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DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

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UNIT – 2

1. JAWAHARLAL NEHRU, LAL BAHADUR SHASTRI – DOMESTIC POLICY

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

An influential leader in the Indian independence movement and political heir of Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru became the nation's first Prime Minister in 1947. His policies of Non-Alignment and Panchasheel, principles of peaceful coexistence, guided India's international relations until the outbreak of the Sino – Indian war in 1962, which contributed to his declining health and subsequent death in 1964.

EARLY LIFE AND FAMILY

Jawaharlal Nehru was born into an affluent Kashmiri Brahman family in Allahabad on November 14, 1889. Tutored at home until the age of 15, Nehru subsequently attended Harrow in England and later, Trinity College, Cambridge. After studying law at London's Inner Temple, he returned to India at the age of 22 where he practiced law with his father and prominent barrister, Motilal Nehru. In 1916, four years after his parents had made the suitable arrangement, Nehru married 17 year old Kamala Kaul. The following year, their only child, Indira Priyadarshini was born.

POLITICAL AWAKENING

Upon learning of esteemed theosophist Annie Besant's arrest in 1917, Nehru was moved to join the All India Home Rule League, an organization devoted to obtaining self-government within the British Empire. In April 1919, British troops opened fire on thousands of unarmed civilians who had been protesting recently passed legislation that permitted the detainment of suspected political foes without trial. The Massacre of Amritsar, in which 379 Indians were killed and more than a thousand others were wounded, outraged Nehru and further solidified his resolve to win India's independence.

During the Non-Cooperation Movement (1920 – 1922) led by Mahatma Gandhi, Nehru was imprisoned for the first time for activities against the British government and, over the course of the next two and a half decades, spent a total of nine years in jail. In 1929, Jawaharlal was elected as President of the Indian National Congress. His first leadership role in, whereby promoted the goal of complete independence from Britain as opposed to dominion status. In response to Britain's declaration of India's participation in the war against Germany at the onset of World War II without consulting Indian leaders, members of Congress passed the Quit India resolution on August 8, 1942, demanding political freedom from Britain in exchange for support in the war effort. The following day, the British government arrested all congress leaders, including Nehru and Gandhi.

LEGACY AS PRIME MINISTER

On August 15, 1947, India finally gained its independence and Nehru became the nation's first Prime Minister. Amid the celebration of newly acquired freedom, there was also considerable turmoil. The mass displacement that followed partition into the separate nations of Pakistan and India, along with disputes over control of Kashmir, resulted in the loss of property and lives for several hundred thousand Muslims and Hindus.

After independence, Nehru became the virtual director of India's foreign policy. And under his guidance India became the first state to have pursued a policy that was new in the history of international relations – the policy of Non –

Alignment. He was ably supported by Naser of Egypt, Sukarno of Indonesia and Joseph Broz Tito of Yugoslavia.

The secret of the Non-Alignment policy is that India is neither permanently pro-west nor with the east. She was clearly with Communist block on the issues such as disarmament, racial discrimination, colonialism and China's membership of the United Nations. India was equally vigorous in condemning the Anglo-French action in Suez and Soviet intervention in Hungary. Non-alignment also did not mean isolation because India had established diplomatic relations with almost all Independent states. She was a member of the United Nations and also took part in the Commonwealth of Nations.

The policy of Non-alignment was based on the five principles of Pancha Sheel, enumerating international conduct. These were first envisaged and formulated in 1954. These principles were:

- Mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty.
- Non – aggression.
- Non interference in each other's military affairs.
- Equality and mutual benefit.
- Peaceful coexistence.

By April 1955, Burma, China, Laos, Nepal, Democratic Republic of Vietnam, Yugoslavia and Cambodia had accepted the Pancha Sheel.

LAL BAHADUR SHASTRI

On 30 May, 1964 hardly three days after the death of NehRu, Lal Bahadur Shastri called on Indira Gandhi, Nehru's daughter, and urged her to succeed her father. But she refused to oblige. Later, Shastri was unanimously elected as leader.

PRIME MINISTER

On 2 June 1964, Shastri was asked by the President to form a new government. 'Soft Shastri' and mild mannered Prime Minister was made of sterner stuff. He shared powers with his cabinet colleagues and encouraged free and frank discussion in the cabinet.

When Shastri succeeded Nehru as Prime Minister, but the situation became different. The economic situation had worsened considerably. The Congress had lost ground both at the Central and State levels. Shastri, therefore, organized the PM's Secretariat and rationalized the workers of the Prime Minister's Office. L.K Jha, was chosen by Shastri as his Secretary, Jha transformed the Prime Minister's Secretariat to all – powerful Prime Minister's Office (PMO). The PMO was not a statutory institution but a professional body that advised the Prime Minister, without interfering with the Cabinet Secretariat or other ministries and departments of the government. The Grand Council of the Republic (GCR), an All – India Congress Organisation, meant to serve as a bridge between the Union and the States and between the Government and the party, though well – meant, was short lived.

FOOD CRISES, 1964:

The first and foremost daunting task of Shastri's government was to meet serious food crisis. Due to shortage of food grains, the food prices had risen by 22% in the past eighteen months, which was as much as the rise in the preceding ten years. Shastri formulated an All – India Food Policy. He then initiated a series of short term and long term measures:

- Food ships destined to go to other ports were arranged to divert to India;
- The import of food grains was increased;
- The net work of **Fair – price shops** was spread over the country.
- An **agricultural prices commission** was constituted to keep the price situation under constant review and to look into the working to the fair price shops.

- A **Food Grains Trading Corporation** was setup to purchase internal agricultural produce at remunerative prices and to ensure a proper distribution system in the country;
- An **Agricultural Commission** was charged with the work of fixing reasonable margins for prices to be enforced at wholesalers and retailers levels;
- Legislation was introduced for quality control of imported seeds.;
- Intensive irrigation was given priority;
- Plant protection measures were extended throughout the country; and
- Large and more efficient rice mills were established.

These measures were intended to attain self-sufficiency in food by the end of the decade thanks to the innovative push given by **C. Subramanyan**, the food minister.

AKALI DEMANDS

Master Tara Singh announced his own faction of Akali Dal in July 1962 and demanded a separate Sikh nation. In 1965, Sant Fateh Singh had renewed the agitation for a Punjabi Suba and Pakistan readily supported such a demand. Prime Minister Shastri set up a Parliamentary Committee under the Speaker of Lok Sabha, Sardar Hukum Singh and another Committee under the Information and Broadcasting Minister, Indira Gandhi, to examine the demand for a Punjabi Suba.

ANTI-HINDI AGITATION, 1965

During India's freedom struggle, national leaders carried on the movement through the medium of regional languages and demanded the replacement of English by a national language. After Independence, the Constituent Assembly debated the issue and arrived at a compromise formula. The constitution spelled out the language policy (Arts. 343 and 344) and stipulated that Hindi would replace English after 1965. The Official Languages Commission, under the Chairmanship of B.G. Kher (1955), recommended the process of replacement

within the constitutional time-frame. The Joint Parliamentary Party reviewed the Kher Commission Report and on the basis of recommendation the President issued an order in April 1960. Following the Presidential order, the Government of India introduced series of steps which aroused the suspicious of the Non-Hindi speaking states.

THE PROVOCATION

On 26th January 1965, the prescribed time period of 15 years to make Hindi the official language replacing English, as provided in the Constitution, come to an end. Nanda the Home Minister and an ardent advocate of Hindi, persuaded himself that under the dispensation of Shastri it should be easier to use Hindi for official proposes in the union administration, to start with at a much more faster phase and at a much greater extent. Communications were issued to the Departments to use Hindi alone as language of central communication.

THE AGITATION

The Dravida Munnetra Khazhagam (DMK) the main opposition in the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly, jumped at this opportunity to launch a state-wide Anti-Hindi Agitation. The Anti- Hindi Agitation, under the leadership of C.N.Annadurai, escalated into a movement. On 25th January 1965, there were demonstrations, processions, meetings and burning of effigies of the 'the demon of Hindi'. On the Madras city two agitators burnt themselves to death. There was police firing at a student demonstration in Chidambaram in which a student was shot dead. The Republic Day (26 Jan) was observed as 'a day of mourning'. On 28 January, the situation in Madras became explosive. The authoritarian attitude and the undiplomatic approach of the Chief Minister M.Bhaktavatsalam aggravated the situation.

Shastri's appeal to the agitators to withdraw the movement in view of a special law passed by Parliament enabling English to continue as the associate language went unheeded. The agitation continued unabated. On 15 February, 35 agitators were killed and 25 injured in a series of police firings as students in

various parts of the state went on a rampage. Two police officers were burnt alive by mobs. The resignations of two central ministers – C.Subramaniam, Food Minister and O.V. Alagesan, Minister of State for Petroleum and chemicals both from Madras State- made matters worse. Shastri's broad-cast appeal on 11 February to the agitators fell on deaf ears.

INDO – PAK WAR, 1965:

Pakistan President Field Marshall Ayub Khan launched an all – out attack on Jammu and Kashmir on 1 September 1965. The Pakistan army under the cover of American Patton Tanks crossed the international border into the Chamb area in Jammu. Pakistan was able to capture Akhnoor and the Chicken Necks and cut off Indian access to Jammu and Kashmir. The pre – meditated attack, known as 'Operation Gifralter' was the last straw on the camel's back. Prime Minister Shastri responded to this provocative challenge swiftly, promptly and decisively.

THE TASHKENT AGREEMENT, 1966:

The historic tripartite summit meeting was held at Tashkent in the Soviet Uzbekistan between 4 and 10 January 1966. It was presided over by Kosygin. After complex, convoluted and complicated negotiations the Tashkent Declaration was signed on 10 January 1966 by India and Pakistan. According to the 9 Point Declaration both the countries agreed to:

- 1) Take all steps to create good neighbourly relations;
- 2) Withdraw all armed forces, not later than 25 February 1966 to the respective positions they held prior to 5 August 1965;
- 3) Maintain bilateral relations upon the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of each other;
- 4) Discourage propaganda directed against the other country;
- 5) Restore normal diplomatic relations between the two countries;
- 6) Implement the existing agreements and take measures for the restoration of economic, trade and cultural relations;
- 7) Carry out the exchange of the Prisoners of War (PWOs);

- 8) Hold discussion on immigrants, refugees and return of property and assets taken over by either side; and
- 9) Hold high level meetings to resolve concerns of mutual interest.

Unfortunately, Shastri passed away within hours of signing the Tashkent agreement due to a massive heart attack.

2. RISE OF POLITICAL PARTIES

A political party, in a democracy, may be defined as an organized group of persons who share the same political views and who by acting as well-knit disciplined political unit try to capture and control government through peaceful and constitutional means and methods. Without party system, no democratic government can be stable and strong. At the time of independence, there were national as well as regional parties.

NATIONAL PARTIES

INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

The Indian National Congress was the Grand Old Party at independence. Founded in 1885 by A.O.Hume, the Congress as a movement was led by political stalwarts and led the country to freedom. The Congress came to power with the formation of Interim government in 1946. After Independence the congress became a distinct political party.

Basically, the Congress played a creative role in the integration of state and society. Its focus was national unity, integrity and sovereignty. During the Nehru era, the Congress, and 'inherited political capital' was used wisely by accommodating rival elites within its political umbrella. Moreover, Nehru and others employed the rhetoric of socialism, planned economy, Panchayat Raj etc effectively. The congress built its vast all – embracing political network with the support of powerful sectors of society such as landowning upper castes. This

strategy succeeded in strengthening democratic practices which struck strong roots on the Indian soil. Electoral politics provided an excellent opportunity to the Congress to extend its influence to the masses at large.

Infighting, intra-party rivalry, longing for power and patronage, political expediency, loss of touch with masses reared these ugly heads even during Nehru years. Yet, the Congress repeatedly won elections during the first phase (1947 – 1964) and dominated Indian landscape.

HINDU MAHASABHA

Hindu Mahasabha was part of the Indian National Congress when it held its first session in 1923, which was attended by well known Congress leaders. For over a decade it existed both within and outside the Congress. In recognition of democratic rights demanded by Muslims, the party denounced it for 'appeasing the Muslims'. The Hindu Mahasabha was quite willing to do a deal with the colonial authorities. Its leaders denounced Nehru since he regarded Hindu communalism more dangerous than Muslim communalism. It swore by Akhand Hindustan.

Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukerjee, leader of Hindu Mahasabha, joined Nehru's first cabinet and resigned after Gandhi's assassination, when there was strong resentment against the Hindu Communal organization. The Hindu Mahasabha, started to encountering the Muslim League, lost its relevance after independence and was discredited after the brutal killing of Mahatma Gandhi. As a political party it met its Waterloo in the general election, 1952. Dr.N.B.Khare, President of the Hindu Mahasabha contested in his hometown Nagpur and lost his security deposit. Prabhudutt Brahmachari, a silent Sadhu and Nehru's sole opponent in his Phulpur constituency, was decisively defeated; the Sadhu got 56,178 votes as against Nehru's 233, 571. After the election, the Hindu Mahasabha, deprived of substance remained a shadow and disappeared from the Indian political scene.

THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA (CPI)

Inspired by the Russian revolution of 1917, some young men formally founded the Communist Party of India on 26 December 1925. Later most of its

prominent members were drawn from the congress. Since they kept themselves aloof from the country's freedom struggle they lost the sympathy of the people. The program of the party was determined by the Communist International and acted under the guidance of the Soviet Union. The Communists in the Congress were expelled from the party in December 1945.

The CPI branded 15 August 1947 as a day of betrayal and criticized the congress as the stooge of British imperialism. The Telengana insurrection and the national railway strike on 9 March 1949 which it organized broke the back of the CPI. The party known for discipline, organization and committed cadre, made its presence felt in the first three general elections. However, Nehru's socialist oriented policies had taken the sail out of the party's ship. In the post independence history, the CPI "has favoured a strategy of alliance with the Congress". Differences over the Indo-Sino War of 1962 split the party into two.

COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA (MARXIST)

The communists remained communists ever since the CPI was formed on 26 December 1925. But the differences started cropping up ever since the Congress government was formed in 1947. The rightists in the party supported the congress but the leftists opposed it as pro-imperialist and rightist reactionary rule. The difference within the party reached the flash point when China invaded India in 1962. The right communists supported Russia which was pro-India but the leftists leaned towards China. In September 1964, the leftists left the party and formed a separate party called the Communist Party of India (Marxist). After the split the CPI continued to support the congress and the CPI (M) opposing it to the extent possible.

REGIONAL PARTIES

DRAVIDA MUNNETRA KAZHAGAM (DMK)

There were few well developed regional parties during the Nehru Era. Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) was one of them. The DMK was the brain child of C.N. Annadurai, known for his erudition, oratory, ornamental writing and

statesmanship. Affectionately called 'Arignar Anna', C.N. Annadurai broke away from Dravida Kazhagam of Periyar E.V. Ramaswamy Naicker in 1949 and founded the DMK. The new party inherited the rich legacy of the Justice Party, the Non-Brahmin Movement and the self-respect Movement. The new party demanded separate Dravida Nadu, wanted to free it from North Indian domination and opposed Brahminical domination and imposition of Hindi. The DMK stood for the upliftment of Tamils and their hoary rich culture, propagation of self – respect, spirit of nationalism and rejection of religion.

Unlike its parent body, the DK, the DMK decided to enter into electoral politics. In the 1952 elections, it supported 30 candidates. In the 1957 election it won 15 seats and in the reconstituted Assembly the DMK was the main opposition party headed by C.N. Annadurai. In the 1962 election, it improved its position by securing 50 seats. In 1962,, when the Anti-Secession Act was passed in the wake of the Chinese invasion, the DMK abandoned the demand for separate Dravida Nadu once for all. After Nehru, the DMK reached greater heights.

SHIROMANI AKALI DAL

Shiromani Akali Dal was a militant, regional and communal party of the Sikhs. It was mainly confined to the Punjab, Haryana and Delhi. The Akali Dal played a prominent part in Punjab politics even before Partition of India. Under the undaunted leadership of Master Tarasingh, the party negotiated with various British missions which visited India to find a solution to India's constitutional problems. After independence, the Akali dal stepped up its demand for Pujabi Suba, a separate home-land for the Sikhs. Sant Fateh Singh threatened the Government of India with self-immolation if his demand for the establishment of Punjabi Suba was not conceded. During the Nehru years the demand remained unfulfilled.

THE JHARKAND PARTY

The Jharkand Party was founded in 1950 by Jaipal Singh, an Oxford educated Jharkand tribal. Under his dynamic leadership, the party made its mark

in 1952 elections by winning 32 seats in Chota Nagpur and emerged as the main opposition party in the Bihar assembly. Its main demand was the formation of a separate Jharkand for the Bihar tribals. The States Reorganisation Commission (1955) rejected the demand and the central Government also was not in favour it an uphill task to maintain the unity of the party. The Jharkand Party won 25 seats in the 1957 election and 20 in 1962. In 1963, Jaipal Singh along with his followers joined the Congress.

3.Smt.INDIRA GANDHI-REFORMS-EMERGENCY

Indira Gandhi , was a stateswoman, politician and daughter to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. She served as India's Prime Minister following the death of Lal Bahadur Shastri and held the office for three separate terms; between 1967 and 1971 first, then between 1971 and 1977, and finally between 1980 and 1984 before being assassinated. She is, to date, India's first and only female Prime Minister. She is also the longest serving Indian Prime Minister after her father Jawaharlal Nehru, who held the post for 17 years post independence.

FACILITATING THE GREEN REVOLUTION

Since India has been primarily an agrarian economy, with most of its people engaged in the rural agriculture; the focus of Indian leaders post-independence, was towards the increased production of good grains to counter the problems of mass hunger, as a result of prevailing poverty and unemployment in the country. The import of food grains from the US to India saw a steady decline, giving rise to shortages of food supply in the country. This prompted the Indira Gandhi government to adopt Norman Borlaugh's Green Revolution ideology.

Agriculture was shifted to the industrial sector with adoption of modern methods such as use of HYV (High Yielding Variety) seeds, use of pesticides and fertilizers, and the adoption of modern technology such as tractors and irrigation facilities. The program was headed by M.S.Swaminathan, an agricultural scientist widely regarded as the 'Father of Green Revolution in India'.

NATIONALISING 14 PRIVATE SECTOR BANKS

On 19th July 1969, the government of India under Prime Minister Indira Gandhi nationalized 14 private-sector banks by means of an ordinance. The ordinance was called the Banking Companies (Acquisition and transfer of Undertakings) ordinance, which was followed by an act of the same name. Under this ordinance, the ownership of 14 major commercial private banks, which controlled 70% of the country's deposits was transferred to the Central Government.

INDO-PAKISTAN WAR OF 1971

India joined the war on 3rd December 1971, following pre-emptive air strikes by Pakistan in North India. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi expressed full support towards East Pakistan, and concluded that instead of taking in millions of refugees, it was economical to go to war with Pakistan. With the help of air supremacy achieved in the eastern province, as well as the rapid advances of the Indian armed forces backed by allied forces of Bangladesh, Pakistan surrendered in Dhaka on December 16th 1971. The war lasted a total of 13 days.

THE SHIMLA AGREEMENT

The treaty was signed between then President of Pakistan, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. The agreement paved the way for the diplomatic recognition of Bangladesh by Pakistan. Under the agreement, both the parties agreed to settle their differences through peaceful means and bilateral agreement. Kashmir, as a dispute was also considered as a bilateral issue that must be settled through the Shimla Agreement 1972, and thus India denied any intervention by third parties, even by that of the United Nations. The agreement also saw the conversion of the Cease-fire of 17th December 1971 into the Line of Control (LOC) between India and Pakistan. It was agreed that 'neither side shall seek to alter it unilaterally, irrespective of mutual differences and legal interpretations'.

EMERGENCY

Following the 1972 national elections, Gandhi was accused of misconduct by her political opponent and, in 1975, was convicted of electoral corruption by the High Court of Allahabad and prohibited from running in another election for six years. Instead of resigning as expected, she responded by declaring a state of emergency on June 25, whereby citizen's civil liberties were suspended, the press was acutely censored and the majority of her opposition was detained without trial. Throughout what became referred to as the "Reign of Terror", thousands of dissidents were imprisoned without due process.

Anticipating that her former popularity would assure her reelection, Gandhi finally eased the emergency restrictions and called for the next general election in March 1977. Riled by their limited liberties, however, the people overwhelmingly voted in favor of the Janata Party and Morarji Desai assumed the role of Prime Minister. Within the next few years, democracy was restored, but the Janata Party had little success in resolving the nation's severe poverty crisis. In 1980, Gandhi campaigned under a new party Congress, and was elected into her fourth term as Prime Minister.

Nevertheless, she leaves behind a legacy as one of India's greatest Prime Ministers. Indira Gandhi was succeeded by her son Rajiv Gandhi, immediately following her assassination.

4.MORARJI DESAI-FIRST NON CONGRESS MINISTRY

Morarji Desai was an independence activist, political leader, and India's 4th Prime Minister. He held the post for 2 years and 4 months, before resigning as a result of Raj Narain and Charan Singh leaving the Janata Party in 1979. Morarji Desai retired from politics following his resignation. During the Emergency, after Indira Gandhi was convicted of electoral fraud, Desai and other opposition leaders were jailed by Gandhi's government. The anti-corruption wave led by Jayaprakash Narayan, and the anti-emergency wave of 1977, caused the Congress

to opt to the Janata Alliance(Janata Party) in the General Elections of 1977. As leader of the party, Morarji Desai became the first non-Congress Prime Minister of India.

FORMALLY ENDING EMERGENCY

As prime Minister, the first task for Morarji Desai to formally end the state of emergency called by Indira Gandhi's government in the period between 1975 and 1977. Media-censorship was removed, and controversial executive decrees that were issued during the emergency were repealed. Many of the anti-democratic provisions of the 42nd Amendment to the Constitution during Emergency, were annulled with the passing of the following amendment.

DEMONETISATION OF 1,000, 5,000 AND 10,000 RUPEE NOTES

In 1978, when Morarji Desai got elected into Premiership, the government of India issued demonetization of 1000, 5000 and 10,000 rupee notes in a bid to combat corruption and black money. Back then, Rs.1000 note could buy about 5 square feet of real estate space in south Bombay. Hoarding of money would take place, as people did not want to deposit their high denomination notes in banks as they feared income tax problems.

On 16th January 1978, the government passed The High Denomination Bank Notes (Demonetisation) Act 1978, which declared that high value notes would cease to be legal tender at the close of banking hours on that day, and that all banks and treasuries of the government would remain closed for transactions from the next day. Any contravention, including false declaration by depositors, was made punishable by law-with a fine or three-year prison term. Gold and commodity prices fell sharply, but the impact was limited.

REFUSING USA'S INVOLVEMENT IN NUCLEAR PROGRAM

Prime Minister Morarji Desai played a crucial role in India's nuclear program after it was targeted by major nuclear powers after conducting a surprise nuclear test, under the Indira Gandhi government in 1974. Since the

tests in 1974, Desai decided to keep India's nuclear reactor stating, "They will never be used for nuclear bombs".

In 1977, the Carter administration in the US offered to sell heavy water and uranium to India for its nuclear reactors. However, it required American on-site inspection of nuclear material. Desai declined stating the contradictory stance of USA in light of its own nuclear program.

Morarji Desai, resigned from Premiership in 1979 and retired from politics altogether. In the two years that he took office, India witnessed a fuelled growth in its foreign policy. Ties were strengthened with USA, China, USSR and Pakistan.