

## Chapter 11- The Making of the National Movement

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Let's Recall

1. Why were people dissatisfied with British rule in the 1870s and 1880s?

Answer

There was great dissatisfaction with British rule in the 1870s and 1880s.

Some of the reasons for this dissatisfaction are as follows:

→ The Arms Act- Passed in 1878, this Act disallowed Indians from possessing arms.

→ The Vernacular Press Act in 1878, this Act was aimed at silencing those who were critical of the government. Under this Act, the government could confiscate the assets of newspapers if they published anything that was found “objectionable”.

→ The Ilbert Bill controversy- In 1883, the government tried introducing the Ilbert Bill. This bill provided for the trial of British or European individuals by Indians, and sought equality between British and Indian judges in the country. However, the white opposition forced the government to withdraw the bill. This enraged the Indians further.

2. Who did the Indian National Congress wish to speak for?

Answer

Indian National Congress wished to speak for all the people of India, irrespective of class, colour caste, creed, language, or gender. It stated that India, its resources and systems were not of any one class or community of India, but of all the different communities of India.

### 3. What economic impact did the First World War have on India?

Answer

The First World War led to a huge rise in the defence expenditure of the Government of India. The government in turn increased taxes on individual incomes and business profits. Increased military expenditure and the demands for war supplies led to a sharp rise in prices which created great difficulties for the common people. On the other hand, business groups reaped fabulous profits from the war. The war created a demand for industrial goods such as jute bags, cloth and rails, and caused a decline in the imports from other countries into India. As a result, Indian industries expanded during the war.

### 4. What did the Muslim League resolution of 1940 ask for?

Answer

The Muslim League resolution of 1940 asked for "Independent States" for Muslims in the North-Western and Eastern areas of the country.

### 5. Who were the Moderates? How did they propose to struggle against British rule?

Answer

In the first twenty years of its existence, the Congress was "moderate" in its objectives and methods. The Congress leaders of this period were called the Moderates. They proposed to struggle against British rule in non-violent manner which the radicals called "politics of petitions". They wanted to develop public awareness about the unjust nature of British rule. They published newspapers, wrote articles, and showed how the British rule was leading to the economic ruin of the country. They criticised British rule in their speeches and sent representatives to

different parts of the country to mobilise public opinion. They felt that the British had respect for the ideals of freedom and justice, and so would accept the just demands of Indians.

**6. How was the politics of the Radicals within the Congress different from that of the Moderates?**

Answer

The Radicals were opposed to the “politics of prayers” followed by the Moderates within the Congress. They explored more radical objectives and methods. They emphasised the importance of self reliance and constructive work. They argued that people must rely on their own strength, not on the “good” intentions of the government (as was the stated policy of the Moderates). They believed that people must fight for swaraj.

**7. Discuss the various forms that the Non-Cooperation Movement took in different parts of India. How did the people understand Gandhiji?**

Answer

During 1921 and 1922 the Non-Cooperation Movement gained momentum.

- Thousands of students left government-controlled schools and colleges
- Many lawyers gave up their practises
- British titles were surrendered
- Legislatures were boycotted
- People lit public bonfires of foreign cloth.

In most cases, the calls for non-cooperation were related to local grievances.

→ In Kheda, Gujrat, Patidar peasants organised non-violent campaigns against the high land revenue demand of the British.

→ In coastal Andhra and interior Tamil Nadu, liquor shops were picketed.

→ In the Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh, tribals and poor peasants protested against the colonial state for restricting their use of forest resources. They staged a number of “forest satyagrahas”, sometimes sending their cattle into forests without paying grazing fees. → In Punjab, the Akali agitation of the Sikhs sought to remove corrupt mahants - supported by the British - from their gurudwaras.

→ In Assam, tea garden labourers demanded a big increase in their wages. When the demands were not met, they left the British-owned plantations.

People thought Gandhiji as messiah, someone who could help them overcome their misery and poverty. Peasants believed that he would help them in their fight against zamindars, while agricultural labourers felt that he would provide them with land.

## 8. Why did Gandhiji choose to break the salt law?

### Answer

Gandhiji choosed to break the salt law as British government had a monopoly on the manufacture and sale of salt. It also imposed a tax on the sale of salt. Gandhiji believed that it was sinful to tax salt as it was an essential part of food. He led a march to the coastal town of Dandi, where he broke the salt law by gathering natural salt found on the seashore, and boiling sea water to produce salt. This march related the general desire of freedom to a specific grievance shared by everybody, and thus, did not divide the rich and the poor.

## 9. Discuss those developments of the 1937-47 period that led to the creation of Pakistan.

## **Answer**

The developments leading to the creation of Pakistan:

→ A two-nation theory - From the late 1930s, the Muslim League began viewing the Muslims as a separate “nation” from the Hindus.

→ Provincial elections of 1937 - The provincial elections of 1937 convinced the League that Muslims were a minority, and they would always have to play second fiddle in any democratic structure. It feared that Muslims may even go unrepresented.

→ Rift between Congress and Muslim League - In 1937, the Congress rejected the Muslim League's proposal for a joint Congress-League government in the United Provinces. This annoyed the League.

→ Wide mass support base for Muslim League - In the 1930s, the Congress failed to mobilise the Muslim masses. This allowed the Muslim League to widen its social support. It sought to enlarge its support in the early 1940s when most Congress leaders were in jail.

→ Failure of talks - At the end of the Second World War in 1945, the British opened negotiations between the Congress, the League and themselves for the independence of India. However, the talks failed as the League saw itself as the sole spokesperson of India's Muslims, and the Congress could not accept this claim since a large number of Muslims still supported it.

→ Provincial elections of 1946 - Elections to the provinces were again held in 1946. The Congress did well in the “General” constituencies but the League's success in the seats reserved for Muslims was spectacular. This led to more demands for a separate nation for Muslims.

→ Failure of talks again - In March 1946, the British cabinet sent a three-member mission to Delhi to examine this demand and to suggest a suitable political framework for a free India. This mission suggested that India should remain united and constitute itself as a loose confederation with some autonomy for Muslim-majority areas. But it could not get the Congress and the Muslim League to agree to specific details of the proposal. Partition was now more or less inevitable.

→ Mass agitation and riots - After the failure of the Cabinet Mission, the Muslim League decided on mass agitation for winning its Pakistan demand. It announced 16 August 1946 as “Direct Action Day”. On this day riots broke out in Calcutta, lasting several days and resulting in the death of thousands of people. By March 1947, violence had spread to different parts of Northern India.

→ Partition- Finally, the demand for the Partition of India was finalised, and “Pakistan” was born.