

I: BIRTH OF MUSLIM LEAGUE

Dr. P.SURESH, Ph.D.,

On 30 December 1906, the All-India Muslim League (AIML), popularly known as the Muslim League was founded in Dhaka, British India (now in Bangladesh).

Background

- The communal idea that the Muslims are a separate nation was sown into the Indian political ethos first by Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, a philosopher and Muslim reformist.
- Although he wanted Muslims to get educated and think in a scientific temper, he suggested aligning with the British rather than rebel against them, as most beneficial for the community. He had founded the Muhammadan Educational Conference in 1886 but this organisation stayed away from politics and desisted from even discussing it as per its own code.
- On 30 December 1906, around 3000 delegates attended a conference of the Muhammadan Educational Conference at Dhaka in which the ban on politics was removed and a motion was moved to form the AIML. The name was proposed by Nawab Khawaja Sir Salimullah Bahadur and seconded by Hakim Ajmal Khan.
- The AIML was the first Muslim political party of India.
- The idea was that the Congress Party was only catering to the needs of the Hindus. This was an erroneous idea since Congress always meant to include every community of the country and had many Muslim leaders as members.
- The founders of the Muslim League were: Khwaja Salimullah, Vikar-ul-Mulk, Syed Amir Ali, Syed Nabiullah, Khan Bahadur Ghulam and Mustafa Chowdhury.
- The first Honorary President of the League was Sir Sultan Muhammad Shah (Aga Khan III).
- The AIML was essentially a party of educated elite Muslims, at least in the beginning.
- The party's chief aim was to promote and secure civil rights for Muslims. It espoused loyalty to the British government as a means to achieve more political and civil rights.
- The objectives of the league were:
 - To create among Muslims the feelings of loyalty towards the British Government.
 - To safeguard the political rights of the Muslims and to convey the same to the government.
 - To prevent the rise of prejudice against other communities of India among the Muslims.
- Muhammad Ali Jinnah joined the league in 1913.
- When the Congress party was opposed to the government and fighting for the gradual establishment of an independent India, the league propounded loyalty to the government. They, in fact, provided the government with a tool to fight the growing nationalism in the country.
- Even though partition of the country was not on the minds of Indian Muslims in the early years of the league, it came into the picture after 1930. Leaders of the league began the propaganda that Hindus and Muslims are not one nation and have separate cultures and identities although they have been cohabitating for centuries.

- In 1940, Jinnah gave a speech in Lahore in which he talked of the impossibility of living as one nation. In response to this, some members of the league who were opposed to the Two-Nation Theory broke away from the party and formed the All-India Jamhur Muslim League (AIJML). The AIJML later merged with the Congress party.
- In 1937, the Muslim League was not able to form the government in any province in the provincial elections held that year as per the Government of India Act. Even in the 125 non-general constituencies out of which 59 were reserved for Muslims, the Congress managed to win 25 seats with 15 seats coming from the Muslim dominated North-West Frontier Province.
- In 1939, the Congress ministries resigned following the viceroy's declaration that made India a party to the Second World War. The league urged Muslims to celebrate December 22 as Deliverance Day.
- The party, under Jinnah, spearheaded the campaign for Pakistan throughout the 1940s and was successful in its mission of dividing the country. The country was partitioned along communal lines along with independence in 1947.
- The league was dissolved on 14 August 1947. It continues to exist in various forms as political parties in Pakistan, Bangladesh and India. In India, the Indian Union Muslim League functions as a political party with its base in Kerala and ironically, aligns itself with the Congress Party.

II: MILITANT NATIONALISM, KOMAGATU MARU INCIDENT- THE GHADAR PROGRAMME

The Komagata Maru incident is about a Japanese steamship called 'Komagata Maru' that voyaged from Hong Kong (part of British Empire) to Vancouver, British Columbia in Canada passing through Shanghai, China to Yokohama (Japan) in the year 1914, carrying 376 passengers from Punjab, part of British India. The incident got highlighted because out of all the passengers 24 were admitted to Canada, but the other 352 passengers were not allowed inside Canada, and the ship was forcefully returned to India.

With the Komagata Maru incident, the situation in Punjab worsened. The reasons being:

- The ship was carrying the majority of Sikh and Punjabi Muslims passengers.
- The ship was returned only after two months of privation and uncertainty which later took the form of an embroiled controversy.
- The belief of Canadian authorities being influenced by British hurt Indians
- While the ship returned to Calcutta in September 1914, the passengers were asked to take Punjab-bound train, which they refused and in conflict 22 people died

Ghard Party Response:

The 'Komagata Maru' incident was quoted largely at that time by various Indian groups to underscore inconsistencies in Canadian immigration laws.

The emotions ignited after this incident was taken advantage of by the Indian revolutionaries, particularly, the Ghadar Party members to gather support from the people for their cause.

Many meetings were held in California in 1914 by Ghadarites to the Indian community there where the Ghadar leaders used this incident to appeal to the community for their engagement with their cause. People were also recruited to the movement in the wake of this unfortunate incident. Prominent Ghadar leaders included Tarak Nath Das, Barkatullah and Sohan Singh.

People Associated with the Ghadr Party Response:

1. Kartar Singh Saraba and Raghubar Dayal Gupta left for India.
2. Rashbehari Bose and Sachin Sanyal were asked to lead the movement.

III: ROLE OF TAMILNADU: VOC, BHARATHI, VANCHI, VVS IYER

Mahajana Sabha led to the formation of an all-India organisation, the Indian National Congress Leaders from different parts of India attended several meetings before the formation of the Congress. One such meeting was held in December 1884 in Theosophical Society. It was attended by Dadabhai Naoroji, K.T. Telang, Surendranath Banerjee and other prominent leaders apart from G. Subramaniam, Rangaiah, and Anandacharlu from Madras.

The first session of the Indian National Congress was held in 1885 at Bombay. Out of a total of 72 delegates, 22 members were from Madras. G. Subramaniam through his writings advanced the cause of nationalism. He ranks with Naoroji and Gokhale for his contribution to the understanding of the economic exploitation of India by the British.

The partition of Bengal (1905) led to the Swadeshi Movement and changed the course of the struggle for freedom. In various parts of India, especially Bengal, Punjab and Maharashtra popular leaders emerged. They implemented the program of the Calcutta Congress which called upon the nation to promote Swadeshi enterprise, boycott foreign goods and promote national education. The Swadeshi movement made a deep impact in Tamil Nadu. Congress carried on a vigorous campaign for the boycott of foreign goods.

(a) Response in Tamilnadu

V.O. Chidambaranar, V. Chakkaraiyar, Subramania Bharati and Surendranath Arya were some of the prominent leaders in Tamilnadu. Public meetings attended by thousands of people were organized in various parts of Tamilnadu. Tamil was used on the public platform for the first time to mobilize the people. Subramanian Tamil Nadu was then part of the Madras Presidency which included large parts of the present-day states of Andhra Pradesh(Coastal districts and Rayalaseema), Karnataka (Bengaluru, Bellary, South Canara), Kerala (Malabar) and even Odisha (Ganjam).

Bharati's patriotic songs were especially important in stirring patriotic emotions. Many journals were started to propagate Swadeshi ideals. Swadesamitran and India were prominent journals. The extremist leader Bipin Chandra Pal toured Madras and delivered lectures that inspired the youth. Students and youth participated widely in the Swadeshi Movement.

Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company

One of the most enterprising acts in pursuance of swadeshi was the launching of the Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company at Thoothukudi by V.O. Chidambaranar. He purchased two ships Gallia and Lavo and plied them between Thoothukudi and Colombo. However, due to cut-throat competition from the European company and the blatantly partisan role played by the government, V.O.C's efforts ended in failure.

Tirunelveli Uprising

V.O.C joined with Subramania Siva in organizing the mill workers in Thoothukudi and Tirunelveli. In 1908, he led a strike in the European-owned Coral Mills. It coincided with the release of Bipin Chandra Pal. V.O.C and Subramania Siva, who organized a public meeting to celebrate the release of Bipin, were arrested. The two leaders were charged with sedition and sentenced to rigorous imprisonment. Initially, V.O.C. was given a draconian sentence of two life imprisonments. The news of the arrest sparked riots in Tirunelveli leading to the burning down of the police station, court building, and municipal office. It led to the death of four people in police firing. V.O.C. was treated harshly in prison and was made to pull the heavy oil press. Others to be arrested included G. Subramaniam and Ethiraj Surendranath Arya. To avoid imprisonment Subramania Bharati moved to Pondicherry which was under French rule. Bharati's example was followed by many other nationalists such as Aurobindo Ghosh and V. V. Subramanianar. The brutal crackdown on Swadeshi leaders virtually brought the Swadeshi Movement to a close in Tamil Nadu.

(b) Revolutionary Activities in Tamil Nadu

As elsewhere the Swadeshi movement inspired the youth. Left leaderless, they turned to the revolutionary path. Pondicherry provided a safe haven for the revolutionaries. Many of these revolutionaries in Tamil Nadu were introduced and trained in revolutionary activities at India House in London and in Paris.

M.P.T. Acharya, V.V. Subramanianar and T.S.S. Rajan were prominent among them. Revolutionary literature was distributed by them in Madras through Pondicherry. Radical papers such as India, Vijaya, and Suryodayam came out of Pondicherry. Such revolutionary papers and Bharati's poems were banned as seditious literature. These activities in Pondicherry intensified with the arrival of Aurobindo Ghosh and V.V. Subramanianar in 1910. These activities continued until the outbreak of the First World War.

Ashe Murder

In 1904 Nilakanta Brahmachari and others started Bharata Matha Society, a secret society. The objective was to kill British officials and thereby kindle patriotic fervour among the people. The Vanchinathan of Senkottai was influenced by this organisation. On 17 June 1911, he shot dead Robert W.D'E. Ashe, Collector of Tirunelveli in Maniyachi Junction. After this, he shot himself. Divorced from the people these young revolutionaries, despite their patriotism, failed to inspire and mobilize the people.

(c) Annie Besant and the Home Rule Movement

While the extremists and revolutionaries were the working classes by forming trade unions. Not only did they succeed in improving their working conditions, but they also made them part of the struggle for freedom. However, with the rise of Gandhi as a national leader Annie Besant and the Home Rule Leagues were eclipsed.

IV: HOME RULE MOVEMENT, JALLIANWALA BAGH- KHILAFAT MOVEMENT

The Home Rule League movement is an important event in Modern Indian History, and has been an area which has frequently featured in the Civil Services (Mains) and Civil Services (Prelims) Examination over many years now. In this article, we attempt at outlining the important headings under which this topic can be asked in the Civil Services Examination.

Background:

1. From 1907-1915/1916, the Indian National Congress (INC) was dominated by the moderates. It was in a formative stage and was dominated by the politics of Annie Besant, and some moderate leaders like G.K. Gokhale and Pheroze Shah Mehta.
2. Tilak was released from jail in 1914. But the release of Tilak was in no way an automatic reentry of Tilak into the INC, because of the firm opposition from Pheroze Shah Mehta and Gopal Krishna Gokhale. But, the death of **G.K. Gokhale**, and **Pheroze Shah Mehta** in 1915, gave a possibility of the entry of Tilak into the INC. With Annie Besant's help, Tilak was able to reenter the INC.

Factors that Contributed to the establishment of Home Rule League:

1. This was the high-time of the First World War.
2. Unification of extremists and moderates
3. Unification of INC and Muslim League These factors created great enthusiasm in the Indian National Movement. Thus, Annie Besant and Tilak were very positive towards political reforms in India. The Home Rule league was 'self-government' based on the Irish model. Annie Besant and Tilak started this movement.

Comparison between Tilak's Home Rule League and Annie Besant's Home Rule League:

1. Annie Besant started the Home Rule League in September, 1916, and Tilak started it in April 1916.
2. Tilak's movement was confined to Maharashtra and Karnataka. And Annie Besant movement spread to other parts of India.
3. But as far as organization skill is concerned, Tilak's Home Rule League movement was more organized, and there were many volunteers who worked for Tilak.
4. Thus, the number of people who took part in Tilak's movement was much more compared to Annie Besant. Mohammed Ali Jinnah also had the first experience of participating in politics in India by taking part in the Home Rule League of Annie Besant.
5. Annie Besant tried to mobilize participation through the publication of her two newspapers: a) **New India** b) **Commonweal** However, Tilak continued writing in '**Kesari**', '**Mahratta**', and **Young India** to spread the message of the Home Rule League.

Thus the activity of Tilak and Annie Besant were very important to Indian Nationalism. **This period marks the transition from the moderate, or deliberate phase of Indian National politics to the agitational phase started by M.K. Gandhi.** Thus, it had a great impact. **Bal Gangadhar Tilak got the title of 'Loknayak' during the Home Rule League itself.**

The decline of Home Rule League:

1. In 1918, the Home Rule League declined due to many factors.
2. In 1917: **Montford reforms** was presented before the British Parliament. The Montford reforms promised responsible Government in India.
3. It was the Montford reforms that turned Annie Besant 'pro-British'.
4. **Bal Gangadhar Tilak** went to England to file a legal suit against **Valentine Chirol**. Valentine Chirol had published, a book, "**Father of Indian Unrest**", in which the Tilak featured as the hero of the title. He blamed Tilak for being responsible for the agitational politics that came to India. Thus Tilak became busy with filing the legal suit against Valentine Chirol.
5. **The advent of Gandhi** who actively took part in Indian politics, gave an opportunity to the Indian youth to get integrated into Gandhian politics, contributed to the decline of the Home Rule League. Nonetheless, it was the Home Rule League that marked the transitional phase between the deliberative and dormant phase of the INC to the mass-based politics of the Gandhian agitation.

JALLIANWALA BAGH

- The situation in Punjab was alarming as there were riots and protests against the Rowlatt Act.
- Punjab was put under martial law which meant that it became unlawful for more than 4 people to assemble at a place.
- The Lieutenant-Governor of Punjab at that time was Michael O'Dwyer. Lord Chelmsford was India's Viceroy.
- On the day of the festival of Baisakhi on 13th April 1919 in Jallianwala Bagh, a public garden in Amritsar, a crowd of non-violent protestors had gathered. Also among the crowd were pilgrims who had come to celebrate Baisakhi.
- General Dyer came there with his troops and blocked the only narrow entrance to the garden.
- Then, without warning, he ordered his troops to fire at the unarmed crowd which included children as well.
- The indiscriminate firing went on for about 10 minutes until the 1650 rounds of ammunition were exhausted. This resulted in the deaths of at least 1000 people and injured more than 1500 people.
- This tragedy came as a rude shock to Indians and totally destroyed their faith in the British system of justice.
- National leaders condemned the act and Dyer unequivocally.
- However, Dyer was appreciated by many in Britain and the British in India although some people in the British government were quick to criticise it. Those who criticised his actions included Winston Churchill and former Prime Minister H.H Ashquith
- The government set up the Hunter Commission to inquire into the massacre. Although the commission condemned the act by Dyer, it did not impose any disciplinary action against him.
- He was relieved of his duties in the army in 1920.
- In protest against the massacre and the British failure to give due justice to the victims, Rabindranath Tagore gave up his knighthood and Gandhiji relinquished his title 'Kaiser-e-hind' bestowed on him by the British for his services during the Boer War in South Africa.
- Michael O'Dwyer, the then Lieutenant-Governor of Punjab, who had approved the actions of Brigadier-General Dyer, was assassinated by Udham Singh in London in 1940 as revenge against the massacre. Udham Singh is believed to have witnessed the massacre as a child.

KHILAFAT MOVEMENT

Background

From 1876 to 1909, Abdul Hamid II was the Ottoman emperor. Being a Caliph, the Ottoman emperor was the supreme religious and political leader of all Sunni Muslims across the world. In the World War I, the Ottoman Empire had sided the Central Powers and the result of this war was the defeat of the Central Powers. As per the Treaty of Versailles (1919), the territorial boundary of the Ottoman Empire got reduced.

Meanwhile, in Turkey, a national movement arose under Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, who was a Pro-western nationalist. He, supported by the western powers, abolished the position of the Caliph. Naturally the Muslims in India became anti British, as the power and influence of their religious leader was ended.

Khilafat Movement in India

Muslims were especially upset about the future of the Islamic places of worship after the allied powers had partitioned the Turkish Empire. In India Maulana Mohammad Ali Jauhar and his brother Maulana Shaukat Ali along with some other Muslim leaders such as Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed Ansari. Raees-ul-Muhajireen Barrister Jan Muhammad Junejo, Hasrat Mohani, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Dr. Hakim Ajmal Khan joined hands a created an All India Khilafat Committee, at Lucknow..

It had two main demands, which were never accepted:

- Caliph Sultan must retain sufficient territories so that he is able to defend the Islamic Faith.
- The places which are called **Jazirat-ul-arab**, including the Arabia, Syria, Iraq and Palestine must remain under Muslim suzerainty.

The Ali brothers were arrested during the course of the war only to be released from jail after the war was over. This movement reached a crescendo in Bengal, North-West Frontier Province and the Punjab. October 17, 1919 was observed as **Khilafat Day**. The Hindus also joined hands with the Muslims and a strike was called for. On November 23 1919, the **All India Khilafat Conference** was organized at New Delhi and later a **Khilafat Manifesto** was published which called upon the British to protect the Caliphate.

The leaders of the Khilafat Movement joined hands with Indian National Congress for the upcoming Non-cooperation Movement. Again March 19 1920 was observed as **Khilafat Day** and following that there was an all party conference in June 1920 at Allahabad. The agenda of the Non-cooperation Movement was finalized.

The agenda was:

1. Boycott of the Titles conferred by the Government
2. Boycott of civil services, army and police and all other Government offices.
3. Non-payment of taxes to the government.

The Khilafat movement came and went very quickly. It had lost its relevance when Mustafa Kemal Atatlurk had abolished the Caliphate. The last Caliphate was Abdülmeçid II, who was expelled with his family and took asylum in Istanbul (Constantinople), where he spent rest of his life catching butterflies. He died in 1948.

.....