

## Contemporary India --14

### ++ Divide and Rule or Partition of Bengal in 1905

The exposition of the partition of Bengal was shown by the British as to improve administration in India. But the real aim was to 'Divide and Rule'. The partition was done in order to create a separate State for Muslims and so introduce the poison of communalism in the country. However the Indians viewed the partition as an attempt by the British to disrupt the growing national movement in Bengal and divide the Hindus and Muslims of India. There was huge protest among the Indians against the British Government for the partition of Bengal. This opposition was carried on by organized meetings, processions and demonstrations etc. Hindus and Muslims tied 'rakhi' on each other's hands to show their unity and protest against the British. Different programmes like the use of Swadeshi goods, own business, opening of national schools and vernacular languages were encouraged. Bal Gangadhar Tilak realized the importance of boycott as a weapon that could be used to paralyze the whole British administrative machinery in India. The boycott and Swadeshi movements were instrumental in the establishment of swadeshi enterprises - textile mills, banks, tanneries, chemical works and insurance companies, etc. The movement spread to all classes and groups of people . people from all walks of life participated in the movement. The most active were school and college students. This made the British reverse the partition of Bengal and unite Bengal again in 1911. This movement united the people of India and the British saw the peoples participation at large.

### ++ The rise of extremists

The moderate policies of the Congress led to the rise of passionate, radical nationalists, who came to be called Extremists. Thus the first phase of the nationalist movement came to an end in 1905 and the Congress got divided into two in 1907. The period from 1905 till 1919 can be called as the period of extremists. The important leaders of this extremist group were Lala Lajpat Rai, Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Bipin Chandra Pal (Lal-Bal-Pal). Their entry marked the beginning of a new trend and a new face in India's struggle for freedom. However, they failed to get the mass support against the British.

### ++ Recognition of true nature of British rule

The extremists exposed the true nature of the British before the people of India. The

extremists recognized that the British were out to exploit Indians, destroy their self-sufficiency and drain India of its wealth. They felt that Indians should now become free of foreign rule and govern themselves. This group, instead of making petitions to the government, believed in organizing mass protests, criticizing government policies, boycotting foreign goods and use of

Swadeshi goods, etc. Bal Gangadhar Tilak used to say 'Freedom is my birth right and I shall have it'.

#### ++ Reunion of Moderates and Extremists

With the efforts of Mrs. Annie Besant the two groups were again reunited in 1916. Her demand was India should be granted Self-Government . In 1916, Muslim League and Congress also came to an understanding with each other and signed the Lucknow Pact. However, Mahatma Gandhi, Jawahar Lal Nehru, Subhash Chandra Bose became the prominent figures of Indian National Congress, who led the freedom movement of India forward.

#### ++ Indian National Movement under leadership of Gandhiji

During this crucial period, M.K. Gandhi appeared in the political scenario of India. He was convinced that no useful purpose would be served by supporting the government. He was also emboldened by his earlier success in Bihar and South Africa. In the light of the past events and the actions of British government, he decided to launch a nation wide satyagraha against the Rowlatt Act was passed in 1919. Under this Act, anybody could be arrested without any trial.

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