

**CLOSER TO FREEDOM (1930-1947)****CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE  
MOVEMENT (1930)****Dandi March (12 March-6 April 1930)**

Gandhi started his famous march along with 79 followers from Sabaramati Ashram on 20 March 1930 to the small village of Dandi to break the Salt Law. It is also called the 'Salt Satyagraha' or the 'Dandi March'. The Congress leaders and workers had been busy at various levels with the organizational tasks of enrolling volunteers and members, forming Congress Committees at the grass-root level, collecting funds and touring villages and towns to spread nationalistic messages. Preparations for launching the Salt Satyagraha were made, sites chosen, volunteers prepared and the logistics of 'battle' worked out. By the time Gandhi reached Dandi, he had a whole nation aroused and expectant, waiting for the final signal. On reaching the seashore on 6 April 1930, Gandhi broke the Salt Law by picking up salt from the seashore. Through this act, Gandhi set into motion the Civil Disobedience movement, a movement that was to remain unsurpassed in the history of the Indian national movement for the countrywide participation it unleashed. The movement became so powerful that it sparked off patriotism even among the Indian soldiers in the Army. One such example was that of the 18th Royal Garhwali Rifles soldiers who refused to fire at the people in Peshawar, on 25 April 1930.

**Imposition of Martial Law**

Gandhi was arrested on 5 May 1930. The protest of the people over the arrest was widespread. In many towns, the crowd that

spilled out into the streets was so large that the police just withdrew. Another round of boycott of foreign goods followed, provoking a nationwide Civil Disobedience movement in which women also participated. Soon, thereafter, the British used repressive measures such as mass arrests, lathi-charge, police firing, about 1,00,000 people went to jail. In Sholapur, the textile workers, who dominated the strike along with the residents of the town, went on to attack all symbols of the government authority. They established a virtual parallel government in the city which could only be dislodged with the imposition of martial law after 16 May 1930.

**Gandhi's 11-point Ultimatum**

Gandhi launched another civil disobedience movement towards achieving the goal of complete independence. In the Beginning, he served an 11-point ultimatum to the authorities which was mainly about the common grievances of the people of India, but did not include the demand for complete independence. Among the 11 demands, two were the demands of the peasants (abolition of salt tax to eradicate the government's salt monopoly and reduction in the land revenue by 50 percent); three were the demands of the middle class (coastal shipping to be reserved for Indians, adequate protection to the domestic textile industry of India, and checking the deteriorating rupee-sterling exchange ratio); the rest were common grievances-modifications in the working of the Central Intelligence Departments, release of political prisoners, complete-prohibition of intoxicants, 50 per cent reduction in military expenditure, 50 per cent cut in civil administration

expenditure, and changes in the Arms Act, thus allowing citizens to bear arms for self-protection).

## **THE FIRST ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE (12 NOVEMBER 1930)**

### **Events Leading to the Conference**

The Indian political community received the Simon Commission Report issued in June 1930, with great resentment. Different political parties gave vent to their feelings in different ways. The Congress started the Civil Disobedience Movement under Gandhi's command. The Muslims reserved their opinion on the Simon Report declaring that the report was not final and that matters should be decided after consultations with leaders representing all communities of India. The British government refused to contemplate any form of self-government for the people of India. The Indian political situation reached a deadlock. This caused frustration among the masses, who often expressed their anger in violent clashes.

The Labour Government returned to power in Britain 1931, raising hope in the Indians. Labour leaders had always been sympathetic to the Indian cause. The government decided to hold a Round Table Conference in London, consider new constitutional reforms. Representatives of Indian political parties were summoned to London for the conference.

### **The Conference**

In the first session of the conference which opened in London, all parties were

present except the Congress, whose leaders were in jail because of the Civil Disobedience movement. The Congress leaders stated that they would have nothing to do with further constitutional discussions unless the Nehru Report was enforced in its entirety as the constitution of India.

Almost 89 members attended the conference, out of whom 58 were chosen from various communities and interests in British India, and the rest from the princely states and other political parties. The prominent Muslim delegates invited by the British government were Sir Aga Khan, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, Maulana Muhammad Ali Jauhar, Sir Muhammad Shaft and Maulvi Fazl-i-Haq. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Jayakar and Dr. Moonje too were invited. The Commission had proposed self-government in the provinces and federation of British India and the princely states at the Centre. However, the representatives of the Muslim League, Liberals and other parties assembled for discussion on the commission report. The Muslim-Hindu differences overshadowed the conference—the Hindus were pushed for a powerful central government while the Muslims stood for a loose federation of completely autonomous provinces. The Muslims demanded maintenance of weightage and separate electorates, the Hindus did not want these. The Muslims claimed statutory majority in Punjab and Bengal, while the Hindus resisted its imposition. In Punjab, the situation was complicated by inflated Sikh claims. Further, Dr. Ambedkar was demanding separate electorate for the depressed classes. Eight subcommittees were set up to deal with all these details. The committees dealt with the federal structure, provincial constitution, adult franchise, Sindh, the North-West Frontier Province, defence services and minorities. However, in the absence

of the Congress-premier political party, the First Round Table Conference had to be adjourned to 2 January 1931. All that emerged was a general agreement to write safeguards for the minorities into the constitution and a vague desire to devise a federal system for the country.

### **Peshawa incident of 18<sup>th</sup> Royal Garhwali Rifles (25 April 1930)**

Events in Peshawar took an even more dramatic turn. Ghaffar Khan's Pathan movement (whose members were called 'Khudai Khidmatgars') stayed non-violent and within the Congress fold but it attracted huge number of Pathans who believed it would fight against the chronic indebtedness to moneylenders. In 6 months after the Lahore Congress, its membership shot up from 500 to 50,000. The British freely used aerial bombardment on the village areas. The arrest of Ghaffar Khan and on 23 April 1930, led to a massive upsurge in Peshawar with the crowds confronting armoured cars and defying intensive firing for 3 hrs at Kissakahani Bazaar. According to the British, 30 were killed whereas according to non-official estimates 200-250 were killed—recalling the scale of Jallianwala Bagh. A remarkable event took place during the firing. Two platoons of the Second Battalion of the 18th Royal Garhwali Rifles, Hindu troops facing a Muslim crowd, refused to fire, broke ranks, and fraternised with the crowd, handing over their weapons. They were later to declare before their court martial.

### **GANDHI-IRWIN PACT (5 MARCH 1931)**

After the conclusion of the First Round Table Conference, the British government

realised that the cooperation of the Indian National Congress was necessary to make progress in framing the Indian constitution. Early in 1931, two demand for freedom. The communal question dominated moderate statesmen. Sapru and Jayakar, initiated efforts to conference and Gandhi had to return empty-handed bring about a rapprochement between Gandhi and the government. Lord Irwin, the Viceroy, extended an invitation to Gandhi for talks. Gandhi agreed to end the Civil Disobedience Movement without setting any preconditions. Six meetings with Lord Irwin finally led to the signing of a pact between the two on 5 March 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. Gandhi and other leaders were released from jail as Irwin agreed to release most political prisoners and to return the properties that had been seized by the government. The government also conceded the right to make salt for consumption in villages along the coast and also the right to peaceful and non-aggressive picketing. The salient points of the agreement were as follows:

1. The Congress was supposed to discontinue the Civil Disobedience movement.
2. The Congress was supposed to participate in the Round Table Conference.
3. The government was supposed to withdraw all ordinances issued to curb the Congress.

4. The government was supposed to withdraw all prosecutions relating to offenses not involving violence.
5. The government was supposed to release all persons undergoing sentences of imprisonment for their activities in the Civil Disobedience Movement. The pact indicated British government was anxious to bring the Congress to the conference table.

### **SECOND ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE (12 SEPTEMBER 1931)**

The second session of the conference opened in London on 7 September 1931, during the viceroyalty of Lord Willington. Gandhi attended, it on behalf of the Indian National Congress. Pt. Madan Mohan Malviya and Sarojin Naidu went there in their personal capacity. The main task of the conference was done through two committees on federal structure and minorities. Nothing much was expected from the conference. The imperialist political forces, which ultimately controlled the British Government in London, were opposed to any political or economic concession being given to India which could lead to its independence. The Round Table Conference, however, failed as Gandhi opposed the British Prime Minister Ramsay Macdonald's policy of communal representation and the British Government refused the basic Indian demand for freedom.

The communal problem represented the most difficult issue for the delegates. Gandhi again tabled the proposal for a settlement, but the Muslim League rejected it. As a result, the communal issue was postponed for future discussion. Three important committees drafted

their reports; the Franchise Committee, the Federal Finance Committee and the States Inquiry Committee.

The conference closed on 11 December 1931, without any concrete result. On the concluding day, the British Prime Minister appealed to the Indian leaders to reach a communal settlement. Failing to do so, he said, would force the British government to take a unilateral decision. Jinnah did not participate in the session of the Second Round Table Conference as he had decided to keep himself aloof from Indian politics and to practise as a professional lawyer in England. On his return to India, Gandhi once again started Civil Disobedience movement, and was duly arrested.

### **CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENT (SECOND PHASE)**

Lord Willington, who took charge as the new Viceroy of India in April 1931, paid no heed to the Delhi pact and started breaching the pact on various counts. The Congress was already angry with the government over the execution of Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev on 23 March 1931. The Congress was declared as an illegal party by Viceroy Lord Willington and the Viceroy's measures to curb Indian nationalism and harass Congressmen was not taken lightly by the Congress. Gandhi returned to India on 28 December 1932, and was compelled to resume the second phase of the disobedience movement. Within 10 days, more than 60,000 activists of the Congress were arrested and confined to jail. The second phase of the disobedience movement carried on till 1934. With the government repression, the Civil Disobedience Movement gradually waned. The Congress officially suspended the movement in May 1933. Gandhi also withdrew from active

politics and formally left the Indian National Congress. As a result, the membership of the Congress dropped to less than five lakhs.

### **THIRD ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE (17 NOVEMBER 1932)**

The third session began on 17 November 1932, but again proved fruitless since the national leaders were in prison. The Indian National Congress was not represented, and Mahatma Gandhi was also absent. The session was short and unimportant. Reports of the various committees were scrutinised. The conference ended on 25 December 1932. The recommendations of the Round Table Conferences were embodied in a White Paper. It was published in March 1933, and debated in Parliament directly afterwards, analysed by the Joint Select Committee and after the final reading and royal assent, the bill reached the Statute Book on 24 July 1935. It was held in London on 12 November 1930, to discuss the Simon Commission, but was totally boycotted by the Indian National Congress.

#### **Karachi session of Congress (1931)**

The Congress session in Karachi in March 1931, endorsed the Gandhi-Irwin Pact. During this session, the Congress also adopted the memorable resolution of Fundamental Rights of Indians and the National economic Programme (drafted by Jawaharlal Nehru) which included the national democratic charter, the nationalisation of key industries in India, agrarian reforms, free and compulsory primary education and protection of culture, language and script of the minorities of different linguistic areas.

### **THE COMMUNAL AWARD (1932)**

While Gandhi was arrested on his return from London after the Second Round Table Conference, Ramsay Macdonald announced the Communal Award on 16 August 1932. This was another expression of the age-old British policy of 'Divide and Rule'. Besides containing provisions for representation of Muslims, Sikhs and Europeans, it envisaged communal representation of the depressed classes also. According to the Award, the right of separate electorates was not only given to the Muslims of India, but also to all the minority communities in the country. The Award declared untouchables or Harijans as a minority and thus the Hind depressed classes were given a number of special seats, to filled from special depressed class electorates in the areas where the voters were concentrated. Under the Communal Award, the principle of weightage was also maintained with some modifications in the Muslim minority provinces. The principle was also applied for Europeans in Bengal and Assam, Sikhs in Punjab and, North-West Frontier Province and Hindus in Sindh and North-West, Frontier Province.

#### **The communal Awards**

Gandhi was deeply grieved by the Communal award and went on a fast in protest against the award since it aimed to divide India on a communal basis. While many Indians saw the fast as a diversion from the ongoing political movement, all were deeply concerned and emotionally shaken. Almost everywhere in India, mass meetings took place. Political leaders of different persuasions, such as Madan Mohan Malviya, B. R. Ambedkar and M. C. Rajah became active. In the end, they succeeded in hammering out an agreement,

known as the Poona Pact, between caste Hindus and the 'untouchable' leaders on 20 September 1932. The leaders of the various groups and parties among the Hindus and B. R. Ambedkar on behalf of the Harijans, signed the pact. The Poona Pact between caste Hindus and the depressed classes agreed upon a joint electorate.

The award was not popular with any Indian party, The Muslims were not happy with the Communal Award as it had reduced their majority in Punjab and Bengal to a minority. Yet, they were prepared to accept it. In its annual session held in November 1933, the All India Muslim League passed a resolution that read: 'Though the decision falls far short of the Muslim demands, the Muslims have accepted it in the best interest of the country, reserving to themselves the right to press for the acceptance of all their demands.'

On the other hand, the Congress refused to accept the Award and decided to launch a campaign against it. The Congress did not accept the untouchables as a minority and Gandhi undertook, a fast unto death. The Congress organised the Allahabad Unity Conference in which they demanded the replacement of separate electorates by joint electorates. Many nationalist Muslims and Sikhs also participated in the conference. Gandhi also held meetings with the leaders of the untouchables and convinced them that they were very much part of the mainstream Hindu society. He signed the Poona Pact with Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, the leader of untouchables. The Congress met many of the untouchables' demands in the Poona Pact.

### **POONA PACT (1932)**

The Communal award created immense dissatisfaction among the Hindus. Gandhi staked his life to get the award repudiated. In jail, Gandhi began his fast unto death against the Communal award. The fast ended on 26 September 1932, with the Poona Pact between Gandhi and Ambedkar. This annulled the Communal award. According to the Pact, the idea of separate electorates for the depressed classes (Harijans) was abandoned, but the seats reserved for them in the provincial legislatures were increased.

### **THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA ACT (1935)**

After the failure of the Third Round Table Conference the British government gave the Joint Select Committee the task of formulating a new Act for India. The Simon Commission Report submitted in 1930, formed the basis for the Government of India Act, 1935. The new Act received the royal assent on 4 August 1935. It was the last major constructive achievement of the British in India; its significance matched both its hulk and the deliberations in its preparation.

The committee comprised 16 members each from the House of Commons and the House of Lords, 20 representatives from British India, and seven from the princely states. Lord Linlithgow was appointed as the president of the committee. After a year and a half of deliberations, the committee finally came out with a draft Bill on 5 February 1935. The Bill was discussed in the House of Commons for 43 days and in the House of Lords for 13 days and finally, after being signed by the King, was enforced as the Government of India Act, 1935.

### **Reaction to the Act of 1935**



The Act of 1935 was condemned by nearly all sections of the Indian public 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. Although the Congress opposed the Act, yet it contested the elections when the Constitution was introduced on 1 April 1937. The Congress formed ministries; first in 6 provinces and then in another two. The Congress high command exercised a great hold upon the ministries of each province. The Muslim League was, however, not happy with the Congress rule, especially Jinnah, who described it in these words; Congress was drunk with power and was oppressive against the Muslims.'

### **Main Features of the Act**

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 the eighteenth-century presidencies; recognition in 1909; and the safeguards devised in 1919, were all continued and in most cases extended. In addition, there were certain new principles introduced. It provided a federal type of government. Thus, the Act:

- (a) introduced provincial autonomy;
- (b) abolished dyarchy in provinces; and
- (c) made ministers responsible to the legislature and federation at the Centre.

The salient features of the Act were as follows:

1. A federation of India was promised, comprising both British provinces and Princely states. The British wanted the princes to counter-balance the anti-imperialist doctrines of the nationalist leaders. The provisions of the Act establishing the federal Central Government were not to become operative until a specified number of rulers of states had signed the Instruments of Accession. As this did not happen, the Central Government continued to function in accordance with the 1919 Act, and only the part of the 1935 Act dealing with the provincial governments became operational.
2. The Governor-General remained the head of the central administration and enjoyed wide powers concerning administration, legislation and finance.
3. No finance bill could be placed in the Central Legislature without the consent of the Governor-General.
4. The Federal Legislature was to consist of two houses, the Council of State (Upper House) and the Federal Assembly (Lower House).
5. The Council of State was to consist of 260 members, out of whom 156 were to be elected from British India and 104 to be nominated by the rulers of the princely states.
6. The Federal Assembly was to consist of 375 members; out of which 250 were to be elected by the Legislative Assemblies of the British Indian provinces, while 125 were to be nominated by the rulers of the princely states.
7. The Central Legislature had the right to pass any bill, but the bill required the approval of the Governor-General

- before it became law. On the other hand, the Governor-General had the power to frame ordinances.
8. The Indian Council was abolished. In its place, a few advisers were nominated to help the Secretary of State for India.
  9. The Secretary of State was not expected to interfere in matters that the Governor-General dealt with, with the help of the Indian ministers.
  10. The provinces were given autonomy with respect to subjects delegated to them.
  11. Dyarchy, which had been established in the provinces by the Act of 1919, was to be established at the Centre. However, it came to an end in the provinces.
  12. Two new provinces—Sindh and Orissa—were created.
  13. Reforms were introduced in the North-West Frontier Province as also in the other provinces.
  14. Separate electorates were continued as before.
  15. One-third Muslim representation in the Central Legislature was guaranteed.
  16. Autonomous Provincial Governments in 11 provinces, under ministries responsible to the legislatures, were to be set up.
  17. Burma and Aden were separated from India.
  18. The Federal Court was established at the Centre.
  19. The Reserve Bank of India was established.
  20. The Governors had the power to veto legislative action and the power to legislate on their own.

## **WORLD WAR II AND THE INDIAN POLITICAL SITUATION**

Just before World War II broke out, the Congress declared its unwillingness to associate itself to the British government. It also clearly informed the government that India should not be pushed to war without the consent of the Indian people. The British government also made no clear statement concerning its war and peace aims as applicable to India. The British Prime Minister stated that the British were in the war to maintain the world safe for democracy and uphold the right of every nation to self-determination after the war. He further promised, (a) the immediate determination. On 3 September 1939, Britain declared war expansion of the Viceroy's executive council by inducting against Germany. The Governor-General to India, Lord Linlithgow, began dispatching the Indian troops to the battlefield, without consulting the Indian leaders. The Governor-General also declared emergency in India under Article 93 of the Act of 1935, to curb internal disorder. The Congress told the British government that if it is fighting Germany for the maintenance and extension of democracy, then it must first extend full democracy to India. On 10 October 1939, the Congress pressed the government to free India after the war. The Viceroy, on 17 October 1939, made an official statement, declaring that the British Government had promised to issue dominion status to India and the Act of 1935, was to be reconsidered after the war.

## **RESIGNATION OF CONGRESS MINISTERS (1939)**

The national reaction to the declaration to the Governor-General's statement was hostile. The Indians wanted complete independence and were not satisfied with the promise of mere dominion status. On 22 October 1939, the Congress ministers resigned from their offices in the eight provinces. This action by the Congress



changed the course of history. It lost its important bargaining position at an important juncture and it was never able to retrieve that position. However, the Muslim League provocatively, declared 22 December 1939, as a 'Day of Deliverance' from the oppressions of the 'Congress Raj'.

### **POONA RESOLUTION AND CONDITIONAL SUPPORT TO BRITAIN (1941)**

After the French surrender on 5 June 1940, the British were left alone against the German forces. The British government was in no position to handle disorder in India. It appealed the Indian political parties for support and cooperation. On 7 July 1941, the Congress passed a resolution at Poona providing conditional support to Britain. The conditions included:

- (a) India's right to self governance after the war must be recognised in clear terms; and
- (b) a provisional national government at the Centre, consisting of all political parties be set up.

### **AUGUST OFFER OF 1940**

The Governor-General subsequently issued a statement from Simla on 8 August 1940, that the British Government would establish a full responsible government on the dominion more Indians. Also, the responsibility of framing the constitution would be given to the Indians. This amounted to agreeing to the Congress demand for a Constituent Assembly, (b) He also declared that a War Advisory Committee with an Indian perspective would be constituted, (c) That initiatives would be taken for an agreement among the Indians in the form

of the representative body after the war was over. He added that the British government could not contemplate the transfer of its personal responsibilities for the peace and welfare of India to any system of government whose authority was directly denied by a large and principle element in India's national life. Because of this condition, the offer fell short of the Congress demand of a national government. The Congress rejected the offer as the British government put the majority at the mercy of the minority. The Muslim League had another reason for rejecting the offer as the government did not provide for equal partnership to Muslims in the Centre and Provincial Government.

### **THE INDIVIDUAL CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE**

The political crisis in India was deepening and the Congressmen looked upon Gandhi to lead them. Gandhi did not want to do anything that would bring political disorder in the country in the critical war situation. He resorted to a novel form of Satyagraha, the individual satyagraha, which kept the torch of nationalism burning. It had a symbolic character against the attitude of the government. It drew the attention of the world at large to the right to self-determination. Lord Linlithgow described the August Movement of 1942 as the most serious revolt after the Sepoy mutiny. Some places even saw large scale peasants' participation. In November 1940, the individual Satyagraha started and Vinoba Bhave became the first satyagrahi and Jawaharlal Nehru the second. They were followed by more than 30,000 individuals who courted imprisonment in this movement. This movement continued during 1940-1941, and almost the entire ZT™ leadership was in prison.

## TWO-NATION THEORY

### The Lahore Resolution

From 22 to 24 March 1940, the All India Muslim League held its annual session at the Minto Park, Lahore. This session proved to be historic. On the first day of the session Muhammad Ah Jinnah narrated the events of some preceding months. In an extempore speech, he presented his own - solution to the Muslim problem. He said that the problem of India was not of an inter-communal nature, but manifestly an international one and must be treated as such. To him, the differences between Hindus and Muslims were so great and so sharp that their union under one Central Government was full of serious risks. They belonged to two separate and distinct nations and therefore, the only chance open was to allow them to have separate states. In the words of Jinnah: 'Hindus and Muslims belong to two different religions, philosophies, social customs and literature. They neither inter-marry nor inter-dine anti, indeed, they belong to two different civilizations that are based mainly on conflicting ideas and conceptions. Their concepts on life and of life are different. It is quite clear that the Hindus and the Muslims derive their inspiration from different sources of history. They have different epics, different heroes and different episodes. Very often the hero of one is a foe of the other, and likewise, their victories and defeats overlap. To yoke together two such nations under a single state, one as a numerical minority and the other as a majority, must lead to growing discontent and final destruction of any fabric that may be so built up for the government of such a state'. He further said nation according to any definition of nation. We wish our people to develop to the fullest spiritual, cultural, economic, social and political life in a way that

we think best and in consonance with our own ideals and according to Jinnah, the Chief Minister of Bengal, A. K. Fazl-ul-Haq, moved the historic resolution, which has since come to be known as the Lahore Resolution and the Pakistan Resolution.

### Two-Nation Theory: Origin of the Concept

This theory held that there were two nations - one belonging to the Hindus and one to the Muslims - living in the territory of India. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan was the first exponent of the Two-Nation Theory in the modern era. He believed that India was a continent and not a country, and that among the vast population of different races and different creeds, Hindus and Muslims were the two major components. Events such as the Urdu-Hindi controversy (1867), the partition of Bengal (1905), and the Hindu revivalism set the Hindus and the Muslims further apart. However, the annulment of the partition of Bengal in 1911 by the British Government brought the Congress and the Muslim League on one platform. Starting with the constitutional cooperation in the Lucknow Pact (1916), they launched the Non-cooperation and Khilafat movements to press upon the British government the demand for constitutional reforms in India in the post-World War I era.

### Reaction to the Two-Nation Theory

The politicisation of the Muslim community came about as a consequence of three developments:

- (a) Various efforts towards Islamic reform and revival during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

- (b) The impact of Hindu-based nationalism.
- (c) The democratisation of the government of British India.

While the antecedents of Muslim nationalism in India go back to the early Islamic conquests of India, organizationally it stems from the demands presented by the Simla deputation to Lord Minto, the Governor-General of India, in October 1906, proposing separate electorates for the Indian Muslims. The principal reason behind this demand was the maintenance of a separate identity of the Muslim nationhood.

In the same year, the founding of the All India Muslim League, a separate political organization for Muslims, highlighted the fact that the Muslims of India had lost trust in the Hindu-dominated Indian National Congress. Besides being a Hindu-dominated body, the Congress leaders, in order to win support at the grass roots for their political movement, used Hindu religious symbols and slogans, thereby arousing Muslim suspicions regarding the secular character of the Congress.

After the collapse of the Khilafat Movement, Hindu-Muslim antagonism revived once again. The Muslim League rejected the proposals forwarded by the Nehru Report and they chose a separate path for themselves. The idea of a separate homeland for the Muslims of Northern India as proposed by Allama Iqbal in his famous Allahabad Address showed that the creation of two separate states for the Muslims and Hindus was the only solution. The idea was reiterated during the Sindh provincial meeting of the League, and finally adopted as the official League position in the Lahore Declaration of 23 March 1940.

Thus, these historical, cultural, religious and social differences between the Hindus and the Muslims accelerated the pace of political

developments, finally leading to the division of British India into two separate, independent states—Pakistan and India—on 14 and 15 August 1947, respectively.

### **DEMAND FOR PAKISTAN (1942)**

In 1930, Iqbal suggested the union of the Frontier Province, Baluchistan, Sindh and Kashmir into a Muslim state within the federation. This proved to be the idea which germinated during the early 1930s and burst into vigorous life with the advent of the new reforms. The idealist Chaudhry Rehmat Ali developed this concept in Cambridge, where he inspired groups of young Muslims and invented the term Pakistan. His ideas seemed visionary during that time. Within 7 years, these ideas were turned into a political programme by Muhammad Ali Jinnah. The ideology of Iqbal, the vision of Rehmat Ali and the fears of the Muslims were thus united by the practical genius of Jinnah to bind the Muslims together as never before. It was to lead to the creation of a new state—Pakistan.

In 1942, the British government realised that it could not ignore the Indian problems any more. The situation worsened for the British with the Japanese advance towards the Indian borders. By 7 March 1942, Rangoon fell and Japan occupied the entire South-east Asia. The British government under Prime Minister Winston Churchill, with a view of getting cooperation from the Indians, sent Sir Stafford Cripps on 22 March 1942, a member of the British cabinet, to India to settle terms with the Indian leaders. The Congress sent Pandit Nehru and Maulana Azad to negotiate on their behalf.

### **CRIPPS MISSION (MARCH 1942)**

The important points made by the Cripps Mission were as follows:

- (a) General elections in the provinces would be arranged as soon as the war ended.
- (b) A new Indian dominion, associated with the United Kingdom, would be created.
- (c) Those provinces not joining the dominion could form their own separate union.
- (d) Minorities were to be protected.
- (e) Provision for forming the Constitution making body.

However, both the Congress and the Muslim League rejected these proposals. Jinnah opposed the plan, as it did not concede Pakistan.

## **QUIT INDIA MOVEMENT (1942-1945)**

### **Origin and Objective**

The Indian leaders were concerned about their national interest in case the Allied forces were defeated in World War II. The news of British defeats at the hands of the Japanese was instrumental in making the Indian leaders believe that the British power was fading. There was a acute shortage of foodstuff in India and the rate of inflation to alarming levels. The British who managed their own economy carefully seemed unconcerned about the state of affairs in India. The failure of the Cripps' Mission made the Congress aware that they would have to take some active steps to compel the British to leave India if the Indians were to gain independence. On 8 August 1942, the Congress in its meeting at Mumbai passed a resolution known as the 'Quit India' resolution, whereby Gandhi asked the British to quit India and gave a 'Do or die' call to his countrymen.

### **Spread of Violence**

On 9 August 1942, Gandhi was arrested, but the other leaders continued the revolutionary struggle. Violence spread throughout the country, several government offices were destroyed and damaged, telegraph lines were cut and communications paralysed. The movement was, however, crushed by the government.

### **Gandhi's Fast**

Gandhi undertook a 21-day fast in jail. His condition deteriorated after 13 days and all hopes of his surviving were given up. However, he survived and completed the 21-day fast. 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. Gandhi not only refused to condemn the people resorting to violence but unequivocally held the government responsible for it. The popular response to the news of the fast was immediate and overwhelming. All over the country, there were demonstrations and strikes. The fast had done exactly what it had intended to. Public morale was raised, the anti-British feeling heightened, and an opportunity for the political activity provided.

### **Significance of the Quit India Movement**

The Quit India movement marked a new high in terms of popular participation in the national movement and sympathy with the national cause. As earlier, students were at the forefront of the struggle. Women, especially school girls, played a vital role. Aruna Asaf Ali, Sucheta Kriplani and Usha Mehta were among the important members of small groups participating in the agitation. 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 matter of transfer of power. Independence was no longer a matter of bargain now.

### **Usha Mehta**

Usha Mehta was a staunch supporter of the Gandhian movement and ideology. She was born on 25 March 1920 in Saras village near Surat in Gujarat. She was the mastermind for organising the Congress Radio during the Quit India Movement in 1942, which was also known as the Secret Congress Radio. The first telecast on this radio was on 14 August 1942. Her associates were Vithalbhai Jhaveri Chandrakant Jhaveri, Babubhai Thakkar, Nanka Motwani who supplied equipments and provided technicians. In 1998 the Government of India conferred on her Padma Vibhushan, the second highest civilian award of the Indian republic. She died on 11 August 2000.

### **THE CR FORMULA (1944)**

Chakravarti Rajagopalachari consented to the idea of partition and made the following proposals on 9 September 1944:

1. Major parties such as the Congress and the Muslim League would form a coalition government;
2. After World War II, a definite boundary would be marked between India and Pakistan;
3. Voluntary settlement by the people would be allowed in both the countries. However, the Muslim League opposed these proposals.

### **GANDHI-JINNAH TALKS (1944)**

The Gandhi-Jinnah talks were very important as these dealt with the political problems of India and the issue of two-nation theory of the Muslim League. They began their talks as the general public wished for an amicable solution to the Hindu-Muslim differences. On 17 July 1944, Gandhi sent a letter to Jinnah expressing his wish to meet him. The formal talk started in Mumbai on 19 September 1944, and continued till 24 September. The talks were not only held directly but also through correspondence. Gandhi conveyed to Jinnah that he had come to meet him on his own. He was not representing anybody. The main objective of the talks for Gandhi was to make Jinnah realise the absurdness of the whole proposition of Pakistan.

Throughout the talks, Gandhi maintained that India was one nation and saw in the Pakistan resolution 'nothing but ruin for the whole of India. If, however, Pakistan had conceded, the areas in which the Muslims are in an absolute majority should be demarcated by a commission approved by both the Congress and the Muslim League. The wishes of the people of these areas will be obtained through referendum. These areas shall form a separate state as soon as possible after India is free from foreign domination. There shall be a treaty of separation which should also provide for the efficient and satisfactory administration of foreign affairs, defence, internal communication, customs and the like, which must necessarily continue to be the matters of common interest between the contracting countries'.

This meant, in effect, that power over the whole of India would first be transferred to the Congress, which, thereafter, would allow the Muslim majority areas that voted for separation

to be constituted, not as an independent sovereign state, but as part of an Indian federation. Gandhi contended that his offer gave the substance of the Lahore Resolution. Jinnah did not agree to the proposal and the talks ended.

### **DESAI-LIAQAT PACT (1945)**

After the failure of Gandhi-Jinnah talks in 1944, another attempt was made by the Congress and the Muslim League leaders to find a way out from the political impasse. The Congress representative of the Central Assembly, Bhulabhai Jeevanji Desai and his Muslim League counterpart, Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan met and came up with the following proposals:

1. Both the Congress and the Muslim League would join in forming an interim government at the Centre which would function as per the Act of 1935, independent of the Governor-General.
2. The interim government would have equal seats for representatives of both the parties, with adequate representation of the minorities. This pact came to be known as the Desai-Liaquat pact; it, however, never got approval from either the Congress or the Muslim League.

### **Achievements of the Indian National Army (INA)**

The achievements of the INA fell much short of its targets, but it acquired a great significance in the history of India, it created a design of communal harmony in India. India's freedom struggle, which was till then a territorial struggle against the ruling government became an international issue. The Indian Army also started thinking of

independent India and showed little will to fight for the British crown. It also gave Congress the knowledge that its non-violent methods to gain independence may not be adequate. Overall, the INA helped expedite the process of the Indian independence.

### **WAVELL PLAN AND SIMLA CONFERENCE (1945)**

In May 1945, Lord Wavell, the Viceroy of India, went to London to discuss with the British administration about the future of India. The talks resulted in the formulation of a plan of action that was made public in June 1945. The plan was known as the Wavell Plan.

The plan suggested the reconstitution of the Viceroy's Executive Council in which the Viceroy was to select people nominated by the political parties. Different communities were also to get their due share in the Council and parity was to be reserved by having equal representation for both the Hindus and the Muslims. While declaring the plan, the Secretary of State for Indian Affairs made it clear that the British government wanted to listen to the ideas of all major Indian communities. Yet, he said, ★ that was only possible if the leadership of the main Indian political parties agreed to the suggestions of the British government.

To discuss these proposals with the Indian leaders, Wavell called for a conference at Simla on 25 June 1945. Leaders of both the Congress and the Muslim League attended the Simla Conference. However, differences arose between the leadership of the two parties on the issue of representation of the Muslim community. The Muslim League claimed that it was the only representative party of the Muslims in India and thus, all the Muslim representatives

in the Viceroy's Executive Council should be the nominees of the party. The Congress, which had sent Maulana Azad as the leader of their delegation, tried to prove that their party represented all the communities living in India and thus should be allowed to nominate Muslim representatives as well. The Congress also opposed the idea of parity. This resulted in a deadlock. Finally, on 14 July Wavell announced the failure of his efforts.

### **PROVINCIAL AND GENERAL ELECTIONS OF 1945**

With the failure of the Simla Conference, Lord Wavell announced that the Central and Provincial Legislature elections would be held in the winter of 1945. after which a constitution-making body would be set up. He also announced that after the elections, the Viceroy would set up an Executive Council that would have the support of the main Indian political parties. Both the Muslim League and the Congress opposed the proposal.

While Jinnah declared that the Muslims were not ready to accept any settlement less than a separate homeland, the All India Congress Committee characterised the proposal as vague, inadequate and unsatisfactory because it had not addressed the issue of independence. Despite this, the two parties launched huge election campaigns. They knew that the elections would be crucial for the future of India, as the results were to play an important role in determining their stand. The League wanted to sweep the Muslim constituencies so as to prove that they were the sole representatives of the Muslims of India, while Congress wanted to prove that, irrespective of religion represented all the Indians.

Both the Muslim League and the Congress promulgated opposite slogans during their campaign Muslim League presented a one-point manifesto 'want Pakistan, vote for the Muslim League'. Jinnah hi toured the length and breadth of India and tried to unite the Muslim community under the banner of the Muslim League.

The Congress, on the other hand, stood for a united India. To counter the Muslim League; the Congress press, termed Jinnuh's demand for Pakistan as the 'vivisection of Mother India', 'reactionary primitivism' and 'religious barbarism'. The Congress tried to brand the Muslim League as an ultra-conservative clique of knights, Khan, Bahadurs, toadies and government pensioners. The Congress also tried to get support of all the provincial and central Muslim parties who had some differences with the League, and backed them in the elections. Elections for the Central Legislature were held in December 1945. Though the franchise was limited, the turnover was extraordinary.

The Congress was able to sweep the polls for the non-Muslim seats. They managed to win more than 80 per cent of the general seats and about 91.3 per cent of the total general votes'. The League's performance, however, was even more impressive: it managed to win all the 30 seats reserved for the Muslims. The results of the provincial elections held in early 1946 were not different. The Congress won most of the non-Muslim seats while the Muslim League captured approximately 95 per cent of the Muslim seats.

In a bulletin issued on 6 January 1946, the Central Election Board of the Congress claimed that the election results had vindicated the party as the biggest, strongest and the most

representative organization in the country. On the other hand, the League celebrated 11 January 1946, as the Day of Victory and declared that the election results were enough to prove that the Muslim League, under the leadership of Jinnah, was the sole representative of the Muslims of the region.

### **Notable Books and journals of Pre-independent India Books**

1. Causes of Indian Mutiny: Syed Ahmad Khan
2. Percepts of Jesus. Raja Ram Mohan Roy
3. Satyarth Prahash: Swami Dayanand
4. The Indian Struggle: Subhas Chandra Bose
5. Poverty and the UnBritish Rule in India: Dadabhai Naroji
6. Neel Darpan: Dinabandhu Mitra
7. Hind Swaraj: Mahatma Gandhi
8. What Congress and Gandhi Have Done to Untouchables: Dr B. R. Ambedkar

#### **Journals**

1. Kesari: Bal Gangadhar Tilak
2. Bande Matram: Madam Cama
3. New India: Bipin Chandra Pal
4. Comrade: Mohammad Ali
5. Sonjeevani: Krishna Kumar Mitra
6. Satya Prakash Karsandas Mulji
7. Dina Mitra: (Satyashodhak Samaj Paper) Mukundrao Patil
8. Free Hindustan: Taraknath Das
9. Bandi jivan: Sachindranath Sanyal

### **CABINET MISSION PLAN (1946)**

The struggle for freedom entered a decisive phase in the year 1945-1946. All attempts by the British government to establish peace between the Congress and the Muslim League had failed. The result of the general elections held in 1945-1946 served to underline

the urgency to find a solution to the political deadlock, the result of non-cooperation between the two major parties. To end this, the British government sent a special mission of cabinet ministers to India.

The British Prime Minister, Lord Attlee, made a declaration on 15 March 1946, that a ★ Cabinet Mission would visit India to make recommendations regarding constitutional reforms to be introduced in India. The mission envisaged the establishment of a Constituent Assembly to frame the Constitution as well as an interim government. The purpose of the mission could be summed up as follows:

1. Preparatory discussions with the elected representatives of British India and the Indian states to secure agreement as to the method of framing the constitution.
2. Setting up of a constitution body.
3. Setting up an Executive Council with the support of the main Indian parties.

It consisted of Lord Pethick Lawrence, the Secretary of State for India, Sir Stafford Cripps, President of the Board of Trade, and A. V. Alexander, the First Lord of the Admiralty. The Mission arrived on 24 March 1946. After extensive discussions with the Congress and the Muslim League, the Cabinet Mission put forward its own proposal on 16 May 1946. The main points of the plan were as follows;

1. There would be a union of India which will include both the British India as well as the Indian states and in which the Union would deal with foreign affairs, defence and communications. The union would involve an Executive and a Legislature.
2. All residuary powers would belong to the provinces.
3. A province would be divided into three sections. The provinces could opt out of



any group after the first general election.

- (a) Northwest frontier provinces, Baluchistan and Punjab; (b) Bengal and Assam and (c) the other states.
4. There would also be an interim government having the support of the major political parties.
  5. The Pakistan demand was rejected.
  6. A federal constitution would be formed, and a separate electorate considered.

The Congress accepted the plan on 24 May 1946, though it rejected the interim set up. The Muslim League accepted the plan on 6 June 1946. The Viceroy should now have invited the Muslim League to form the government as it had accepted the interim set up; but he did not do so.

## **AZAD HIND FAUJ (INDIAN NATIONAL ARMY)**

### **Origin and Purpose**

Subhas Chandra Bose, popularly known as 'Netaji', was not convinced by the policy of the Congress to acquire freedom. He was an extremist and felt that it was impossible to compel the British to leave India without force.

In 1943, Netaji formed the Azad Hind Fauj (Indian National Army) in Singapore and gave his famous call 'Dilli chalo'. He started a military campaign for the independence of India. Indian residents of South-east Asia and Indian soldiers and officers captured by the Japanese forces in Malaya, Singapore and Burma joined the INA in large numbers.

### **Rise and Decline**

Subhas Chandra Bose set up the headquarter of the INA in two places—Rangoon

and Singapore—recruits were sought from civilians, funds were gathered, and even a women's regiment called the Rani Jhansi regiment was formed. One INA battalion also accompanied the Japanese Army to the Indo-Burma front to participate in the Imphal campaign. But with the defeat of Japan in 1944—1945, the INA also died out. Bose is said to have been killed in an air crash on his way to Tokyo in August 1945. But his death is still considered a mystery.

### **Subhas Chandra Bose (1897-1945)**

Born in Cuttack, Bengal, and educated at the universities of Kolkata and Cambridge, Subhas Chandra Bose left a career in the Indian Civil Service to fight for India's independence and was imprisoned a dozen times by the British. He shared the leadership of India's youth and peasant societies with Jawaharlal Nehru and became the president of the Indian National Congress in 1938. Bose was opposed, however, by Gandhi, whose principle of non-violence he did not accept, and was forced to resign the following year. In 1941, hoping to take advantage of the war to free India of the British rule, Bose fled to Germany. From there he went to Malaya, where he set up (1943) a Provisional Government of Free India, and with Japanese help, organised the so-called Indian National Army. Bose led his troops against the British on the Burma-India frontier until 1945; He is speculated to have been killed in a plane crash while fleeing to Japan in August of that year.

### **DIRECT ACTION CAMPAIGN (1946)**

Provoked by the success of the Congress, the Muslim League launched a direct action campaign on 16 August 1946, to achieve

Pakistan which resulted in communal riots across the country. Rioting broke out on an unprecedented scale, especially in Bengal and Bihar, the massacre of Muslims in Kolkata brought Gandhi to scene, where he worked with the Muslim provincial Chief Minister Hussain Shaheed Suhrawardy. Gandhiji's and Suhrawardy's efforts calmed fears in Bengal, but rioting quickly spread elsewhere.

It disassociated itself from the Cabinet Plan. As a result, Viceroy Wavell invited the Congress to join the interim government, although it had practically rejected the plan. However, the Viceroy soon realised the futility of the scheme without the participation of the League. Therefore, on 14 October 1946, he extended an invitation to them ask well. Jinnah nominated Liaqat Ali Khan. T. T. Chundrigar, SardarAbdurRabNishtar, GhavanfarAli Khan and Jogandra Nath Mandal to the cabinet. The Congress allocated the Finance Ministry to the League. This, in effect, placed the whole governmental set-up under the Muslim League. As Minister of Finance, Liaqat Ali Khan presented a budget which was called a 'poor man's budget' and it adversely affected the Hindu capitalists. Disagreements among the ministers paralysed the government, already haunted by the spectre of civil war.

The deadlock between the Congress and the League further worsened in this set-up. On 22 March 1947, Lord Mountbatten arrived as the last Viceroy of India. He announced that power would be transferred from the British to Indian hands by June 1948. Mountbatten assessed the situation and was convinced that Congress was willing to accept partition as the price of independence; Jinnah would accept a smaller Pakistan than the one he demanded, that is, all of Punjab and Bengal, and the Sikhs would learn to accept the division of Punjab. Mountbatten was able to persuade most Indian leaders that

immediate acceptance of his plan was imperative. Lord Mountbatten entered into a series of talks with the Congress and the Muslim League. Jinnah made it clear that the demand for Pakistan had the support of all the Muslims of India and that he could not withdraw from it. With staunch extremists, such as Patel, agreeing to the Muslim demand for a separate homeland, Mountbatten now prepared for the partition of India and announced it on 3 June 1947.

### **INTERIM GOVERNMENT (1946)**

On 2 September 1946, an interim government was formed on the 6-5-3 formula. It had six Congressmen, five Muslim League representatives and three representatives of the minorities. The composition of the 14-member interim government was as follows:

1. Jawaharlal Nehru (Vice-President)
2. Vallabhbhai Patel (Home, Information Executive Council External Affairs and Broadcasting and Commonwealth Relations)
3. Baldev Singh (Defence)
4. Liaqat Ali Khan (Finance)
5. Dr. John Matthai (Industries and Supplies)
6. Ghazanfar Ali Khan (Health)
7. Rajendra Prasad (Food and Agriculture)
8. Jogindernath Mandal (Law)
9. C. H. Bhaba (Works, Mines, and Power)
10. Jagjivan Ram (Labour)
11. T. T. Chudrigar (Commerce)
12. Abdur Rah Nishtar (Communications)
13. Asaf Ali (Railways)
14. C. Rajagopalachari (Education)

The Muslim League joined the interim government without any intention to cooperate. They kept on organising anti-Congress and anti-Hindu rallies in Punjab and the United Provinces. Liaqat Ali, the Finance Minister,

presented the first budget, which was allegedly designed to harm the industrialists and the merchant community dominated by the Hindus. The Muslim League kept its hard stance of not joining the Constituent Assembly, which began its sitting in New Delhi on 9 December 1946, and started pressing for its demand of Pakistan.

### **MOUNTBATTEN PLAN (1947)**

On 3 June 1947, Lord Mountbatten announced a plan offering a key to the political and constitutional deadlock

#### **Chronology of Indian National Movement: (1940 Onwards)**

Lahore Session 1940 (Muslim League)  
August Offer 1940  
Individual CDM 1940 (by Gandhi)  
Cripps' Mission 1942  
Quit India Movement 1942  
Karachi Session 1943 (Muslim League)  
Simla Conference and Wavell Plan; 1945  
Cabinet Mission 1946  
Interim Government 1946  
Attlee Announcement February 1947  
Mountbatten Plan June 1947  
India Independence Bill July 1947

created by the refusal of the Muslim League to join the Constituent Assembly formed to frame the Constitution of India. Mountbatten's formula was to divide India but to 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 the League's position to some extent. The League's position on Pakistan was conceded in that it would be created, but the Congress position on unity would be taken into account to make Pakistan as small as possible. He laid

down detailed principles for the partition of the country and speedy transfer of political power in the form of dominion status to the newly formed dominions of India and Pakistan. Its acceptance by the Congress and the Muslim League resulted in the birth of Pakistan.

### **June 3rd Plan**

Earlier, when all of Mountbatten's efforts to keep India united failed, he asked Ismay, Chief of Staff, to chalk out a plan for the transfer of power and the division of the country. It was decided that none of the Indian parties would view it before the plan was finalised.

However, before the announcement of the plan, Nehru who was staying with Mountbatten as a guest at his residence at Simla, had a look at the plan and rejected it. Mountbatten then asked V. P. Menon, the only Indian in his personal staff, to present a new plan for the transfer of power. Nehru edited Menon's formula and then Mountbatten himself took the new plan to London, where he got it approved without any alteration. Attlee and his cabinet gave the approval in a meeting that lasted not more than five minutes. Mountbatten came back from London on 31 May, and on 2 June, met the Indian leaders including Nehru, Patel, Kripalani, Jinnah, Liaquat Ali, Nishtar and Baldev Singh. After these leaders approved the plan, Mountbatten discussed it with Gandhi and convinced him that it was the best plan under the circumstances. The plan was made public on 3 June, and is thus known as the 3rd Plan.

The following were the main clauses of the Plan:

1. The provincial Legislative Assemblies of Punjab and Bengal were to meet in two groups, that is, the Muslim majority districts and the non-Muslim majority districts. If any of the two decided in favour of the division of the

- province, then the Governor-General would appoint a boundary commission to demarcate the boundaries of the province on the basis of ascertaining the contiguous majority areas of the Muslims and the non-Muslims.
2. The Legislative Assembly of Sindh (excluding its European members) was to decide either to join the existing Constituent Assembly or the New Constituent Assembly.
  3. To decide the future of the North-West Frontier Province, a referendum was proposed. The electoral college for the referendum was to be the same as the electoral college for the Provincial Legislative Assembly in 1946.
  4. Baluchistan was also to be given the option to express its opinion on the issue.

5. If Bengal decided in favour of partition, a referendum was to be held in the Sylhet District of Assam to decide whether it would continue as a part of Assam or be merged with the new province of East Bengal.

The Nawab of Junagarh announced to join Pakistan, but the people of the region wanted to join India and therefore, a plebiscite was held and the area remained with India. The Nizam of Hyderabad also made an attempt to claim an independent status but was forced to accede in 1948, after an internal revolt had broken out in its Telangana area and the Indian troops marched in Hyderabad. The Maharaja of Kashmir also delayed accession to India. He acceded in October 1947, after the Pathans and the irregular armed forces of Pakistan invaded Kashmir.

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