

## Indian national movement

### # FORMATION OF THE MUSLIM LEAGUE (1906)

As the radical movement grew stronger the British began to look for ways and means to break the unity among Indian. They tried to do this through the partition of Bengal and by sowing the seed of communalism among Indian people. They motivated Muslims to form a permanent political association of their own. In December, 1906, During the Muhammadan Educational conference in Dacca, Nawab Salim Ullah Khan raised the idea of establishing a Central Muhammadan Association to take care of Muslim interests. Accordingly, on 30th December, 1906, the All India Muslim League was founded. Another prominent person, Aga Khan was chosen as its president. The main objective of the league was to protect and advance the rights of Muslims in India and represent their needs to the government. By encouraging the issue of separate electorates, the government sowed the seed of communalism and separatism among Indians. The formation of the Muslim League is considered to be the firstfruit of the British master strategy of 'Divide and Rule'. Mohammad Ali Jinnah later joined the League.

### # MORLEY-MINTO REFORMS (1909)

The Indian Councils Act 1892, which enlarged the legislature by adding members to the Central Legislative Assembly? The Council Act of 1909 was an extension of the 1892 reforms, also known as the Morley-Minto Reforms after the names of the then Secretary of State (Lord Morley) and the then Viceroy (Lord Minto). It increased the members of the Legislative Assembly from sixteen to sixty. A few non-elected members were also added. Though the members of the Legislative Council were increased, they had no real powers. They remained mainly advisory in character. They could not stop any bills from being passed. Nor did they have any power over the budget.

The British made another calculated move to sow the seed of communalism in Indian politics by introducing separate electorates for the Muslims. This meant that from the constituencies dominated by Muslims only Muslim candidates could be elected. Hindus could only vote for Hindus, and Muslims could only vote for Muslims. Many leaders protested against this communal electorate policy of the British to 'Divide and Rule'.

### # THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR

The First World War started in the year of 1914, about which you have already read in the previous lesson. This War was fought among the nations of Europe to get colonial monopoly. During war time, the British Government made an appeal to the Indian leaders to join hands with them in their time of crisis. Indian leaders agreed but they put their own terms and conditions i.e. after the war was over, the British government would give Constitutional (legislative and administrative) powers to the

Indian People. Unfortunately, the steps taken by the British government during the World War I created unrest among the Indian people. This was because the British government had taken a huge loan during war time which they had to repay. They increased rent from the land, i.e. lagan. They forcefully recruited Indians in the British Army. They increased the price of necessary goods and imposed taxes on personal and professional income. As a result, they had to face protest from the Indian society. Farmers and workers of Champaran, Bardoli, Kheda and Ahmedabad actively protested against the exploitative policies of British government. Lakhs of students left schools and colleges. Hundreds of lawyers gave up their practice. Women also significantly contributed in this movement and their participation became wider with the emergence of Gandhi. The boycott of foreign cloth became a mass movement, with thousands of bonfires of foreign cloth lighting the Indian sky.