

LAHORE SESSION (1929)

In December 1929, under the presidency of Jawaharlal Nehru, the Indian National Congress at its Lahore session declared Poortm Swaraj (complete independence) to be the goal of the national movement. It was Gandhi again, who was the decisive voice in investing Jawaharlal Nehru with the office of president in what was to be a critical year of mass struggle.

Jawaharlal Nehru's presidential address was a stirring call to action: 'We have now an open conspiracy to free this country from foreign rule, and you, comrades and all the countrymen and countrywomen are invited to join it'. Nehru also made it known that in his view, liberation did not mean only throwing off the foreign yoke: I must frankly confess that I am a socialist and a republican, and am no believer in kings and princes, or in the order which produces the modern kings of industry, who have greater power over the lives and fortunes of men than even the kings of old, and whose methods are as predatory as those of old feudal aristocracy.' He also spelt out the method of struggle: 'Any great movement for liberation today must necessarily be a mass movement, and mass movements must essentially be peaceful, in times of organised and if the principal movement is a peaceful one, contemporaneous attempts at a sporadic violence can only distract attention and weaken it'.

On 31 December 1929, the newly adopted tricolour flag was unfurled, and 26 January fixed as India's Republic Day, which was to be celebrated every year.

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