



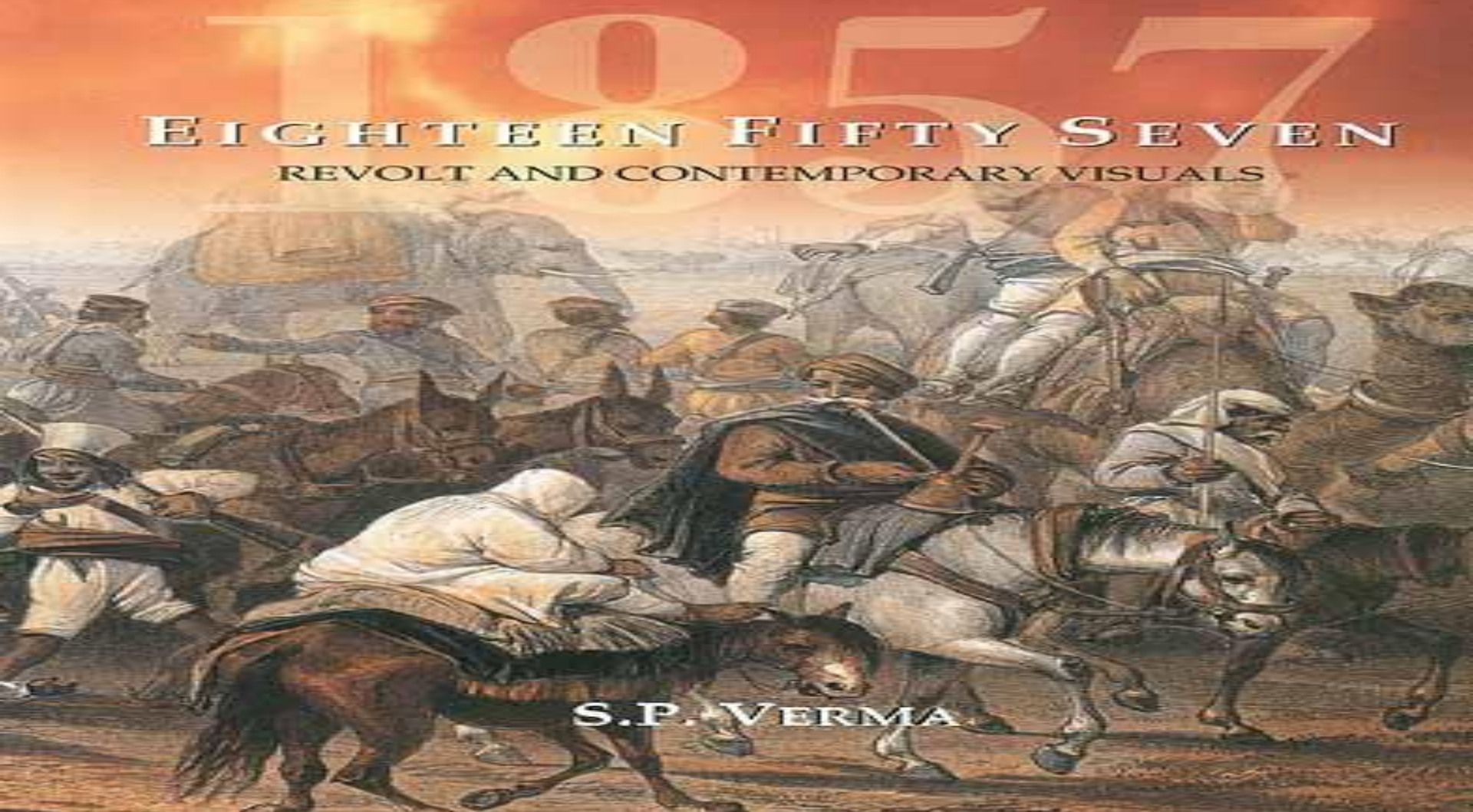


INDIAN FREEDOM STRUGGLE, 1857-1947

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INDIAN FREEDOM STRUGGLE

- 1857 REVOLT



INDIAN FREEDOM STRUGGLE

- Bahadur Shah Zafar: The last Mughal Emperor



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- Rani Jhansi Laxmibai



History of Modern India: The Struggle for Freedom

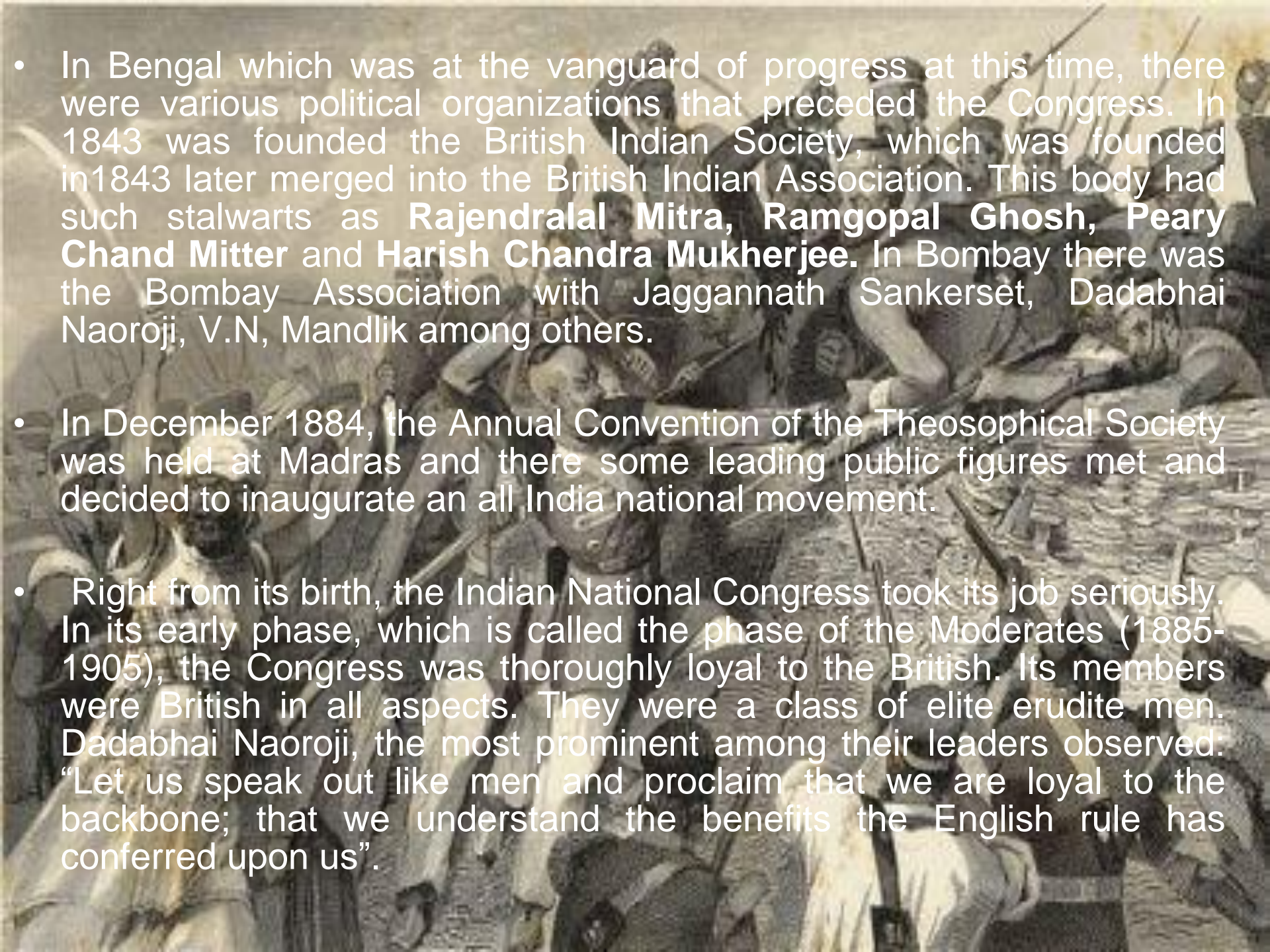
- **Birth of the Congress**

The credit for the birth of the Indian National Congress is generally given to A.O. Hume, a retired British civil servant who inaugurated it. However there is general consensus on the view that the Congress was a natural and inevitable consequence of various political, economic and social forces.

Mr. Hume collected widespread evidence of the imminence of a “terrible revolution” by the half-starved and desperate population; so he set about to find ways and means to direct the popular impulse into an innocuous channel. He wrote a letter to “Graduates of Calcutta University” on March 1, 1883 and the “Indian National Union” was formed in 1884, for constitutional agitation, on an all-India basis; it was to meet in Pune later that year. This organization was renamed the Indian National Congress.

The British Government, which initially patronized this organization, later discovered that it outgrew its plans and promptly withdrew support. After a while, the Congress came to be called the ‘factory of sedition’ and Lord Duff rein termed it as a body representing “microscopic minority” of India’s population.



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- In Bengal which was at the vanguard of progress at this time, there were various political organizations that preceded the Congress. In 1843 was founded the British Indian Society, which was founded in 1843 later merged into the British Indian Association. This body had such stalwarts as **Rajendralal Mitra, Ramgopal Ghosh, Peary Chand Mitter** and **Harish Chandra Mukherjee**. In Bombay there was the Bombay Association with Jaggannath Sankerset, Dadabhai Naoroji, V.N, Mandlik among others.
 - In December 1884, the Annual Convention of the Theosophical Society was held at Madras and there some leading public figures met and decided to inaugurate an all India national movement.
 - Right from its birth, the Indian National Congress took its job seriously. In its early phase, which is called the phase of the Moderates (1885-1905), the Congress was thoroughly loyal to the British. Its members were British in all aspects. They were a class of elite erudite men. Dadabhai Naoroji, the most prominent among their leaders observed: “Let us speak out like men and proclaim that we are loyal to the backbone; that we understand the benefits the English rule has conferred upon us”.

- In 1907, there took place a split in the Congress, as there were some members who were dissatisfied with the scheme of affairs under the Moderate leaders. Fiery and spirited leaders like Bipin Chandra Pal, Lala Lajpat Rai and Bal Gangadhar Tilak, parted company with them.



Bipin Chandra Pal



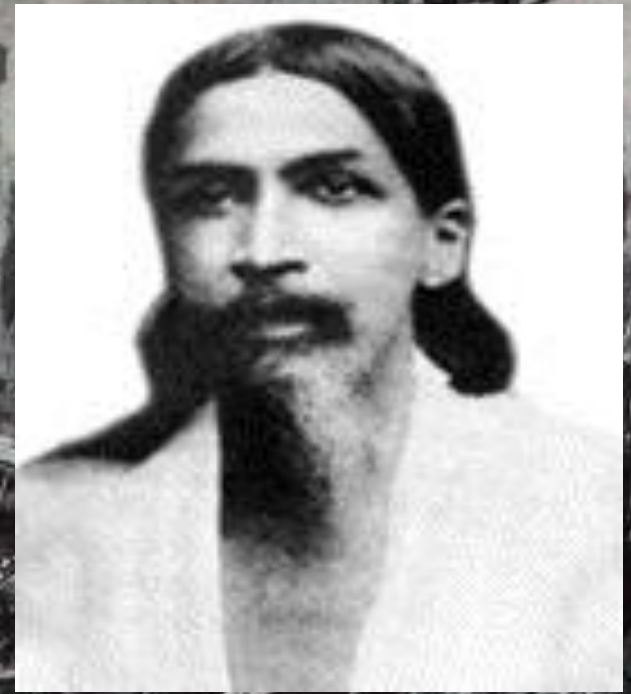
Lala Lajpat Ray



Bal Gangadhar Tilak

- This was the time when extreme nationalists came to the forefront; this was sparked off by the Partition of Bengal into west and east Bengal in 1905, by Lord Curzon (1899-1905), the Viceroy and Governor-General. He declared that the step would help to improve the administrative of the highly populated region, where the Bengali Hindu intelligentsia exerted considerable influence on both local and national politics. The partition created two provinces: Eastern Bengal & Assam, with its capital at Dhaka, and West Bengal, with its capital at Calcutta (which at that time was the capital of British India). This hastily implemented action outraged the Bengalis. There were widespread agitations across the state. October 16, 1905, the day on which the partition came into effect, was observed as a day of mourning and fasting throughout Bengal. Rabindranath Tagore, the famous Nobel-laureate and writer, spoke out against this political event by means of a highly inspiring poem: *Banglar mati Banglar jal, Banglar bayu, banglar phal, punya houk, hey Bhagaban...* (roughly translated into English: "May the soil of Bengal, the water and the air of Bengal be hallowed ... ") Tagore himself led hordes of people on the streets, singing the song and tying Rakhi (an ornamental, colourful chord / strap) on each other's wrists (to symbolise unity and brotherhood). There was a mass-scale fasting by the people and no food was cooked on that day.

- This was the time when the Swadeshi Movement was first launched. Indians all over the country came together in groups, made public bonfires of foreign clothes, cigarettes, soap and anything that came handy. They vowed to use only indigenously manufactured products. A large number of young leaders in Bengal took up the mammoth task of educating people. On August 15, 1906, a National Council of Education was introduced under the educationist and revolutionary, Aurobindo Ghose.



Aurobindo Ghose

- The British government came down heavily on these demonstrations and protests. In 1907, leaders Lala Lajpat Rai and Sardar Ajit Singh were deported from the Punjab. In 1908, Bal Gangadhar Tilak was arrested and sentenced to six years imprisonment. Aurobindo Ghose was arrested, prosecuted and when acquitted, escaped to Pondicherry (then a French colony) to escape the clutches of the British. In later years he founded the Aurobindo Ashram - a centre for the evolution of another kind of life which would in the end be moved by a higher spiritual consciousness and embody a greater life of the spirit.

Home Rule Movement:

- When Great Britain was involved in World War I, India's national movement took on new dimensions. One of them was the Home Rule Movement. On April 28, 1916, the Home Rule League was set up with its headquarters at Pune. Tilak went on a whirlwind tour of the country, appealing to everybody to unite under the banner of Home Rule League. Annie Besant, an Irish lady, who was a member of the Theosophical Society of India, played a key role in this movement.
- To quell the growing revolutionary fervour and spirit, the British government enforced stricter laws to prevent agitations and meetings. The importance of the Home Rule movement lay in the fact that for the first time, the independence of India clearly became the objective of the Indian national movement. The public at large especially the youth began to indulge in acts of terrorism, bombing parliamentary meetings, blowing up railway lines and picketing shops. It was at this juncture that a new leader appeared on the political horizon.



Annie Besant

- **Debut of Gandhi**

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, was a barrister who came back to India from South Africa at the age of 49. While in South Africa, he had already built a tremendous reputation for himself as a political leader. Almost immediately after arriving in Bombay, he was offered to lead the national movement. Gandhi opted to travel and know the country thoroughly first and to familiarize himself with the masses.



Gandhi and Nehru

- **Rowlatt Act**

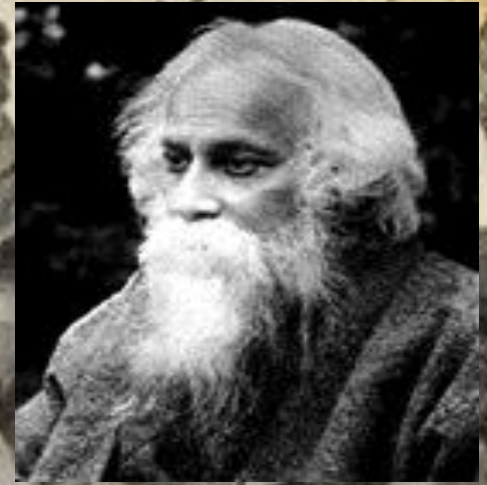
Meanwhile in 1917-18, came the Rowlatt Act, proposed by Justice Rowlatt which, among other things gave the courts the right to try political cases without a jury while provincial governments, apart from the centre, had the power of internment without trial. Gandhi vehemently opposed the Rowlatt Act saying that since it raised issues of trust and self-respect, and hence should be met by a moral response.

• Jallianwallah Bagh tragedy

This gruesome incident added fuel to the fire of nationalist movement. On April 12, 1919, General Michael O Dwyer, who had taken over the command of the troops in Punjab, the day before, prohibited all public meetings or gatherings.

Unfortunately a large number of men women and children had assembled at Jallianwala Bagh, a public garden in Amritsar (which was hemmed in by buildings on all sides and had only a narrow passage way for both entry and exit), on the occasion of Baisakhi (new year celebrations held on 13th April every year) and also to show their resentment against the government policies. Enraged, General Dwyer fired 1600 rounds of ammunition on the crowds, resulting in a stampede and a bloody massacre of thousands of men women and children.

The brutality of the Jallianwallah Bagh tragedy shocked the country. It deeply moved the national leaders who now keenly began to search for newer, more effective ways to express their anguish and displeasure against the government. To show his solidarity with the Indian masses, Tagore rejected the knighthood, earlier conferred upon him by the British government.



Rabindranath Tagore

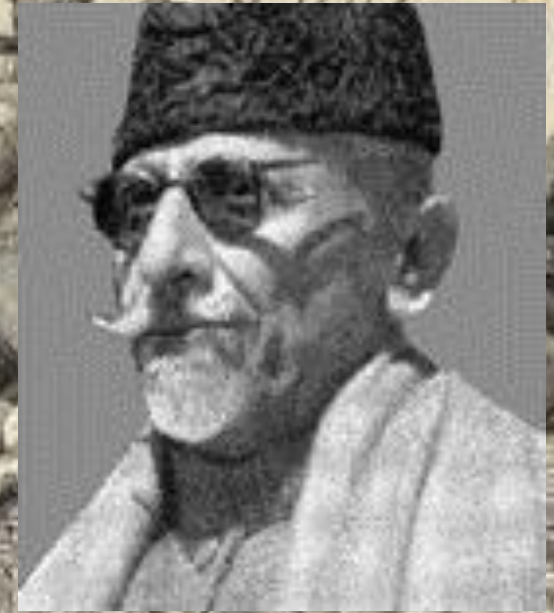


Udham Singh

- **Khilafat Movement**

The Khilafat (opposition) Movement was launched in September 1919 as a communal movement to protect the Turkish Khalifa and save his empire from dismemberment by Great Britain and other European powers. The Ali brothers, Muhammad Ali, Shaukat Ali, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, and Dr M A Ansari, among others, initiated the Movement.

Khilafat conferences were organized in several cities in northern India. Subsequently, the Ali Brothers produced the Khilafat manifesto. The Central Khilafat Committee started a fund to help the nationalist movement in Turkey and to organise the Khilafat Movement at home.



Abul Kalam Azad

Non Co-operation Movement

Non Co-operation Movement In 1920, under the leadership of Gandhi, the Indian National Congress launched his first innovative protest, the Non Cooperation Movement. It involved surrender of all titles, honorary offices and nominated posts in local bodies. People stopped attending government functions and *darbars* (royal court functions and ceremonies). Parents were requested to withdraw their children from all kinds of government-run educational institutions. British courts and the army were boycotted. Indians were to stand for elections to any government body or legislature. Ahimsa or *non-violence* was to be strictly observed. The Non Cooperation Movement came to an abrupt end, with the Chauri-Chaura incident which took place in Gorakhpur (UP) in 1922. Members of a Congress and Khilafat procession were picketing the local bazaar in a campaign directed both against liquor sales and high food prices. Being provoked by some policemen, a section of the crowd attacked them. The police opened fire. In retaliation, the entire procession killed 22 policemen and set the police station on fire. A stunned Gandhi decided to withdraw the movement.

Kakori Robbery

- In August 1925 a band of young revolutionaries in UP looted official a large amount of cash (which belonged to the government treasury) from a Kakori-bound train on the Saharanpur-Lucknow railway section. The Government arrested a large number of young men and tried them in the robbery case.
- Ashfaqualla Khan, Ram Prasad Bismil, Roshan Singh and Rajendra Lahiri were hanged; four others were sentenced to a life term in the penal colony on the Andaman & Nicobar Islands. **Chandra Shekhar Azad** remained a fugitive but was ultimately shot down in a park at Allahabad.



Chandra Shekhar Azad

Civil Disobedience Movement

• Civil Disobedience Movement Launched in 1930 under Gandhi's leadership, it proved to be one of the most important phases of India's freedom struggle. The Simon Commission, constituted in November 1927, by the British Government to prepare and finalize a constitution for India, and consisting of members of the British Parliament only, was boycotted by all sections of the Indian social and political platforms as an '*All-White Commission*'. The opposition to the Simon Commission across the country was wide-spread. Massive demonstrations were held in Calcutta on 19 February 1928, the day of Simon's arrival in the city. On 30th October 1928 when the Simon Commission was expected to arrive in Lahore, it was greeted by a sea of black flags and slogans of "*Simon, go back*". The police *lathi-charged* the mob, during which, Lala Lajpat Rai (a.k.a. *The lion of Punjab*) was grievously injured and succumbed to his injuries two weeks later.

Following the rejection of the recommendations of the Simon Commission by the Indians, an All-Party Conference was held at Bombay in May 1928 under the president ship of Dr MA Ansari. The Conference appointed a drafting committee under Motilal Nehru, also a reputed barrister, to draw up a constitution for India. The Nehru Report was accepted by all sections of Indian society barring a section of Muslims. In December 1928, the Indian National Congress pressed the British Government to accept the Nehru Report in toto.

- The Calcutta Session of the Congress in December 1928 gave an ultimatum to the British Government, that if dominion status was not granted by December 1929, a countrywide Civil Disobedience Movement would be launched. In mid-1929, the British Government, that India would be given dominion status within the British Empire very soon. A few months later, upon assuming office, Lord Irwin, the Governor General, reiterated that the government would usher in some constitutional reforms which would end in granting of dominion status to the Indians. Reacting to this statement, Indian leaders like Gandhi, Tej Bahadur Sapru, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and Annie Besant urged the Governor General to devise a more liberal formula so that the entire issue could be sorted out in a peaceful manner. The leaders demanded the release of all political prisoners. They also urged the British government to convene the proposed Round Table Conference in which the constitutional problems of India were could be discussed.

Meanwhile within the Congress itself young leaders like Subhash Chandra Bose and Jawaharlal Nehru demanded that their aim was not to fight for dominion status but for complete independence. The Congress, at its historic Lahore Session held in December 1929 under the presidentship of Jawaharlal Nehru, adopted a resolution to this effect. It authorised the Congress Working Committee to launch a Civil Disobedience Movement throughout the country. It was decided that 26 January should be observed all over India as the *Purna Swaraj* (complete independence) Day.

Dandi March



- Gandhi, who was called upon to lead the movement, decided to do so in a totally non-violent manner. The violation of the Salt Law was his first step. His famous march from Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad, Gujarat to Dandi (a tiny place on the sea coast of Gujarat in March-April 1930, led to a popular, countrywide movement against the Salt Law. It soon turned into a popular movement. Realising the popularity as well as the intensity of the movement, the government decided to crush it. The Congress Committee was banned. Both Jawaharlal Nehru and Gandhi were imprisoned.

- **The Final Phase:** Bhagat Singh, a young marxist from Punjab, vowed to avenge Lala Lajpat Rai's death. With the help of Chandrashekhar Azad, Rajguru and Sukhdev, plotted to kill Scott a police officer who had brutally beaten up Lalaji. However instead of Scott, they killed a junior officer named Mr. Sanders, thereby incurring the wrath of the administration. The British, under the Defence of India Act, empowered the police to arrest people and stop processions on the flimsiest pretext. To protest against this decision, Bhagat Singh and an accomplice, Batukeshwar Dutt threw handouts, and threw a hand grenade during an ongoing session in Delhi's Central Assembly, on 8 April 1929. They cheerfully courted arrest after shouting slogans of "*Inquilab Zindabad!*" (*Long Live, Revolution!*). Bhagat Singh was found guilty, and was hanged on 23 March 1931.



Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev

- On 18 April 1930, young revolutionaries in Bengal (including Preetilata Waddadar and Kalapana Dutt) led by Surya Sen (a.k.a Masterda = teacher, sir) attacked and burned down the British Armory in Chittagong (modern Bangladesh). They fought a heroic battle on the hills of Jalalabad where twelve revolutionaries were killed. On 23 September 1932, Surya Sen masterminded a successful attack on the European Club in Chittagong, which displayed a nefarious sign: *Dogs and Indians not allowed*. Surya Sen was finally captured on 17 February 1933 and hanged in Chittagong Jail on 8th January, 1934.

- In April 1930, there were violent clashes between the police and the masses in Calcutta. Thousands of people were imprisoned in the course of the Civil disobedience movement (1930-31). While Gandhi was in jail, the first Round Table Conference was held in London in November 1930; it was completely boycotted by the congressmen and therefore, futile. The ban upon the Congress was removed due to the economic hardships caused by the Salt Satyagraha (movement for truth) Gandhi, and other members of the Congress Working Committee, was released from prison in January 1931.

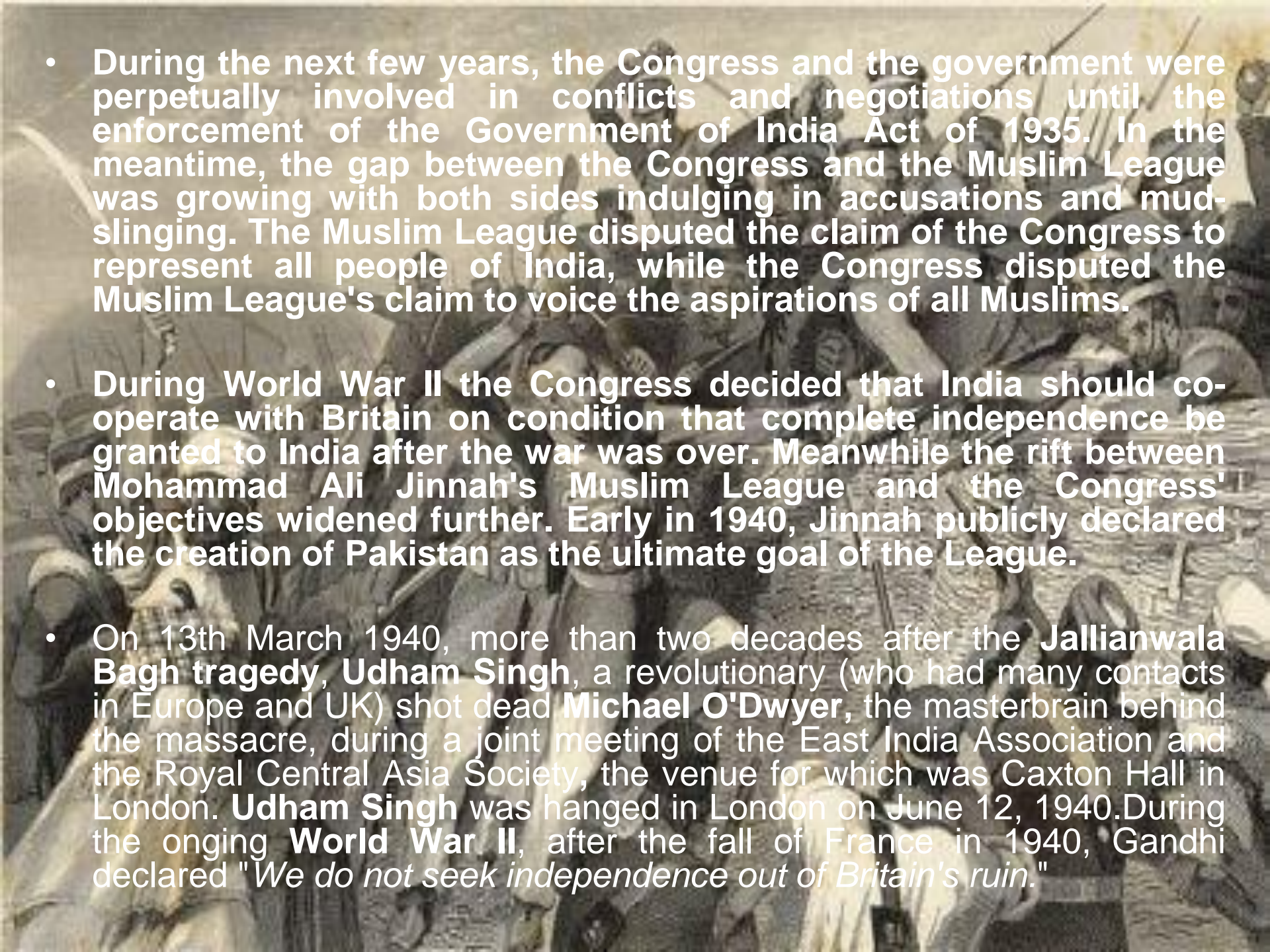



Surya Sen

- In March of 1931, the Gandhi-Irwin Pact was signed, with the government agreeing to release all political prisoners. Gandhi agreed to discontinue the civil disobedience movement and participate in the second Round Table Conference, which was held in London in September 1931. However, this meet too, ended in failure. In December 1931, a dejected Gandhi returned to India, determined to resume the Civil Disobedience Movement in January 1932.



Lord Irwin

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- During the next few years, the Congress and the government were perpetually involved in conflicts and negotiations until the enforcement of the Government of India Act of 1935. In the meantime, the gap between the Congress and the Muslim League was growing with both sides indulging in accusations and mud-slinging. The Muslim League disputed the claim of the Congress to represent all people of India, while the Congress disputed the Muslim League's claim to voice the aspirations of all Muslims.
 - During World War II the Congress decided that India should cooperate with Britain on condition that complete independence be granted to India after the war was over. Meanwhile the rift between Mohammad Ali Jinnah's Muslim League and the Congress' objectives widened further. Early in 1940, Jinnah publicly declared the creation of Pakistan as the ultimate goal of the League.
 - On 13th March 1940, more than two decades after the **Jallianwala Bagh tragedy**, **Udham Singh**, a revolutionary (who had many contacts in Europe and UK) shot dead **Michael O'Dwyer**, the masterbrain behind the massacre, during a joint meeting of the East India Association and the Royal Central Asia Society, the venue for which was Caxton Hall in London. **Udham Singh** was hanged in London on June 12, 1940. During the ongoing **World War II**, after the fall of France in 1940, Gandhi declared "*We do not seek independence out of Britain's ruin.*"



The British replied with the offer that a `constituent assembly as well as Dominion status would be discussed `after the war'. India's arbitrary entry into the **World War II** was strongly opposed by **Subhash Chandra Bose**, President of the Congress in 1937 and later in 1939. Resigning from Congress in 1939 Bose floated a new party, the **All India Forward Bloc**. In 1941 he dexterously escaped from house arrest in Calcutta, and resurfaced in **Germany**. There he garnered **German and Japanese** help to fight the British in India.

- In March 1942, the British government, by means of the '**Cripps' Mission** attempted to secure Indian cooperation and support for their efforts in the still raging World War II. The mission was headed by **Sir Stafford Cripps**, a senior **Labour Party** politician and government minister in the War Cabinet headed by the premier **Winston Churchill**.

- In India, **Cripps** parleyed with the Indian leaders. But his failure to present any concrete proposals for greater self-government, the Congress leaders felt that the British were not interested in granting India self-government or respecting Indian public opinion on the war. Offended, the Congress halted all talks with **Cripps**. The nation guided by **Gandhi**, vociferously demanded immediate self-government in turn for war support. Finding the British unresponsive, Gandhi gave the clarion call for the British to “ **Quit India**. ” The movement was launched on **August 8, 1942** in **Bombay** and

immediately caught on like wild fire across the country. It was a “Do or Die” attempt on the part of the leaders as well as the masses. In 1943, Bose went to Japan, where he helped organize the Indian National Army (a.k.a *Azad Hind Fauj*) and set up a government-in-exile. Shortly afterwards, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands came under INA control. Pressing forward, the INA traversed Nagaland, finally reaching Manipur. Unfortunately, lack of equipment,ammunitions coupled half-hearted support from Japan, took a heavy toll of the INA soldiers. the INA's efforts ended with the surrender of Japan in 1945. Bose was reportedly killed in an air crash in August 1945. His end is still shrouded in mystery.

- The victory of Britain's Labour Party' in the elections of 1945 was a shot in the arm for the Indian freedom fighters, as the party had long championed the cause of India's freedom. helped reassess the merits of the traditional policies. While the British were negotiating to transfer power to India, the Muslim League renewed its demand for the formation of Pakistan. Jinnah, who was opposed to sharing power with the Indian National Congress, declared 16 August 1946 as Direct Action Day, which led to communal rioting in many places in the northern part of the country. Thousands of people lost their lives. On 3 June 1947, Lord Louis Mountbatten, the last British Viceroy, announced plans for the bifurcation o the British Indian Empire into a secular India, and Islamic Pakistan, which was divided into east and west wings on either side of India.



Gandhi and Jinnah

- At midnight on August 14, 1947, India became an independent nation, with Jawaharlal Nehru as its first prime minister. **Gandhi**, who was dead against the idea of a divided India, spent the day fasting and praying in Calcutta. Muslims in the northwest and northeast of India were assimilated into Pakistan. Violent clashes between Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs followed. The area of Kashmir became a source of controversy that erupted into the First Indo-Pakistani War which lasted from 1947 to 1949. India and Pakistan were granted full autonomy, with the King-Emperor crowned as the Head of State of both India and Pakistan, and the Governor General as the King's representative. In 1948, **Mountbatten** was succeeded by **Chakravarti Rajgopalachari**, a veteran Congress leader. Mohammed Ali Jinnah assumed charge as Pakistan's Governor General, with **Liaquat Ali Khan** as Prime Minister.



C. Rajgopalachari

