

WORLD WAR I-REFORMS AND AGITATION

When World War I began, the British were surprised to see the massive outpour of sympathy, loyalty and goodwill for them. On the contrary, they had feared that the Indians would use the opportunity to revolt. India supplied to the British with men and resources very generously. Nearly 1.3 million soldiers and labourers from India rendered their services in Europe, Africa and the Middle East. Not only the Indian government, but also the princes provided huge supplies of food, money and ammunition. However, the high rate of casualties, rising inflation fuelled by heavy taxation, an outbreak of influenza and the interruption of trade increased suffering in India. The nationalist movement again saw a revival. The moderate and the extremist groups within the Congress forgot their differences to stand as a united front. These were also a temporary alliance set up between the congress and the Muslim League in 1916. The alliance was known as the Lucknow pact. The alliance was made over the issue of devolution of political power and the treatment met to Islam in the Middle East. The British adopted a 'carrot and stick' approach in acknowledging India's support during the war. In the month of August 1917, Edwin Montague, who was the secretary of State for India was 'increasing the association of Indians in every branch of administration of Indians in every branch of administration and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view on the progressive realisation of a responsible government in India as an Integral part of the British Empire'. The methods of attaining the suggested measure were later preserved in the government of India Act of 1919.

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