

INDIAN NATIONAL MOVEMENT -3

Partition of Bengal (1905)

What do you think happened in 1905? Curzon announced the partition of Bengal. The reason for partition was given as an attempt to improve administration. But the real aim was to 'Divide and Rule'. The partition was done in order to create 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 the region. Widespread agitation ensued in the streets and in the press. People of different parts of India opposed the partition of Bengal all over the country. 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 their protest.

The use of Swadeshi (made in our own country by our own people) goods, business, national education and Indian languages were encouraged. The new nationalist spirit of self reliance-shed the fear of repression including imprisonment and painful torture by the British rule. It was Bal Gangadhar Tilak who 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, hosiery, tanneries, chemical works and insurance companies. Swadeshi stores were opened. Volunteers supplied goods at the doorstep of every household. The movement spread to all classes and groups of people. Everyone, including women and children, came forward to take part. The most active were school and college students. This made the British reverse the partition of Bengal and unite it in 1911. During this time, the role of Radical Nationalists in the Indian National Congress, who were called the 'Garam Dal', came to be appreciated. They tried to involve people from all classes and groups including peasants, worker, students as well as women. They succeeded in uniting the Indian people against the common enemy - the British. The young people were roused to the highest level of patriotism and zeal to free their country. They helped in making people self confident and self reliant. They also revived the Indian Cottage industry.

#Garam Dal

The mild policies of the Moderates in the Congress led to the rise of passionate, radical nationalists, who came to be called the 'Garam Dal'. Thus the first phase of the nationalist movement came to an end with government reaction against the Congress on the one hand and a split in the Congress in 1907 on the other. That is why the period after 1905 till 1918 can be referred to as the 'Era of Passionate Nationalists or Garam Dal'. Lala Lajpat Rai, Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Bipin Chandra Pal (Lal-Bal-Pal) were important leaders of this Radical group. When the Moderates were in the forefront of the action, they had maintained a low profile but now they

swung into action. Their entry marked the beginning of a new trend and a new face in India's struggle for freedom. According to them, the Moderates had failed to define India's political goals and the methods adopted by them were mild and ineffective. Besides, the Moderates remained confined to the upper, landed class and failed to enlist mass support as a basis for negotiating with the British. The Garam Dal realized 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 (home-made) goods etc. They did not believe in depending on the mercy of the Britishers, but believed that freedom was their right. Bal Gangadhar Tilak gave a slogan 'Freedom is our birth right and we must have it'.