 1857 a story got currency in the Bengal regiments that the greased cartridge contained the fat of pig and cow. At once a denial was issued by the military authorities without investigating into the matter.

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Subsequently enquiries proved that "the fat of cows or oxen really had been used at Woolwich arsenal" (V. A Smith). Assurances of superior officers and slight concessions proved of no avail. The sepoys become convinced that the introduction of greased cartridges was a deliberate move to defile their religion. It was argued that the East India Company was playing the part of Aurangzeb and it was but natural that sepoys should play the part of Shivaji.

13.1 Important Centres of the Revolt 1857

In this section we will discuss about the important events took place around the Revolt 1857.

At that time the refusal of the sepoys to use the greased cartridges was regarded by the authorities as an act of insubordination and punished accordingly. On 29 March 1857 the sepoys at Barrackpore refused to use the greased cartridge and one Brahmin sepoy, Mangal Pandey, attacked and fired at the Adjutant. The 34 N. I. regiment was disbanded and sepoys guilty of rebellion punished. At Meerut, in May 1857, 85 sepoys of the 3rd Cavalry regiment on their refusal to use the greased cartridge were court-martialled and sentenced to long terms of imprisonment. On 10th May the sepoys broke out in open rebellion, shot their officers, released their fellow sepoys and headed towards Delhi.

Delhi was seized by the rebels on 12th May 1857. Lieutenant Willoughby, the officer-in-charge of the magazine at Delhi, offered some resistance, but was overcome. The palace and the city were occupied.

Descriptive note on the Spread of Mutiny and Civil Rebellion during 1857-58.

2 February 1857	—	Mutiny of the 19th Native Infantry at Berhampur.
10 May 1857	—	Mutiny of Sepoys at Meerut.
11-30 May 1857	—	Outbreaks in Delhi, Ferozepur, Bombay, Aligarh, Etawah, Bulandshahr, Nasirabad Bareilly, Moradabad, Shahjehanpur and other stations in U.P.
		The Mughal Emperor proclaimed as the Emperor of India
June 1857	—	Mutinies at Gwalior, Bharatpur, Jhansi Allahabad, Faizabad, Sultanpur, Lucknow etc.,
		The civil rebellion spreads through the Indo-Gangetic plain, Rajputana, Central India and some parts of Bengal.
July 1857	—	Mutinies at Indore, Mhow, Saugar and certain places in the Panjab like Jhelum sialkot etc.
August 1857	—	Civil rebellion spreads throughout Saugor and Nerbudda districts.
September 1857	—	The English recapture Delhi: further outbreaks in Central India.
October 1857	—	Revolt spreads to Kotah State.
November 1857	—	The rebels defeat General Windham outside Kanpur.
December 1587	—	Sir Colin Campbell wins the battle of Kanpur.
	—	Tantia Tope escapes.
March 1858	—	Lucknow recaptured by the English.
April 1858	—	Jhansi falls to the English. Fresh rising in Bihar led by Kunwar Singh.
May 1858	—	The English recapture Bareilly, Jagdishpur and Kalpi.
		Indian rebels begin guerilla warfare Rohilkhand.
July-December 1858	—	English authority re-established in India.

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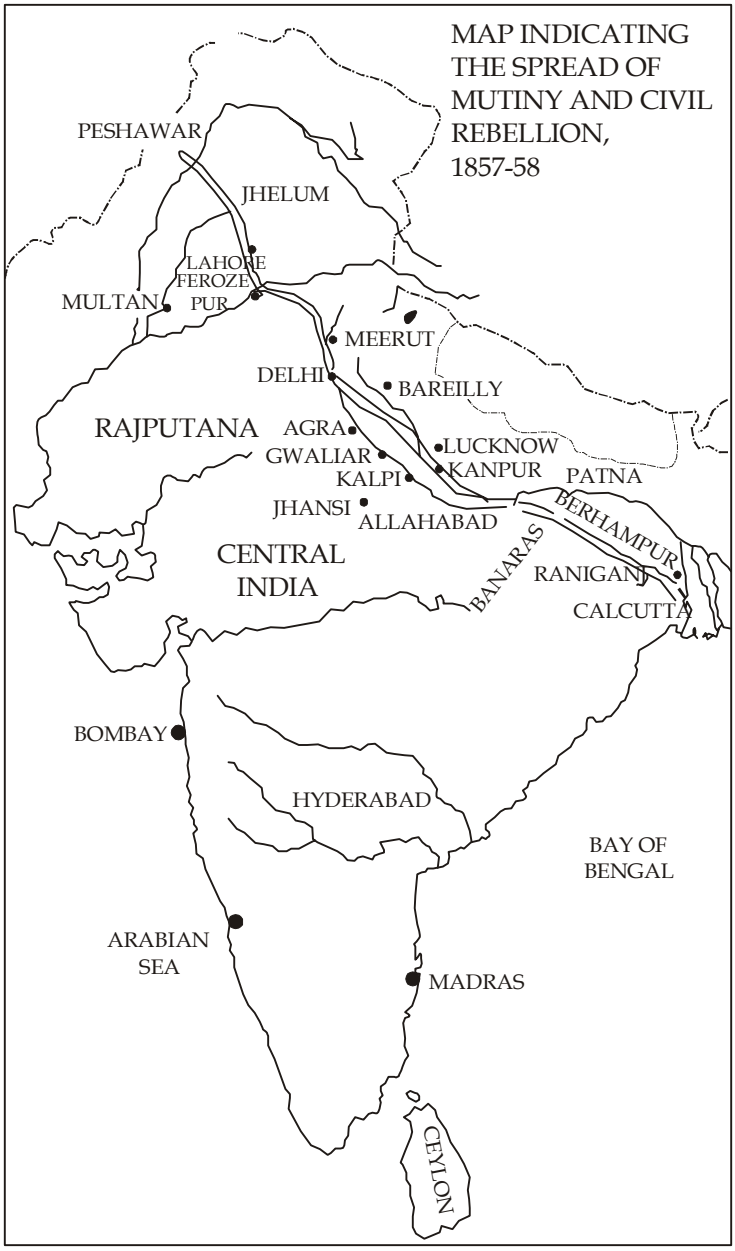

The recapture of Delhi could be of great psychological importance and English efforts were directed towards that end. Troops from the Punjab were rushed and took their position to the north of Delhi.

The rebellion broke our at Lucknow on 4th June. Henry Lawrence, the British Resident, the European inhabitants and a few hundred loyal sepoys took shelter in the Residency. The Residency was besieged by the Indian rebels and Sir Henry was killed during the siege. The command of the besieged garrison devolved on Brigadier Ingils who held our against heavy odds.

Kanpur was lost to the British on 5th June 1857. Nana Sahib was proclaimed the Peshwa. General Sir Hugh Wheeler, commanding the station, surrendered on 27 June. Some Europeans, men women and children, were murdered. At Kanpur Nana Sahib was joined by his able and experienced Lieutenant, Tantia Tope.

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In the beginning of June 1857 the troops at Jhansi mutinied Rani Lakshmi Bai, the widow of the late Raja Gangadhar Rao, was proclaimed the ruler of the state. After the loss of Kanpur, Tantia Tope joined the Rani. Sir Hugh Rose recaptured Jhansi by assault on 3rd April 1958.

The Rani of Jhansi and Tantia tope marched towards Gwalior where hailed by the Indian soldiers. The Sindhia however, decided to remain loyal to the English and took shelter at Agra. Nana Sahib was proclaimed the Peshwa and plans were chalked our for a march into the South. Gwalior was recaptured by the English in June 1858, the Rani of Jhansi died fighting clad in soldier's uniform on the ramparts of the fort.

At Bareily Khan Bahadur Khan had proclaimed himself the Nawab Nazim. In Bihar a local zamindar kunwar Singh of Jagdishpur raised the banner of revolt. At Banaras a rebellion had been organised which was mercilessly suppressed by Colonel Neill who put to death all rebels, suspected and even disorderly boys.

The Revolt of 1857 though completely suppressed had shaken the British rule in India from its very foundations. The reactionary and vested interests were well protected and encouraged and became pillars of British rule in India: the policy of divide and rule was deliberately pursued and made the main prop of British control; tight European control over key positions both in the civil and military administration was maintained.

1. The control of Indian administration was transferred from the East India Company to the Crown by The Government of India Act 1858. In India the same sort of Governor-General and the same military and civil service continued as before. In Britain 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 to be nominated by the Crown and seven members at first to be selected by the Court of Directors and afterwards by co-option by the Council itself.

   Ever since 1784 the Crown through the Board of Control had exercised considerable influence over Indian affairs and, in fact, had the deciding voice in all major issues. The Act of 1858 ended the dualism in the control of Indian affairs and made the Crown directly responsible for management of Indian affairs.

2. 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 as their own", while general amnesty was granted to "all offenders, save and except those who have been or shall be convicted of having directly taken part in the murder of British subjects". The Indian states had served as "breakwaters to the storm which would otherwise have swept over us in one great wave" and to preserve them as the bulwark of the Empire became a cardinal principle of British policy.

3. The Proclamation of 1858 contained an assurance that "our subjects, of whatever race or creed, be freely, and impartially admitted to office in our service, the duties of which they may be qualified by their education, ability and integrity duly to discharge".

4. The Indian Army had been mainly responsible for the crisis of 1857. It was thoroughly reorganised and built up on the policy of 'division and counterpoise'. The Army Amalgamation Scheme of 1861 transferred the Company's European troops to the services of the Crown. The European troops in India were constantly renovated by periodical visits to England in what came to be known as the iinked-battalion' scheme.

5. It was increasingly realised that one basic cause for the Revolt of 1857 was the lack of contact between the ruler and the ruled. Sir Bartle Frere, in his famous Minute of 1860, urged 'the addition of the native element' to the Legislative Councils.

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6. The emotional after-effects of the Revolts were perhaps the most unfortunate. Racial bitterness was perhaps the worst legacy of the struggle. *The Punch* cartooned the Indian as a subhuman creature, half gorilla, half-negro who could be kept in check by superior force only. The agents of imperialism in India dubbed the entire Indian people as unworthy of trust and subjected them to insults, humiliation and contemptuous treatment.
7. The Revolt of 1857 ended an era and sowed the seeds of new era. The era of territorial aggrandisement gave place to the era of economic exploitation. For the British, the danger from the feudal India ended for ever; the new challenge to British Imperialism came from progressive India fed on the philosophy of John Stuart Mill and British liberals of the nineteenth century.

13.2 India before Independence

Pre independence struggle makes India proud: The term pre independence India is quite complicated and may denote lots of developments along with declinations and if you wish for, you may focus on the entire course of Indian history starting form the ancient era to the national independence in 1947. Without a shred of doubt, this period can be delved into but may lead to sleepless nights in profusion. Why don't we focus on the pre independence era that witnessed the birth of Indian freedom movement? After all, this happens to form one of the glorious chapters of Indian history and thanks to the same, India or the perfect emblem of a multiethnic, multi-religious ad multi-linguistic nation, for the first time, got hold of an exclusive identity - Indian.

Prior to the same, there is the need of a critical analysis of first era of British India or pre independence India. It has to be accepted that British India brought about lots of decisive changes in the Indian scenario and the credit, in this regard, goes to the fact that imperialism has lots of merits as well. And the first of these is that there is the need of a strong and vigorous administration along with discipline in the social sphere. Truly, British India became able to introduce a strong discipline and through the set up of railways, judiciary and also'modern police and administration, India attained the age of modernism.

But this honeymoon ended up soon when the mercantile interests of British supremacy got manifest. What did start as land oriented disturbances in the upper India led to the strongest disenchantment among the Indian aristocracy, especially the dethroned blue blood, and sepoys (Indian soldiers), devoid of livelihood for years. What did happen in 1857 as a result of minute conflagration in North India engulfed almost the whole of India before long. Even if British historians have tried best to put down or disgrace the same movement, it is regarded as the "First War of Indian Independence"- the first momentous event of pre independence India.

Even if the first flare of independence struggle met an untimely death owing to British ferocity, the scenario changed soon. At this time it was Bengal, where the seeds of militant nationalism were witnessed to raise belligerent heads. Owing to Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo and Anushilan Samiti and Yugantar, militant philosophy, for the first time, was found to make a strong impression among the young generation. Maharashtra and Punjab were found to join the movement soon and the anti-partition struggle in Bengal that did dare to unsettle a "settled fact" proved that the days of British hegemony were numbered.

The movement for national liberation gained a national character before long owing to the emergence of Mahatma Gandhi in the national scenario. His mantra of non-violence that was a direct consequence of Indian philosophy mesmerized the whole of India and history was created in an unusual manner for the first time. The civil-disobedience movement based on non violence rocked the entire British Empire and even 10, Downing Street, seat of British Government. The coveted independence, as a result, became a reality on August 15, 1947.

Pre independence period of India and the glorious struggle for national liberation forms one of the greatest chapters of Indian history.

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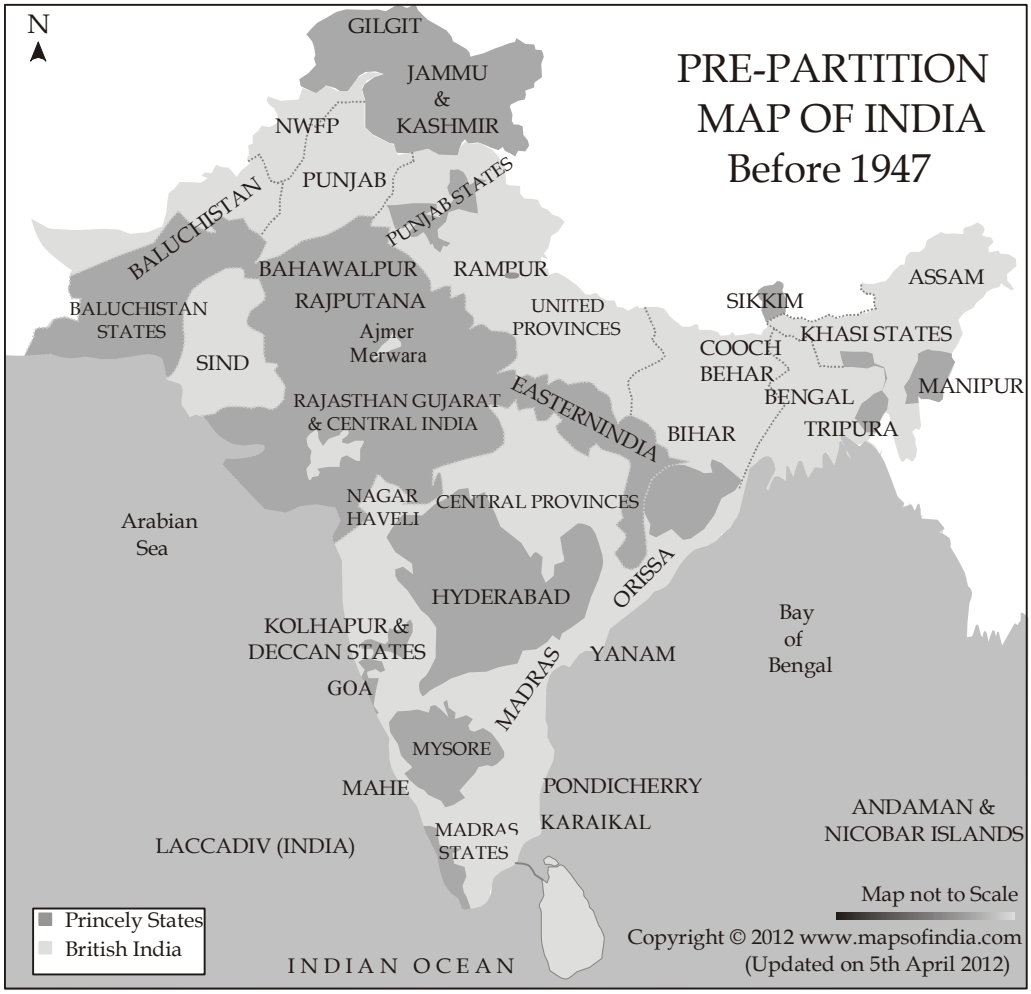


13.3 Summary

- The view of the British historians was that the outbreak of 1857 was a Mutiny. The fashion was originally set by the Government of the day. Earl Stanley, the then Secretary of State for India, while reporting the events of 1857 to Parliament, used the term "Mutiny" and most of the English writers on the subject followed his lead and writers like Charles Ball, G.W. Forrest, T.R. Holmes, M. Innes, J.W. Kaye, G.F. Macmunn, G.B. Malleson, C.T. Metcalfe, Earl Roberts and others used the term "Mutiny" in this connection. Sir John Lawrence was of the opinion that the Mutiny had its origin in the army and its cause was the greased cartridges and nothing else. It was not attributable to any antecedent conspiracy what-soever, although it was taken advantage of by the mutineers to increase their number. The view of Sir John Seeley was that the Mutiny was a "wholly unpatriotic and selfish sepoy mutiny with no native leadership and no popular support." The British officers conducting the trial of Bahadur Shah II held him responsible for originating the Mutiny in conspiracy with the Shah of Iran and other Muslim rulers of the Middle East. Sir Theophilius Metcalfe deposed in the trial of Bahadur Shah that six weeks before the outbreak, a seditious poster was found pasted on the walls of Jama Masjid proclaiming that the Shah of Iran would invade India and all the Muslims should be ready to join the Jehad. British historians are of the view that Nana Sahib organised the revolution long before its outbreak at Meerut.

Notes

- The annexation of Indian states produced startling economic and social effects. The Indian aristocracy was deprived of power and position. It found little chance to gain the same old position in the new administrative set-up, as under the British rule all high posts, civil and military, were reserved for the Europeans.
- Like all conquering people the English rulers of India were rude and arrogant towards the subject people. However, the English were infected with a spirit of racialism. The rulers followed a policy of contempt towards the Indians and described the Hindus as barbarians with hardly any trace of culture and civilisation, while the Muslims were dubbed as bigots, cruel and faithless.
- Since the Afghan adventure of Lord Auckland, the discipline in the army had suffered a serious set back Lord Dalhousie had written to the Home authorities that "the discipline of the army from top to bottom officers and men alike, is scandalous". The Bengal Army was "a great brotherhood in which all the members felt and acted in union", and service in the army was hereditary. Three-fifth of the recruits of the Bengal Army were drawn from Oudh and the North-Western Provinces and most of them came from high caste Brahmin and Rajput families who were averse to accepting that part of the army discipline which treated them on par with the low caste recruits.
- Pre independence struggle makes India proud: The term pre independence India is quite complicated and may denote lots of developments along with declinations and if you wish for, you may focus on the entire course of Indian history starting form the ancient era to the national independence in 1947. Without a shred of doubt, this period can be delved into but may lead to sleepless nights in profusion. Why don't we focus on the pre independence era that witnessed the birth of Indian freedom movement? After all, this happens to form one of the glorious chapters of Indian history and thanks to the same, India or the perfect emblem of a multiethnic, multi-religious ad multi-linguistic nation, for the first time, got hold of an exclusive identity - Indian.

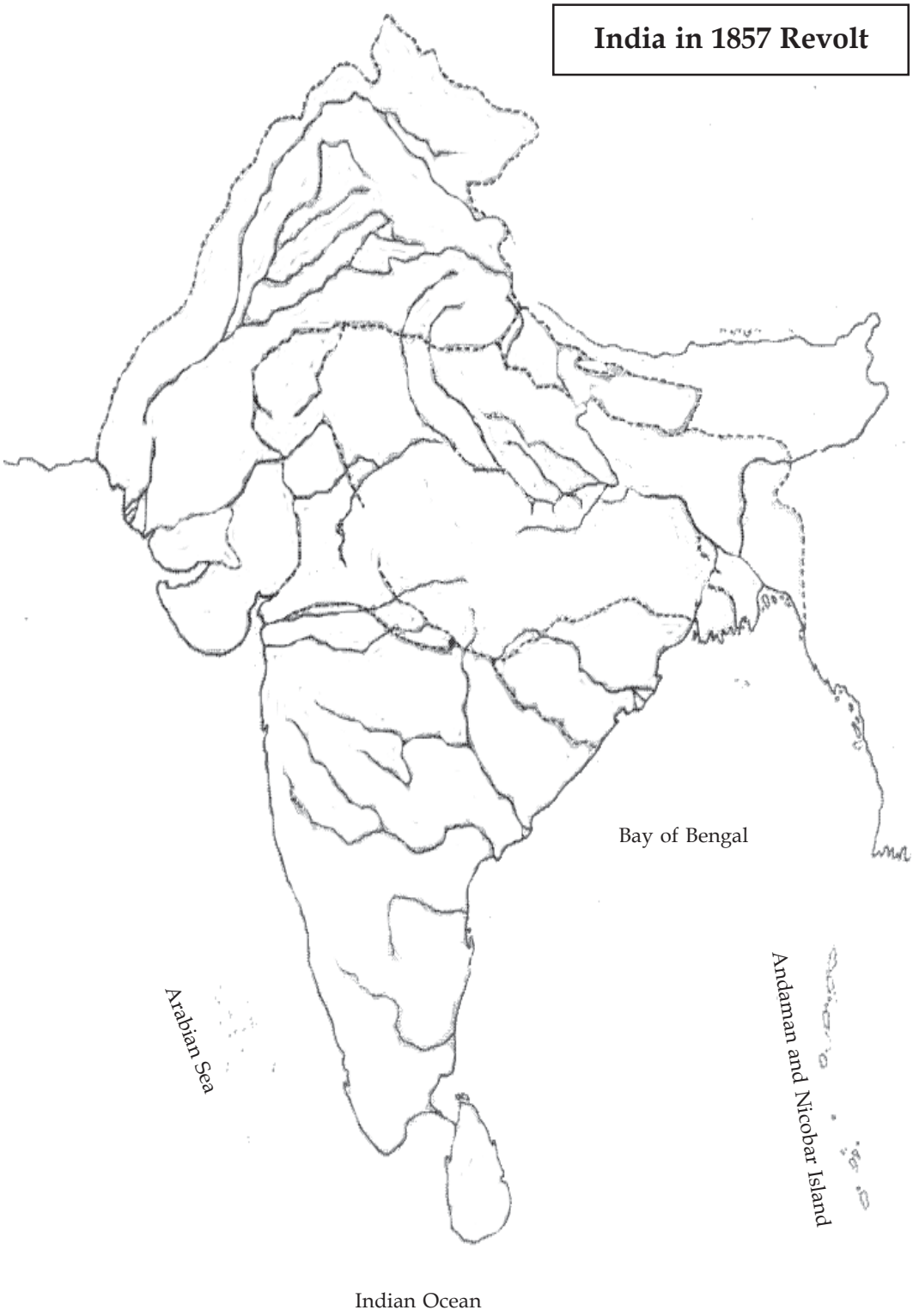
13.4 Key-Words

1. Mutiny : An open rebellion against the proper authorities
2. Shaitani daftars : Education offices set up by the British.

Notes

13.5 Review Questions

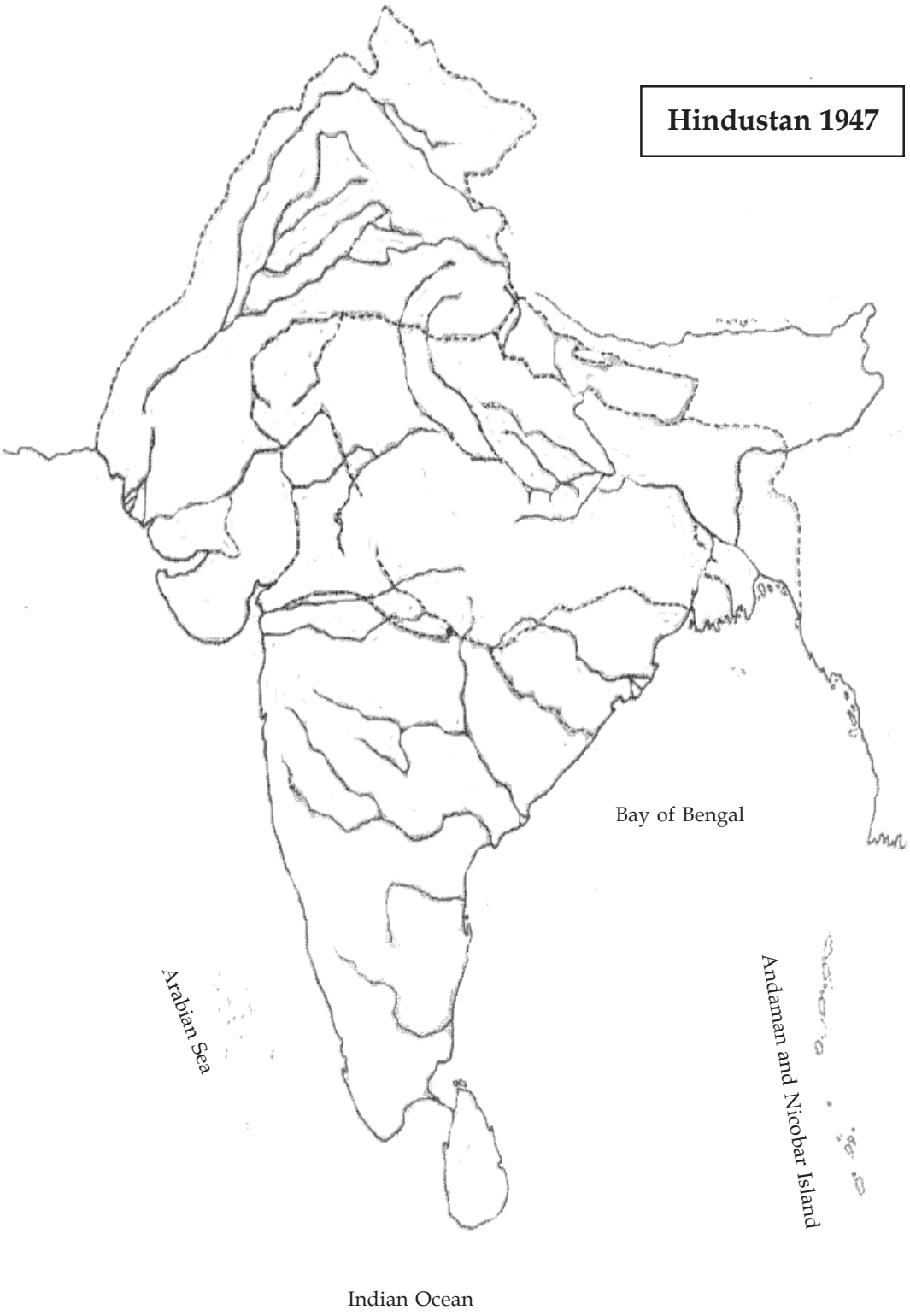
1. Depict the important centres of 1857 Revolt.



Notes

2. Indicate the following places on the map given below:

(*i*) Sindh (*ii*) Baluchistan (*iii*) Uttar Pradesh (*iv*) Mysore



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13.6 Further Readings

Books

1. Sunlight Atlas of Modern India.
2. A.R. Desai, Social background of Indian Nationalisation Bombay.

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Unit 14: Map II

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Objectives
Introduction
14.1 India in 1947
14.2 Indian States and Capitals
14.3 Summary
14.4 Review Questions
14.5 Further Readings

Objectives

After studying this unit students will be able to:

- Understand the geographical map of India in 1947.
- Know about the states and capitals of India.

Introduction

The East India Company had established its control over almost all parts of India by the middle of the 19th century. There were numerous risings in the first hundred years of British rule in India. They were, however, local and isolated in character. Some of them were led by the nobility who were refusing to accept the changing patterns of the time and wanted the past to be restored. But the risings developed a tradition of resistance offoreign rule, culminating in the 1857 revolt.

The Revolt of 1857, an unsuccessful but heroic effort to eliminate foreign rule, had begun. The capture of Delhi and the proclamation of Bahadurshah as the Emperor of Hindustan are a positive meaning to the Revolt and provided a rallying point for the rebels by recalling the past glory of the imperial city. On May 10,1857, soldiers at Meerut refused to touch the new Enfield rifle cartridges. The soldiers along with other group of civilians, went on a rampage shouting 'Maro Firangi Ko'. They broke open jails, murdered European men and women, burnt their houses and marched to Delhi. The appearance of the marching soldiers next morning in Delhi was a'signal to the local soldiers, who in turn revolted, seized the city and proclaimed the 80-year old Bahadurshah Zafar, as Emperor of India.

Queen Victoria issued a proclamation on November 1, 1858, placing India under direct government of the Crown.

The Proclamation was called the 'Magna Carta of Indian Liberty'. The British rule in India was strongest between 1858 and 1905. The British also started treating India as its most precious possession and their rule over India seemed set to continue for centuries to come. Because of various subjective and objective factors which came into existence during this era, the feeling of nationalism in Indians started and grow.

Although the British succeeded in suppressing the 1857 Revolt, they could not stop the growth of political awareness in India. The Indian National Congress was founded in December 1885. It was the visible embodiment of the national awakening in the country. Its founder was an Englishman,

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Allan Octavian Hume, a retired member of the Indian Civil Service. The Indian leaders, who cooperated with Hume in launching the Congress, were patriots of high character. The first President of the Congress was W.C. Bannerjee.

On December 30,1898, Lord Curzon took over as the new Viceroy of India. The partition of Bengal came into effect on October 16, 1905, through a Royal Proclamation, reducing the old province of Bengal in size by creating a new province of East Bengal, which later on became East Pakistan and present day Bangladesh. The government explained that it was done to stimulate growth of underdeveloped eastern region of the Bengal. But, actually, the main objective was to 'Divide and Rule' the most advanced region of the country at that time.

Dr. Annie Besant, inspired by the Irish rebellion, started a Home Rule Movement in India in September 1916. The movement spread rapidly and branches of the Rome Rule League were established all over India. Bal Gangadhar Tilak wholeheartedly supported this movement. Rejoined forces with Dr. Besant and persuaded the Muslim League to support this programme.

The Government was bent on suppressing the mass agitation. In Bombay; Ahmedabad, Calcutta, Delhi and at other places demonstrators were lathi-charged and fired upon. Gandhiji gave a call for a general hartal on April 6, 1919. The call was responded to with great enthusiasm. The Government decided to resort to repression to suppress the agitation. At this time the British Government committed one of the worst political crimes in modem history. An unarmed but a large crowd had gathered in Jallianwalla Bagh, Amritsar (Punjab) on April, 13, 1919 for a meeting. General Dyer ordered his troops to open fire on them without warning. This massacre of unarmed people (hundreds died and thousands were wounded) in an enclosed place from which there was no exit, was followed by a reign of terror in several districts under martial law.

With the Congress support of the Khilafat movement, Hindu-Muslim unity was achieved which encouraged Gandhiji to launch his non-violent, non-cooperation movement. At the Calcutta Session in September 1920, the Congress resolved in favour of the non-violent, non-cooperation movement and defined Swaraj as its ultimate aim. The movement envisaged : (i) Surrender of titles and honorary officers; (ii) Resignation from nominated offices and posts in the local bodies; (iii) Refusal to attend government darbars and official functions and boycott of British courts by the lawyers; (iv) Refusal of general public to offer themselves for military and other government jobs, and boycott of foreign goods, etc.

The non-cooperation movement also saw picketing of shops selling foreign cloth and boycott of the foreign cloth by the followers of Gandhiji.

The Congress session held at Ahmedabad in December 1921 decided to launch a Civil Disobedience Movement while reiterating its stand on the non-violent, noncooperation movement of which Gandhiji was appointed the leader. Before Gandhiji could launch the Civil Disobedience Movement, a mob of countrymen at Chauri Chaura, a place near Gorakhpur in D.P., clashed with the police which opened fire. In retaliation the mob burnt the police-station and killed 22 policemen. This compelled Gandhiji to call off the Civil Disobedience Movement on February 12,1922.

Despite this Gandhiji was arrested and sentenced to six years imprisonment. The Chauri Chaura incident convinced Gandhiji that the nation was not yet ready for the mass-disobedience and he prevailed upon Congress Working Committee in Bardoli on February 12, 1922 to call off the Non-Cooperation Movement.

Gandhiji's decision to call off the agitation caused frustration among masses. His decision came in for severe criticism from his colleagues like Motilal Nehru, C.R. Das and N.C. Kelkar, who organized the Swaraj Party. The foundations of the 'Swaraj Party' were laid on January 1, 1923, as the 'Congress-Khilafat-Swarajya Patty'. It proposed then an alternative programme of diverting the movement from widespread civil disobedience programme to restrictive one which would

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encourage its member to enter into legislative councils (established under Montford Reforms of 1919) by contesting elections in order to wreck the legislature from within and to use moral pressure to compel the authority to concede to the popular demand for self-government.

Under the 1919 Act, a statutory commission was to be appointed by the British Government at the end often years from the passing of the Act to inquire into the working of the system of government in the country and to recommend further reforms. Thus the commission was scheduled to be appointed in 1929. It was actually appointed two years earlier in 1927. The commission consisted of seven members of the British Parliament. It was headed by Sir John Simon. As all its members were British, the Congress decided to boycott it. The Commission arrived in India in Feb. 1928. It was greeted with black flags and hostile demonstrations everywhere it went. In one such demonstration at Lahore, Lala Lajpat Rai was seriously injured in a wanton police lathi-charge on the demonstrators. Lalaji died soon after from wounds received during the demonstration.

Also called the 'Salt Satyagraha'. To achieve the goal of complete independence, Gandhiji launched another civil disobedience movement. Along with 79 followers, Gandhiji started his famous march from Sabarmati Ashram on March 20,1930, for the small village Dandi to break the Salt Law. While Gandhiji was marching to Dandi,

Congress leaders and workers had been busy at various levels with the hard organizational tasks of enrolling volunteers and members, forming grassroot Congress Committees, collecting funds, and touring villages and towns to spread nationalist messages.

On reaching the seashore on April 6,1930, he broke the Salt Law by picking up salt from the seashore. By picking a handful of salt, Gandhiji inaugurated the Civil Disobedience Movement, a movement that was to remain unsurpassed in the history of the Indian National Movement for the countrywide mass participation it unleashed. The movement became so powerful that it sparked off partriotism even among the Indian soldiers in the Army. The Garhwal soldiers refused to fire on the people at Peshawar.

Early in 1931 two moderate statesmen, Sapru and Jayakar, initiated efforts to bring about rapprochement between Gandhiji and the government. Six meetings with Viceroy Lord Irwin finally led to the signing of a pact between the two on March 5, 1931, whereby the Congress called off the movement and agreed to join the Second Round Table Conference. The terms of the agreement included the immediate release of all political prisoners not convicted for violence, the remission of all fines not yet collected, the return of confiscated land not yet sold to third parties, and lenient treatment of all the government officials who had resigned.

The Simon Commission report submitted in 1930 formed the basis for the Government of India Act 1935. The new Government of India Act received the royal assent on August 4,1935. The Act continued and extended all the existing features of the Indian constitution. Popular representation, which went back to 1892, dyarchy and ministerial responsibility, which dated from 1921, provincial autonomy, whose chequered history went back to eighteenth century presidencies, communal representation, which first received recognition in 1909, and the safeguards devised in 1919, were all continued and in most cases extended. But in addition there were certain new principles intro-duced. It provided for a federal type of government.

The Act of 1935 was condemned by nearly all sections of Indian public opinion and was unanimously rejected by the Congress. The Congress demanded instead, the convening of a Constituent Assembly elected on the basis of adult franchise to frame a constitution for an independent India.

On August 8, 1942, the Congress in its meeting at Bombay passed a resolution known as 'Quit India' resolution, whereby Gandhiji asked the British to quit India and gave a call for 'Do or die' to his countrymen. On August 9, 1942, Gandhiji was arrested but the other leaders continued the revolutionary struggle. Violence spread throughout the country, several government officers were destroyed and damaged, telegraph wires were cut and communication paralyzed. The movement was, however, crushed by the government.

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The struggle for freedom entered a decisive phase in the year 1945-46. The British Prime Minister, Lord Attlee, made a declaration on March 15, 1946, that British Cabinet Mission would visit India to make recommendations regarding constitutional reforms to be introduced in India. The Cabinet Mission which constituted of Lord Lawrence, Sir Stafford Cripps and A.V. Alexander visited India and met the representatives of different political parties but a satisfactory solution to the constitutional difficulties could not be found. The Mission envisaged the establishment of a Constituent Assembly to frame the Constitution as well as an interim government. The Muslim League accepted the plan on June 6, 1946, while maintaining its rights of striving for a separate Muslim state. The Congress also partially accepted the plan. On September 2,1946, an interim government was formed. Congress members led by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru joined it but the Muslim League did not as it withdrew its earlier acceptance of the Cabinet Mission Plan.

The Constituent Assembly met on December 9,1946, and Dr. Rajendra Prasad was elected its President. The Muslim League did not join the Assembly.

The Bill containing the provisions of the Mountbatten Plan of June 3,1947, was introduced in the British Parliament and passed as the Indian Independence Act,

1947. The Act laid down detailed measures for the partition of India and speedy transfer of political powers to the new government of India and Pakistan.

In accordance with the Indian Independence Act, 1947, India was partitioned on August 15, 1947 into India and Pakistan. The Act made India and Pakistan independent dominions. Bloodshed and violence marked the exodus of refugees. The state of Kashmir acceded to the Indian Union, after the raiders were helped by Pakistan, in October 1947. Lord Mountbatten was appointed the Governor-General of free India and M.A. Jinnah the first Governor-General of Pakistan.

14.1 India in 1947

In March 1947, Lord Wavell was replaced by Lord Mountbatten. When he reached India, he found the situation very critical. The Muslim League was carrying on its wear and tear campaign all over the country especially in the Punjab. There were riots in March 1947. Lord Mountbatten felt that the only way to tackle the situation was to complete the work of transfer of power into the Indian hands within as short a period as possible. He held consultations with the Indian leaders for the same purpose. He went to London in May 1947 to discuss the matter with the British Government. On his return, he announced his famous June 3 Plan. By this Plan, it was proposed to divide India into two parts, viz., the Dominion of India and Dominion of Pakistan. Both the Dominions were to be given independence. The Plan was accepted by both the Muslim League and the Indian National Congress. The Indian Independence Act, 1947, was passed to give effect to the June 3 Plan. The division of the country took place on 15th August, 1947.

After the independence of India, Lord Mountbatten was again appointed as the Governor-General of India and he continued to occupy that position till June 1948. It was during this period that the invasion of Kashmir by the raiders took place. Kashmir acceded to India and the case of Kashmir was taken to the United Nations.

There was a lot of bloodshed both in India and Pakistan on account of communal riots. There was wholesale exodus of populations from India to Pakistan and *vice versa*.

Lord Mountbatten did a lot of useful work in connection with the Indian States. There was. the possibility of a large number of independent states coming into existence in the country after the extinction of British paramountcy in India. It goes to the credit of Lord Mountbatten that lie was able to persuade most of the Indian States to join one or the oilier Dominion. The result was that a lot of complications which otherwise would have given headache to the rulers of both India and Pakistan were avoided. When Lord and Lady Mountbatten left India in June 194ft, there was a general feeling that one who belonged to them was going to depart from their country.

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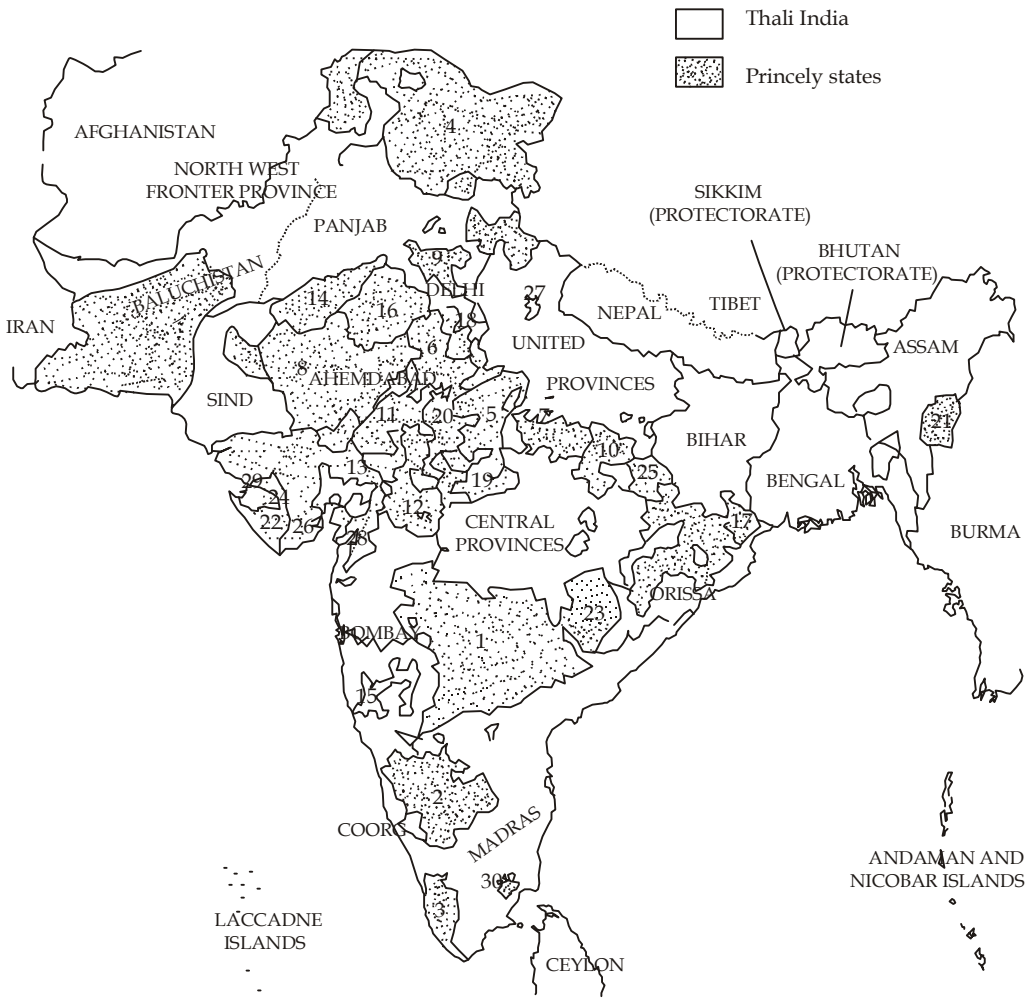

14.2 Indian States and Capitals

India is divided into 28 States, 6 centrally administered union Territories and 1 National capital Territory of Delhi. States of India : 1. Andhra Pradesh (Hyderabad) 2. Assam (Dispur) 3. Bihar (Patna) 4. Gujarat (Gandhinagar) 5. Haryana (Chandigarh) 6. Himachal Pradesh (Shimla) 7. Jammu & Kashmir (Srinagar) 8. Karnataka (Bangalore) 9. Kerala (Thiruvananthapuram) 10. Madhya Pradesh (Bhopal) 11. Maharashtra (Mumbai) 12. Manipur (Imphal) 13. Mahe (Pondicherry) 14. Meghalaya (Shilong) 15. Orissa (Bhubaneshwar) 16. Punjab (Chandigarh) 17. Rajasthan (Jaipur) 18. Sikkim (Gangtak) 19. Tamilnadu (Chennai) 20. Tripura (Agartala) 21. Uttar Pradesh (Lucknow) 22. West Bengal (Kolkata) 23. Mizoram (Alzawl) 24. Arunachal Pradesh (Itanagar) 25. Goa (Panaji) 26. Chhattisgarh (Raipur) 27. Uttaranchal (Dehradun) 28. Jharkhand (Ranchi)

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Union Territories States of India

1. Andaman & Nicobar Islands (Port Blair) 2. Chandigarh (Chandigarh) 3. Dadar & Nagar Haveli (Silvas) 4. Delhi (Delhi) 5. Daman & Diu (Daman) 6. Lakshadweep Islands (Kavarati) 7. Pondicherry (Pondicherry)

14.3 Summary

- The Revolt of 1857, an unsuccessful but heroic effort to eliminate foreign rule, had begun. The capture of Delhi and the proclamation of Bahadurshah as the Emperor of Hindustan are a positive meaning to the Revolt and provided a rallying point for the rebels by recalling the past glory of the imperial city. On May 10,1857, soldiers at Meerut refused to touch the new Enfield rifle cartridges. The soldiers along with other group of civilians, went on a rampage shouting 'Maro Firangi Ko'. They broke open jails, murdered European men and women, burnt their houses and marched to Delhi. The appearance of the marching soldiers next morning in Delhi was a'signal to the local soldiers, who in turn revolted, seized the city and proclaimed the 80-year old Bahadurshah Zafar, as Emperor of India.

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- The Proclamation was called the 'Magna Carta of Indian Liberty'. The British rule in India was strongest between 1858 and 1905. The British also started treating India as its most precious possession and their rule over India seemed set to continue for centuries to come. Because of various subjective and objective factors which came into existence during this era, the feeling of nationalism in Indians started and grow.
- On December 30,1898, Lord Curzon took over as the new Viceroy of India. The partition of Bengal came into effect on October 16, 1905, through a Royal Proclamation, reducing the old province of Bengal in size by creating a new province of East Bengal, which later on became East Pakistan and present day Bangladesh. The government explained that it was done to stimulate growth of underdeveloped eastern region of the Bengal. But, actually, the main objective was to 'Divide and Rule' the most advanced region of the country at that time.
- The non-cooperation movement also saw picketing of shops selling foreign cloth and boycott of the foreign cloth by the followers of Gandhiji.
- The Congress session held at Ahmedabad in December 1921 decided to launch a Civil Disobedience Movement while reiterating its stand on the non-violent, noncooperation movement of which Gandhiji was appointed the leader. Before Gandhiji could launch the Civil Disobedience Movement, a mob of countrymen at Chauri Chaura, a place near Gorakhpur in D.P., clashed with the police which opened fire. In retaliation the mob burnt the police-station and killed 22 policemen. This compelled Gandhiji to call off the Civil Disobedience Movement on February 12,1922.
- The Simon Commission report submitted in 1930 formed the basis for the Government of India Act 1935. The new Government of India Act received the royal assent on August 4,1935. The Act continued and extended all the existing features of the Indian constitution. Popular representation, which went back to 1892, dyarchy and ministerial responsibility, which dated from 1921, provincial autonomy, whose chequered history went back to eighteenth century presidencies, communal representation, which first received recognition in 1909, and the safeguards devised in 1919, were all continued and in most cases extended. But in addition there were certain new principles intro-duced. It provided for a federal type of government.
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Notes

14.4 Review Questions

1. Indicate the partitions of India in the following map.

2. Illustrate the states of India and their capitals in the following maps.

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Outline Map of India

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3. Indicate the union territories states of Indian in the following map.

Outline Map of India

14.5 Further Readings

1. Sunlight Atlas of Modern India.
2. A.R. Desai, Social background of Indian Nationalisation Bombay.