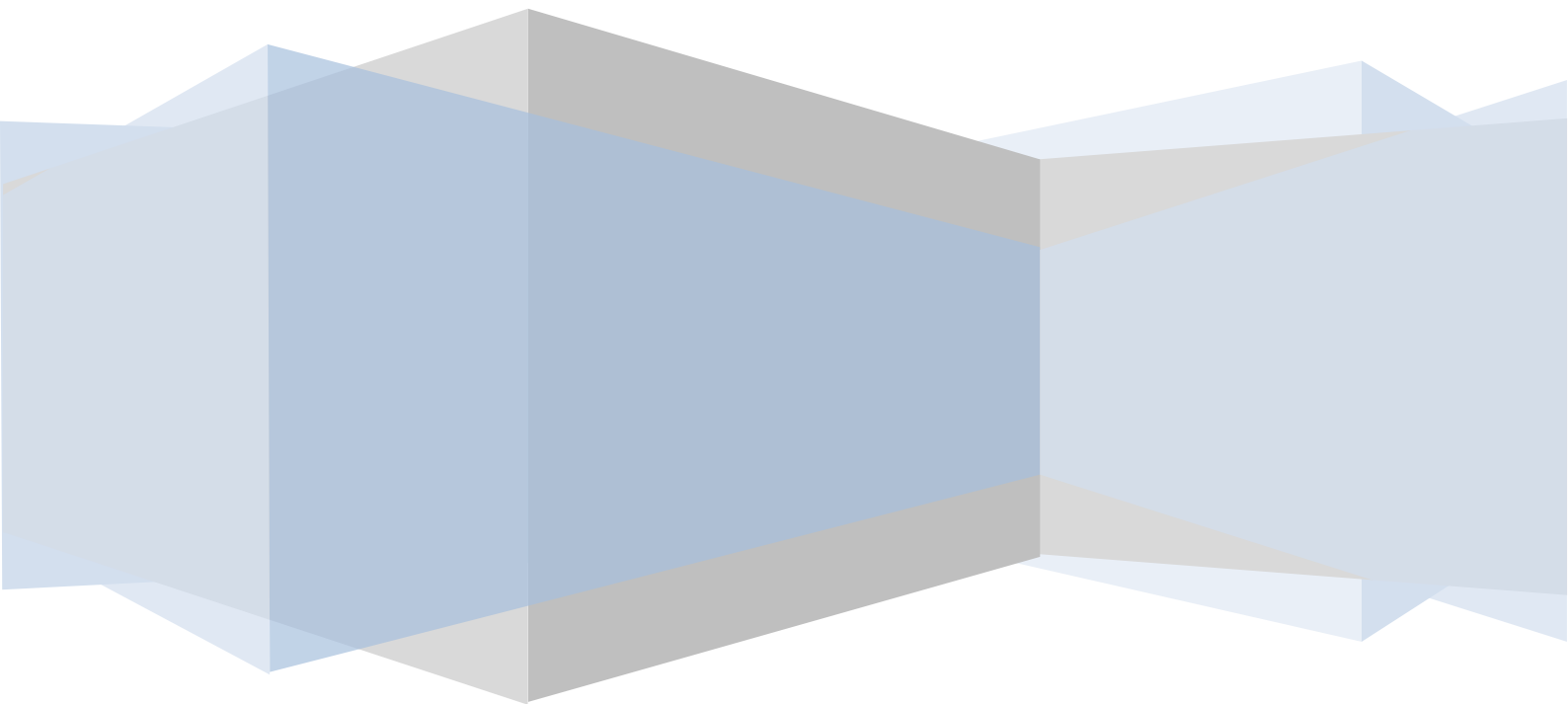


# Chapter 7: Gandhian Phase

## Short Answers

### CSM 05: History of India and Indian National Movement

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**This chapter contains:**

- Suraj Split
- First Phase of Revolutionary Activities
- Decline of Revolutionary Activities
- Indian Press Act
- Komagata Maru Incident
- Indian Freedom Struggle amid WW1
- Emergence of Gandhi
- Nationalist Response to First World War
- Home Rule League Movement
- Annie Besant

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# 1. Surat Split

The **conflict between** the various nationalist strands culminated in the **Surat Split in December 1907**. Rash Behari Ghosh presided over the Surat Congress session in 1907, despite opposition from Tilak and others. At the Surat session, Congress leaders were divided into two factions: **Moderates and Extremists**. This schism was also visible at the **Banaras Session of Congress (1905)**, when some leaders, such as Tilak, criticized the moderates' methods and suggested passive resistance. They also believed that boycotting British goods and government institutions was a good idea. In this article, we will discuss the **Surat Split (1907)** which will be helpful for UPSC exam preparation.

## 1.1 Background

- Congress leaders split into two groups at the Surat Session in 1907: moderates and extremists.
- The schism between these two groups became clear at the Banaras Session (1905).
- Lokmanya Tilak and his supporters held a separate conference at the end of this session and announced the formation of the **Extremist Party**. They did, however, decide to work as part of the Indian National Congress.
- The schism between Moderators and Extremists widened further in 1906 at the Calcutta Session.
- Both parties nominated candidates for the presidency, but **Dadabhai Naoroji** was accepted as a compromise candidate by both parties.
- The Extremists were also successful in obtaining a resolution emphasizing the principles of swadeshi, boycott, and national education.
- However, the Moderators refused to accept what had occurred at the **Calcutta session in 1906** and were determined to undo it at the Surat Session in 1907.
- Extremists were equally determined to ensure that the Moderates did not get their way.
- In Surat, extremists attempted to push Lala Lajpat Rai's candidacy for Congress President, while moderates supported **Dr. Rash Behari Ghosh**.
- Lala Lajpat Rai saved the situation by stepping down, and Dr. Rash Behari Ghosh took over as President.

## 1.2 Causes

- The partition of Bengal in 1905 provided impetus for the Extremists to openly criticize the Moderates' methods. As a result, the Partition promoted extremist ideology.
- The moderate method of constitutional agitation, which included petitioning, praying, and protesting, had exhausted the Indian masses, giving rise to extremist tendencies that emphasized direct action against the British.
- The Extremists set two main goals for the Surat Session of Congress.
  - The extremists demanded that Lala Lajpat Rai be appointed President of the INC.
  - The second demand was for Swaraj's resolution.
- Both demands were rejected by the Moderates.

### 1.3 Consequences

- **Rabindranath Tagore's** efforts to reconcile the Moderates and Extremists following the Surat Split were futile.
- Furthermore, the adoption of resolutions for permanently disqualifying the Congress's Extremist section at the 1908 Allahabad convention aggravated the situation.
- Following the Surat Split in 1907, the Moderates demanded colonial self-government in contrast to the Extremists' demand for total independence.
- The moderates' constitutional politics did not impress the British government, as evidenced by the **Morley-Minto Reforms of 1909**.
- The Moderates had lost touch with the nationalism's younger generation. The younger generation desired results, which fueled the rise of revolutionaries.
- To suppress militant nationalists, the British used a **divide and rule strategy**.
- Extremism was mostly confined to Bengal, Maharashtra, and Punjab, where the rise in terrorist activity allowed the government to unleash repression.
- Following the incarceration of leaders such as Bal Gangadhar Tilak, the moderate-dominated Congress went dormant.
- Separate electorates were granted to Muslims in 1909. This was a setback for Congress because the most critical and vocal elements were not included in the INC.

### 1.4 Ideological Differences between Moderates and Extremist

- Even when they were working together to oppose Bengal's partition, there was a great deal of public debate and disagreement between Moderates and Extremists in 1905-1907.
- The extremists wished to expand the Swadeshi and Boycott Movement beyond Bengal into the rest of the country.
- They also intended to gradually broaden the boycott of foreign goods to include any form of association or cooperation with the colonial government.
- The Moderates wished to limit the boycott portion of the movement to Bengal and were vehemently opposed to its extension to the Government.
- The question of the Presidentship of the Calcutta Congress nearly came to a head in 1906. By selecting Dadabhai Naoroji, a schism was avoided.
- Four compromise resolutions were passed on the Swadeshi, Boycott, National Education, and Self-Government demands.
- Throughout the year 1907, the two sides fought over differing interpretations of the four resolutions.
- By the end of 1907, the Extremists were convinced that the fight for liberty had begun, as the people had been roused.
- The majority of them believed that the time had come to part ways with the Moderates.
- The majority of the Moderates, led by Pherozeshah Mehta, were equally adamant about a split. They were afraid that the Congress organization, which had been carefully built over the previous twenty years, would be shattered.

### 1.5 Aftermath

- The British Divide and Rule policy resulted in the Surat Split.
- After a significant period of time, the British believed they had gained control of the INC's affairs.
- While the Congress' leadership remained in the hands of the Moderates for some time longer, as the Extremists worked separately until 1916.
- Due to the efforts of the leaders of the Home Rule movement, both groups later reunited at the Lucknow session of Congress in 1916.
- The moderates and the extremists were like the brain and heart of the nation-one was the law and the other impulse. Their unified function was a prerequisite for the growth of the national movement.
- The exit of the Extremist left the Congress paralysed for more than a decade as the Moderates could achieve very little.
- It was only in 1916 after re-entry of the Extremists and exit of the Moderates (1918) that the Congress was reactivated.
- But now it was a different story all together. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi had entered the political scene and associated himself with the programme of the Extremist.
- He represented a new synthesis of faith and reason, law and impulse and inaugurated a new era in Modern India History.

## **1.6 Conclusion**

The Surat Split was a watershed moment in the history of India's Nationalist Movement. It represented a shift in the government's policy and attitude toward nationalist moderates on the government side. The Surat Split was the direct cause of the Minto-Morley Reform of 1909. Both parties have been greatly weakened as a result of the split. Extremists faced official repression, while liberals were abandoned by their own people.

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## 2. First Phase of Revolutionary Activities

The **first phase of revolutionary activities** lasted from **1907 to 1917**. The activities of revolutionary heroism arose as a result of the rise of **militant nationalism**. The first phase, which lasted until 1917, took on a more activist tone as a result of the **Swadeshi and Boycott Movement**. As a result of the **Non-Cooperation Movement**, the **second phase began**. In this article, we will discuss various activities that took place during the first phase of revolutionary activities which will be helpful for UPSC exam preparation.

### 2.1 Reasons for Surge in Revolutionary Activities

- After the open movements demise, the younger nationalists who had been a part of it found it impossible to drop out and fade into the background.
- They looked for ways to express their patriotic energies, but were disillusioned by the failure of the leadership, including the Extremists, to find new forms of struggle to put the new militant trends into practise.
- Although the extremist leaders called on the youth to make sacrifices, they were unable to establish an effective organisation or find new forms of political work to channel these revolutionary energies.
- Because all avenues of peaceful political protest were closed to them due to government repression, the youth believed that if nationalist goals of independence were to be met, the British had to be expelled by force.

### 2.2 Revolutionary Programme

- The revolutionaries considered, but did not find it practical to implement, the options of launching a violent mass revolution across the country or attempting to undermine the Army's loyalties.
- Rather, they chose to follow in the footsteps of Russian nihilists or Irish nationalists.
- Individual heroic actions included organising assassinations of unpopular officials as well as traitors and informers among the revolutionaries themselves.
- They conducted swadeshi dacoities to raise funds for **revolutionary activities**; and (during the First World War) **organized military conspiracies** with the expectation of assistance from Britain's enemies.
- The plan was to instill fear in the hearts of the rulers, arouse the people, and remove their fear of authority.
- The revolutionaries hoped to inspire the people by **appealing to patriotism**, particularly among the idealistic youth who would eventually drive the British out.
- Extremist leaders failed to ideologically counter the revolutionaries because they failed to distinguish between a revolution based on mass activity and one based on individual violent activity, allowing individualistic violent activities to take root.

### 2.3 Revolutionary Activities During First Phase

- **India's struggle for independence** was accompanied by many **revolutionary activities** that had been raised from different parts of the country.



- Revolutionaries are those people who believed in **overthrowing the British Government** by means of mass movements. Several internal and external influences worked on the minds of the youth in India during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, resulting in the emergence of revolutionary ideology.
- **The revolutionary movement in India began in Bengal, Maharashtra, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Orissa, Bihar, and Madras provinces, but it was primarily active in Bengal, Maharashtra, and Punjab** because these regions were more politically active than the rest of the country.
- The activities, writings, and speeches of this period's revolutionaries reveal a strong religious bias, romanticism, and emotionalism.
- Many of them were convinced that "pure political propaganda would not suffice for the country, and that people needed to be spiritually prepared to face dangers."
- The first revolutionary organizations were formed in **1902 in Midnapore** (under **Jnanendra Nath Basu**) and **Calcutta** (under **Promotha Mitter and including Jatindranath Banerjee, Barindra Kumar Ghosh**, and others).
- The first of the revolutionary activities in Maharashtra was the organization of the **Ramosi Peasant Force** by **Vasudev Balwant Phadke in 1879**, which aimed to rid the country of the British by instigating an armed revolt by disrupting the communication lines.
- Extremism in Punjab was fueled by issues such as **frequent famines** combined with an **increase in land revenue and irrigation tax**, zamindars' practise of 'begar,' and events in Bengal.

## 2.4 Revolutionary Activities Abroad

- **Revolutionary activities continued unabated even abroad.**
- The need for shelter, the possibility of publishing revolutionary literature that would be exempt from the Press Acts, and the desire for arms drove Indian revolutionaries to travel abroad.
- Following the assassination of District Magistrate Rand, **Shyamji Krishna Verma of Kathiawar** travelled to London and established the **Home Rule Society - 'India House'** - in London in 1905 as a center for Indian students, a scholarship scheme to bring radical youth from India, and a journal called **'The Indian Sociologist.'**
- The Indian Home Rule Society was an **informal Indian Nationalist movement** that started in **London**.
- **V.D. Savarkar** went to London in 1906 and joined the **'Indian Society.'** It advocated for revolutionary terrorism.
- The **role of the Ghadar Party** in revolutionary activities around the world cannot be overstated.
- The **Ghadar Movement** was a pivotal event in the history of the Indian freedom struggle. The Ghadar Party was a **political revolutionary organization** founded in the **United States of America** by migrated Indians.
- The formation of the Ghadar Party was primarily the work of Sikhs.
- **Lala Hardayal**, a revolutionary young man from Punjab, **founded the Ghadar Party** and also published **The Ghadar**, a weekly newspaper. Its goal was to spark a revolution in India that would liberate the country from British rule.

- The **Komagata Maru incident** involved the **Japanese steamship Komagata Maru**, on which a group of British Raj citizens attempted to emigrate to Canada in 1914 but were denied entry.
- The 1915 **Singapore Mutiny**, also known as the **1915 Sepoy Mutiny or the Mutiny of the 5th Light Infantry**, was a mutiny against the British in Singapore by up to half of a regiment of 850 Indian Muslim sepoys during World War I.

## 2.5 Decline of Revolutionary Activities

After 1918, the Revolutionary Activities came to a temporary halt due to several reasons:

- Stern Government repression along with a series of draconian laws.
- Lack of popular response.
- The World War-I ended and the government released all political prisoners arrested under the Defense of India Act.
- Discussion began on the new Constitutional Reforms (Government of India Act 1919) which generated an atmosphere of compromise.
- Gandhi arrived on the national scene and emphasized non-violent means which also halted the place of revolutionary activities.

## 2.6 Conclusion

Revolutionary activities emerged as the most significant legacy of Swadeshi Bengal, having an impact on educated youth for a generation or more. The revolutionary activities spread throughout the country. Maharashtra, Bengal, Punjab, and Madras were transformed into revolutionary hotspots. Revolutionary activities continued unabated even abroad. The lack of mass participation, combined with the movement's narrow upper-caste social base in Bengal, severely limited the scope of revolutionary activity. In the end, it crumbled under the weight of state repression.

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### 3. Decline of Revolutionary Activities

The causes of the rise of revolutionary activities are largely similar to the ones that gave rise to **Extremist Nationalism**. The emergence of revolutionary ideology in India during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was the result of several internal and external influences working on the minds of the youth. The revolutionary movement in India began in Bengal, Maharashtra, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Orissa, Bihar, and Madras provinces, but it was primarily active in **Bengal, Maharashtra, and Punjab because these regions were more politically active than other parts of the country**. In this article, we will discuss the reasons for the **Decline of Revolutionary Activities** which will be helpful for UPSC exam preparation.

#### 3.1 Rise of Revolutionary Activities

- The activities of revolutionary heroism arose as a result of the rise of **militant nationalism**.
- The first phase, which lasted until 1917, took on a more activist tone as a result of the Swadeshi and Boycott Movement.
- As a result of the Non-Cooperation Movement, the second phase began.
- After the open movement's demise, the younger nationalists who had been a part of it found it impossible to drop out and fade into the background.
- They looked for ways to express their patriotic energies but were disillusioned by the failure of the leadership, including the Extremists, to find new forms of struggle to put the new militant trends into practice.
- Although the extremist leaders called on the youth to make sacrifices, they were unable to establish an effective organization or find new forms of political work to channel these revolutionary energies.
- Because all avenues of peaceful political protest were closed to them due to government repression, the youth believed that in order to achieve nationalist goals of independence, the British had to be physically expelled.
- Liberation through revolution, heroism, and supreme sacrifice, **assassinating unpopular British officials, instilling fear in rulers**, and inciting people to expel the British with force drew in new nationalists.

#### 3.2 Revolutionary Programme

- The revolutionaries considered but did not find it practical to implement, the options of launching a violent mass revolution across the country or attempting to undermine the Army's loyalties.
- Rather, they chose to follow in the footsteps of Russian nihilists or Irish nationalists.
- Individual heroic actions included organizing assassinations of unpopular officials as well as traitors and informers among the revolutionaries themselves.
- They conducted swadeshi dacoities to raise funds for **revolutionary activities**; and (during the First World War) **organized military conspiracies** with the expectation of assistance from Britain's enemies.
- The plan was to instill fear in the hearts of the rulers, arouse the people, and remove their fear of authority.

- The revolutionaries hoped to inspire the people by **appealing to patriotism**, particularly among the idealistic youth who would eventually drive the British out.
- Extremist leaders failed to ideologically counter the revolutionaries because they failed to distinguish between a revolution based on mass activity and one based on individual violent activity, allowing individualistic violent activities to take root.

### 3.3 Revolutionary Activities

#### Revolutionary Activities in Maharashtra

- The **Chapaker brothers (Deodar and Balkrishana Chapeau)** assassinated Lt. Ayerst in Poona in 1897, but Rand, the president of the Plague Committee, was the intended target.
- They were apprehended, tried, and hanged.
- Similarly, **Bal Gangadhar Tilak** was imprisoned for inciting terrorism through his writings.

#### Revolutionary Activities in Bengal

- Bengal became a hotspot for terrorist activity. **In 1908, Prafulla Chaki and Khudiram Bose** threw a bomb at Kennedy's carriage, mistaking it for that of Muzaffarpur's **judge, Kingsford**.
- Previously, the concerned judge had sentenced a number of young people to death.
- Two women were killed in the incident, and Prafulla shot himself dead before he could be apprehended by police. Khudiram, on the other hand, was tried and executed.

#### Revolutionary Activities in Punjab

- Under the leadership of **Lala Hardayal, Avado Bihar, Amir Chandra, J.M. Chatterjee**, and others, Punjab also became a hotbed of revolutionary activity.
- There were also revolutionary organizations such as the '**Kitty Kinas Party and the Naujawan Sabha.**'
- The '**Hindustan Republic Association**' was founded by **Chandra Shekhar Azad**. Later, it was renamed the '**Hindustan Socialist Republic Association.**'
- Its leaders, including Bhagat Singh, Raj Guru, and Sukh Dev, were executed for their roles in the **Kakori train robbery**, the bombing of the Assembly hall, and other terrorist activities.
- In fact, for the British government, Punjab became a raging volcano.

#### Revolutionary Activities Abroad

- Revolutionary activities continued unabated even abroad. Following the assassination of District Magistrate Rand, **Shyamji Krishna Verma** of Kathiawar traveled to London and established the **Indian Home Rule Society**.
- **V.D.Savarkar** went to London in 1906 and joined the 'Indian Society.' It advocated for revolutionary terrorism.

- **Madan Lal Dhingra**, a member of this society, **assassinated Sir William Curzon Willy**, the ADC to India's Secretary of State.
- **Lala Hardayal**, a revolutionary young man from Punjab, founded the **Gadar Party** and also published **The Gadar, a weekly newspaper**.
  - Its goal was to spark a revolution in India that would liberate the country from British rule.
  - The United States government ordered Lala Hardayal to leave the country due to his involvement in anti-British propaganda.
- The **Komagata Maru case** fueled revolutionary terrorism. This Japanese ship, which had brought revolutionary Sikhs to Canada, was denied anchoring in a Canadian port and was forced to return to Calcutta.

### 3.4 Government Response to Revolutionary Activities

In order to meet revolutionary activities, the government of India passed several repressive legislations including:

- The Prevention of Seditious Meeting Act, 1907
- The Explosives Substances Act, 1908
- The Indian Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1908
- The Newspaper (Incitement to Offenses Act), 1908
- The Press Act, 1910
- The Defense of India Rules, 1915

### 3.5 Decline of Revolutionary Activities

- **There was no central, all-India organization** that could control the activities in an organized manner.
- These movements appealed to the youth who had faced the hostilities of British rule, but the **mass following in the rural belt was unavailable**.
- After the First World War, there was a brief respite in revolutionary activity as prisoners held under the Defense of India Rules were released.
- There was an atmosphere of conciliation following **Montagu's August 1917 statement** and talk of constitutional reforms, and the arrival of Gandhi on the scene with the program of **nonviolent non-cooperation** promised new hope.
- After 1918 the revolutionary activities came to a temporary halt. There was stern government repression along with a series of harsh and severe laws. There was also a lack of popular response.
- Discussions began on the new **Constitutional Reforms (Government of India Act 1919)** which generated an atmosphere of compromise.
- Germany failed to deliver on its promises of arms and funds to be used against Britain.
- The United States' entry into the war and subsequent dominance in the war demoralized Germany and the allies, making it difficult for them to assist the Indian cause.
- Montagu's package of self-government for Indians dampened the revolutionary activists' enthusiasm.

- The Congress Party and other upper-middle-class politicians and leaders have always been critical of these movements' methods.
- Gandhiji arrived on the national scene and emphasized non-violent means which also halted the pace of revolutionary activities.
- On account of the very nature of **revolutionary terrorism**, it could be taken up by only a handful of individuals while the masses still awaited a form of political action that could accommodate their weaknesses while utilizing their strength simultaneously.

### **3.6 Conclusion**

Although they did not achieve their stated goal of achieving independence through armed revolt, they were successful in arousing people, removing their fear of authority from their minds, and striking terror into the hearts of the rulers. The Revolutionaries organized rebellions against the British government, and they grew stronger and more determined as they gained support from foreign nations hostile to the British. Despite gaining popularity and a dedicated following, both the terrorist and revolutionary movements were unable to achieve their goals of liberating India from British rule.

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## 4. Indian Press Act

**Indian Press Act (1910)** was one of the acts which were rolled out to curtail the progress of the **Swadeshi movement**. It was an act to provide for better control of the press. This act resurrected the worst aspects of the **Vernacular Press Act (VPA)**. The British government constantly feared the growing dissatisfaction among the masses and how the growing educated gentry from among the masses was spreading ideas that brought the people against the government. Since the disturbances of 1857, the government vigilantly suppressed the freedom of the press and other vital liberties through legal means. This article will exclusively deal with the **Indian Press Act**, which was one of the most undemocratic laws enacted by the British in India.

### 4.1 Background

- The British government's attitude toward the Indian press changed over time.
- From 1908 to 1935, numerous press laws were enacted in an attempt to curb the anti-British tone of the Indian press.
- The resurgence of political terrorism forced the British to take a hard line against Indian nationalists.
- **On February 4, 1910, Lord Ridley**, the Home Member, introduced a bill to prohibit the distribution of anti-government literature.
- **On February 9, 1910, Lord Minto II**, Viceroy of India, enacted the Indian Press Act of 1910.

### 4.2 Important Provisions of the Act

- The Indian Press Act of 1910 was enacted in British India, and it imposed rigorous censorship on all types of publications.
- The principal tools of control imposed by the Press Act were financial securities that could be confiscated if any of the legislation's extraordinarily broad provisions were broken.
- Proprietors were required to deposit between 500 and 5000 rupees, according to the Magistrate's discretion.
- The authority to detain and investigate the suspected substance was given to customs and postal authorities.
- **Section 12(1) of the Act empowered Local Governments** to issue warrants against any newspaper or book containing seditious matters, which were to be forfeited to his Majesty.
- The Indian Press Act of 1910 **prohibited the publication of a large amount of nationalist press and political literature.**

### 4.3 Implications of the Act

- Attempts to incite murder or anarchical outrages, to tamper with the loyalty of the Army or Navy, to excite racial, class, and religious animosity, hatred, and contempt of the Government or a native prince, to incite criminal intimidation and

interference with law and order, and to intimidate public servants with threats of injury were all defined as press offenses in the bill.

- Bal Gangadhar Tilak was prosecuted for sedition and sentenced to six years in Mandalay (Burma).
- Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, the Law Member of the Government of India, headed a committee to examine the working of the Indian Press Act, 1910. On the recommendation of the Committee, the Act was repealed.
- **Lord Reading (1921-1926) later abolished the Indian Press Act of 1910.**

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

From the turn of the twentieth century forward, the issue of press freedom became intertwined with nationalist politics. The Press Acts and restrictions, ostensibly aimed at suppressing revolutionary and "seditious" activities, had a broader scope than even the harsh Indian Penal Code.

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## 5. Komagata Maru Incident (1914)

The **Komagata Maru incident** occurred in **1914**, when the Japanese steamship '**Komagata Maru**' sailed from Hong Kong (part of the British Empire) to Vancouver, British Columbia in Canada, passing through Shanghai, China to Yokohama (Japan), **carrying 376 passengers** from Punjab, part of British India. The incident gained attention because, while 24 of the passengers were admitted to Canada, the remaining 352 passengers were denied entry and the ship was forcibly returned to India. The significance of this event stems from the fact that it sparked an explosive situation in Punjab. In this article, we will discuss the **Komagata Maru Incident (1914)** which will be helpful for UPSC exam preparation.

### 5.1 What is Komagata Maru?

- In **May 1914**, a **Japanese steamship** sailed from **Hong Kong to Vancouver**, Canada via Japan.
- It was carrying **376 passengers**, all of whom were **Punjabi immigrants**. Only 24 of them were allowed to enter Canada when the ship docked in Vancouver.
- At the time, **Canada had strict laws prohibiting Asian migrants** from entering the country. After a two-month standoff, the ship and its 352 passengers were escorted out of the dock by Canadian military personnel and forced to sail back to India.
- The ship returned to Calcutta and was intercepted by British forces. Passengers were placed under guard, and the ship was permitted to dock in Budge Budge, Calcutta.
- The passengers were thought to be lawbreakers and political agitators by the British. When the police attempted to arrest the people they considered to be the group's leaders, they were met with resistance, and a riot broke out.

### 5.2 Background

- Canada had imposed strict restrictions on Indian immigration. Its law forbade entry to all except those who made a continuous journey from India to Canada - 'direct passage in their own ship'.
- In November 1913, the Supreme Court of Canada had allowed entry to 35 Indians who had made a continuous journey.
- Encouraged by this judgment, **Gurdit Singh**, an Indian contractor living in Singapore, decided to charter a ship and carry it to Vancouver, Indians living in East and southeast India.
- Thus, a **Japanese ship named Komagata Maru**, carrying 376 Indians (351 Sikhs and 21 Punjabi) began its journey to Vancouver.
- At Yokohama, in Japan, Ghadirites visited the ship, gave lectures, and distributed Ghadar literature.
- On its arrival, the ship was not allowed to land in Vancouver. To fight for the rights of the passengers, a '**Shore Committee**' was formed in Vancouver led by Hussain Rahim, Sohan Lal Pathak, and Balwant Singh.
- A powerful campaign was carried out in the USA led by Barkatullah, Bhagwan Singh, Ram Chandra, and Sohan Singh Bhakna. Yet, Komagata Maru was forced out of Canadian waters.

- On its way back, **First World War broke out** and before the ship could reach Yokhama, the British Government passed orders that no passengers be allowed to disembark anywhere on the way, but only at Calcutta.
- **On 27th Sep 1914**, the ship reached **Budge Budge, Calcutta**. The harassed passengers resisted the hostile attitude of the police when it escalated into a clash resulting in the death of 18 passengers.
- This created widespread discontentment in Punjab and political dacoities erupted in the districts of Jalandhar, Amritsar, and Ludhiana

### 5.3 Significance

- **Human rights violations** such as arbitrary detention aided Indian independence fighters in **exposing the true face of the British administration**.
- During the course of the voyage, the Komagata Maru stopped at various ports where the delivery of political lectures helped rally the support of other countries.
- Exposition of the **Asian Exclusion Act** - the discriminatory immigration laws for Asians only allowed the leaders to cast doubt on Whiteman's burden theory because they refused to accept that "burden."
- The Ghadar Party **used the incident to rally support** for a massive uprising against the British Empire.

### 5.4 Ghadar Party Response

- Various Indian groups used the 'Komagata Maru' incident to highlight inconsistencies in Canadian immigration laws at the time.
- The **emotions sparked by this incident** were used by Indian revolutionaries, particularly Ghadar Party members, to rally public support for their cause.
- Ghadirites held **numerous meetings with the Indian community** in California in 1914, and the Ghadar leaders used this incident to enlist the community's support for their cause.
- In the aftermath of this unfortunate incident, **people were also recruited** to the movement. **Tarak Nath Das, Barkatullah, and Sohan Singh** were among the prominent Ghadar leaders.
- They encouraged fighters to travel to India. Raghubar Dayal Gupta and Kartar Singh Saraba left for India.
- Rashbehari Bose and Sachin Sanyal, both Bengal revolutionaries, were contacted and asked to lead the movement.
- Political dacoits were determined to raise funds. The Punjab political squabbles of January–February 1915 featured some novel social content.
- Before fleeing with the cash, the raiders targeted moneylenders and debt records in at least three of the five major causes. As a result, an explosive situation developed in Punjab.
- The Ghadirites set **February 21, 1915**, as the date for an armed revolt in the garrisons of Ferozepur, Lahore, and Rawalpindi.
- Due to treachery, the plan was thwarted at the last minute.

- The authorities acted quickly, aided by the **Defence of India Rules, 1915**. Rebel regiments were disbanded, leaders were arrested and deported, and 45 were executed.
- Rashbehari Bose fled to Japan (where he and Abani Mukherji made numerous attempts to send arms), while Sachin Sanyal was imprisoned for life.
- The British responded to the wartime threat with a formidable arsenal of repressive measures, the most extensive since 1857, led by the Defence of India Act, which was passed in March 1915 primarily to crush the Ghadr movement.
- There were large-scale detentions without trial, special courts that handed down extremely harsh sentences, and a slew of court-martials of army personnel.
- Aside from the Bengal revolutionaries and the Punjab Ghadrites, radical pan-Islamists such as the Ali brothers, Maulana Azad, and Hasrat Mohani were imprisoned for years.

## 5.5 Conclusion

The Komagata Maru incident was widely used by Indian groups at the time to highlight inconsistencies in Canadian immigration laws. Furthermore, the Ghadar Party, an Indian revolutionary organization, used the incident's inflamed passions to rally support for its goals. In a series of meetings ranging from California in 1914 to the Indian diaspora, prominent Ghadarites such as Barkatullah, Tarak Nath Das, and Sohan Singh used the incident as a rallying point to recruit members for the Ghadar movement, most notably in support of plans to coordinate a massive uprising in India. Their efforts were thwarted due to a lack of public support.

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## 6. Indian Freedom Struggle amid World War 1

The **First World War began in June 1914**, with the United Kingdom, France, Italy, Russia, Japan, and the United States of America on one side and Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Turkey on the other. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the world's industrialized capitalist countries began to **compete for, and struggle for, exclusive markets and colonies**. This struggle had become very intense and bitter by the beginning of the twentieth century, as the **area of the world still available for conquest began to shrink**. Very quickly, the powers were divided into hostile alliances or power blocs. Finally, the war began in **August 1914**, and world politics began to shift rapidly. The years of war in India marked the **maturation of nationalism**. In this article, we will discuss the Indian Freedom Struggle amid World War 1 and its economic hardship which will be helpful for UPSC exam preparation.

### 6.1 Background

- Powers such as **Germany and Italy**, who arrived late on the world stage were unable to seize as much as the early starters, such as Britain and France, now demanded a redistribution of the colonies.
- They were willing to use force to achieve such a division.
- Every major country in the world began to prepare for a possible war in order to keep or acquire new possessions.
- The powers engaged in a fierce armament race in the early years of the twentieth century.
- The people of these countries became emotionally involved in the struggle for colonies after their rulers told them that a nation's prestige, power, and fame depended on the extent of its colonial holdings.
- Finally, the war began in **August 1914**, and world politics began to shift rapidly.

### 6.2 India's Support to British during World War 1

- When World War I broke out, the British were taken aback by the outpouring of sympathy, loyalty, and goodwill for them.
- They had feared that the Indians would seize the opportunity to revolt. India generously supplied the British with men and resources.
- Nearly 1.3 million Indian soldiers and laborers served in Europe, Africa, and the Middle East.
- The Indian government, as well as the princes, provided massive amounts of food, money, and ammunition.
- However, the high rate of casualties, rising inflation fuelled by heavy taxation, an influenza outbreak, and trade disruptions increased suffering in India. The nationalist movement experienced a resurgence.
- The moderate and extremist factions in Congress put aside their differences to form a unified front.
- Initially, Indian nationalist leaders, including **Lokmanya Tilak**, who had been released in June 1914, decided to back the war.

- The nationalists adopted an actively pro-British stance, erroneously believing that a grateful Britain would repay India's loyalty with gratitude, allowing India to take a significant step forward on the road to self-government.
- They were unaware that the various powers were igniting the First World War precisely to protect their existing colonies.
- These were also temporary alliances formed in 1916 by the Congress and the Muslim League. The **Lucknow Pact** was the name given to the alliance.
- The alliance was formed over the issue of political power devolution and the treatment of Islam in the Middle East.
- When it came to acknowledging India's support during the war, the British used a "**carrot and stick**" strategy.
- In August 1917, Edwin Montague, the Secretary of State for India, was 'increasing the association of Indians in every branch of administration and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realization of a responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire.'
- The methods for implementing the proposed measure were later incorporated into the **Government of India Act of 1919**.

### 6.3 Reforms and Agitation

- In India, the return of Punjabi soldiers after the war sparked political activity against colonial rule in that province, which sparked further wider protests.
- After the war, Punjab, which supplied a large proportion of the troops, became a hotbed of nationalism.
- When the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms failed to deliver on the expectation of home rule that had led to popular support for the British war effort, there was a surge of nationalism and a rise in mass civil disobedience.
- As the war dragged on, casualties piled up, and recruitment methods became more coercive, resentment grew, fuelling nationalism.
- Gandhiji called for **satyagraha** against the **Rowlatt Act**, which the British had just passed, in **1919**. The Act **restricted fundamental rights** such as freedom of expression and increased police powers.
- Another cause was the Khilafat dispute in which the British imposed a harsh treaty on the Turkish Sultan, or Khalifa, in 1920. People were outraged, just as they had been after the Jallianwala Bagh massacre.
- **Mohammad Ali and Shaukat Ali**, the leaders of the Khilafat agitation, now wished to launch a full-fledged **Non-Cooperation Movement**.
- During 1921-22, the **Non-Cooperation Movement** gained traction.
- Muslim traders and peasants in Sind (now Pakistan) were ecstatic about the Khilafat call.
- The **Khilafat-Non-Cooperation alliance** provided enormous communal unity and strength to the national movement in Bengal as well.
- The **Sikh Akali agitation** in Punjab sought to remove **corrupt mahants** – supported by the British – from their gurdwaras. This movement became inextricably linked with the Non-Cooperation Movement.
- Patidar peasants in Kheda, Gujarat, organized nonviolent campaigns against the British's high land revenue demand.

- Liquor stores were picketed in coastal Andhra Pradesh and the interior of Tamil Nadu.
- Tribals and poor peasants in Andhra Pradesh's Guntur district staged a number of "**forest satyagraha**," sometimes sending their cattle into forests without paying grazing fees.

#### 6.4 Post War Economic Hardship

Following the war, the conditions in India, combined with foreign influences, created a situation ripe for a national uprising against foreign rule.

- India provided both men and money to the British war effort. Thousands of Indian men died on various fronts during the war.
- The money raised by **taxing Indians** was used to pay for food, ammunition, and the army's keep. When the war ended, all segments of the Indian population were facing hardships on multiple fronts.
- **Price increases, followed by a recession** and increased foreign investment, pushed many industries to the brink of closure and loss. In addition to government assistance, they now demand protection from imports.
- Artisans and workers - This segment of the population was affected by **unemployment and high prices**.
- Peasants Faced with **high taxes and poverty**, waited for a leader to protest.
- Soldiers who returned from foreign battlefields shared their experiences with the rural populace. They were also taken aback by the fact that they had returned to a country that was **impoverished and had less liberty** than before.
- Urban Educated Classes were facing **unemployment** as well as an **acute awareness of racism** in the British attitude.
- It resulted in a significant increase in the Government of India's defense spending.
- In turn, the government raised taxes on individual income and business profits.
- Increased military spending and demand for war supplies resulted in a sharp rise in prices, causing great hardship for the general public.

#### 6.5 World War 1 and Growth of Mass Nationalism

- After 1919, the struggle against British rule grew into a mass movement, involving large numbers of peasants, tribals, students, and women, as well as factory workers on occasion.
- In the 1920s, certain business groups also began to actively support Congress.
- The war also prompted the British to increase the size of their army.
- Villages were coerced into supplying soldiers for a foreign cause. A large number of soldiers were sent abroad to serve.
- Many returned from the war with a better understanding of how imperialist powers exploited the peoples of Asia and Africa, as well as a desire to oppose colonial rule in India.
- In addition, **Russia experienced a revolution in 1917**. News of peasant and worker struggles, as well as socialist ideas, spread widely, inspiring people.

- The contribution of Indians to the British war effort was enormous, though it went unnoticed.
- Gandhi and most nationalists lent their support to the war effort, and a large number of Indian troops died on the battlefields.
- As a result, there were high expectations of political gains from the British government following the war, which contributed to the country's charged atmosphere.
- In these circumstances, Mahatma Gandhi rose to prominence as a mass leader.

## **6.6 Conclusion**

Towards the end of World War I, a variety of forces were at work in India and on the international stage. After the war, there was a resurgence of nationalist activity in India and many other Asian and African colonies. With the emergence of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi on the Indian political scene, the Indian struggle against imperialism took a decisive turn toward a broad-based popular struggle.

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## 7. Emergence of Gandhi

The **emergence of Gandhi** was a watershed moment in the history of **Indian nationalism**. Gandhi returned to India from South Africa in 1915. During his early years, he spent his time at the **Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad**, which was relatively unknown to the general public. In taking his political stance, he sought advice from **Gopal Krishna Gokhale**. Gokhale advised Gandhi to first thoroughly research the socio-political situation in the country and then act accordingly. However, Gandhi quickly rose to prominence in the political arena as a result of his capable leadership in a number of local conflicts. In this article, we will discuss **various aspects of the emergence of Gandhi** which will be helpful for UPSC exam preparation.

### 7.1 Early Career

- **On October 2, 1869, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi** was born in Porbandar, Gujarat's princely state of **Kathiawar**. His father was a state diwan (minister).
- After studying law in England, Gandhi traveled to South Africa in 1893 in connection with a case involving his client, **Dada Abdullah**.
- In South Africa, he witnessed the ugly face of **white racism**, as well as the humiliation and contempt, showed to Asians who had come to South Africa as laborers.
- He chose to remain in South Africa in order to organize the Indian workers and enable them to fight for their rights.
- Gandhi spent 20 years of his life (1893 - 1914) in South Africa working as an attorney and a public worker.
- There he developed the idea of **Satyagraha** and used it against the Asiatic Registration Law. It also resulted in the first jail sentence in Mahatma Gandhi's life.
- Although it couldn't stop him from evolving into one of the most impactful and respected leaders in South Africa.
- He remained there until 1914 when he returned to India.

### 7.2 Gandhi's Experiment with truth in South Africa

- The Indians in South Africa were divided into three groups:
  - **indentured Indian laborers**, primarily from South India, who had migrated to South Africa after 1890 to work on sugar plantations;
  - **merchants**—mostly Meman Muslims who had followed the laborers; and
  - **ex-indentured laborers** who had settled down with their children in South Africa after their contracts expired.
- These Indians were mostly illiterate and spoke little or no English. They accepted racial discrimination as a normal part of life.
- These Indian immigrants had to deal with a slew of handicaps.
  - They were not allowed to vote.
  - They could only live in designated areas that were unsanitary and congested.
- Asians and Africans in some colonies were unable to leave their homes after dark and nor were they allowed using public footpaths.



## 7.3 Phases of Struggle

### Moderate Phase of Struggle (1894-1906)

- During this period, Gandhi relied on **petitions and memorials** to South African and British authorities.
- He hoped that once the authorities were made aware of the plight of Indians, they would take genuine steps to address their grievances, as Indians were, after all, British subjects.
- To unite various sections of Indians, he founded the **Natal Indian Congress** and launched the newspaper **Indian Opinion**.

### Phase of Passive Resistance or Satyagraha (1906-1914)

- The second phase, which began in 1906, was distinguished by Gandhi's use of the method of passive resistance or **civil disobedience known as satyagraha**.
- After a series of negotiations involving Gandhi, Lord Hardinge, C.F. Andrews, and General Smuts, an agreement was reached.
- The South African government conceded the major Indian demands relating to the poll tax, registration certificates, and marriages solemnized according to Indian rites, and promised to treat the issue of Indian immigration sympathetically.

Satyagraha	Description
Satyagraha against Registration Certificates (1906)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In South Africa, new legislation requires Indians to carry registration certificates with their fingerprints at all times.</li> <li>• The Indians, led by Gandhi, decided not to submit to this discriminatory measure.</li> <li>• Gandhi established the Passive Resistance Association to carry out a campaign of defying the law and suffering the consequences of such defiance.</li> <li>• Thus, was born satyagraha, or devotion to truth, the technique of resisting opponents without resorting to violence.</li> <li>• Gandhi and others who refused to register were imprisoned by the government.</li> </ul>
Campaign against restrictions on Indian migration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The previous campaign was expanded to include opposition to new legislation restricting Indian migration.</li> <li>• The Indians defied the law by crossing from one province to the next and refusing to produce licenses.</li> <li>• Many of these Native Americans were imprisoned.</li> </ul>
Campaign against Poll Tax and Invalidation of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All ex-indentured Indians were subjected to a three-pound poll tax.</li> <li>• The demand for the abolition of the poll tax broadened the</li> </ul>

Indian Marriages	<p>campaign's base.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Then, in response to a Supreme Court order that invalidated all marriages not conducted according to Christian rites and registered by the registrar of marriages, Indians and others who were not Christians were outraged.</li> <li>• By extension, Hindu, Muslim, and Parsi marriages were illegal, and children born from such unions were illegitimate.</li> <li>• The Indians saw this decision as an insult to women's honor, and many women were drawn into the movement as a result of this humiliation.</li> </ul>
Protest against Transvaal Immigration Act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indians illegally migrated from Natal to Transvaal in protest of the Transvaal Immigration Act.</li> <li>• These Indians were imprisoned by the government.</li> <li>• Miners and plantation workers were struck by lightning.</li> <li>• Gokhale toured the entire country of India, rallying public support for Indians in South Africa.</li> <li>• Even the viceroy, Lord Hardinge, condemned the repression and demanded an impartial investigation.</li> </ul>

#### 7.4 Gandhi's Experience in South Africa

- Gandhi discovered that the masses have an enormous capacity to participate in and sacrifice for a cause that moves them.
- Under his leadership, he was able to bring together Indians of various religions and classes, as well as men and women.
- He also realized that leaders must sometimes make decisions that are unpopular with their ardent supporters.
- He was able to develop his own leadership and political style, as well as new techniques of struggle on a small scale, unhindered by the opposition of competing political currents.

#### 7.5 Gandhi's Technique of Satyagraha

During his time in South Africa, Gandhi developed the Satyagraha technique. It was founded on the **truth and nonviolence**. He combined elements of Indian tradition with the Christian requirement of turning the other cheek and **Tolstoy's philosophy**, which stated that nonviolent resistance was the best way to combat evil. Its fundamental tenets were as follows:

- A satyagrahi was not to submit to what he saw as wrong, but rather to be truthful, nonviolent, and fearless.
- A satyagrahi works on the principles of **boycott and withdrawal of cooperation**.

- **Satyagraha tactics include refusing to pay taxes and declining honors and positions of authority.**
- In his fight against the wrongdoer, a satyagrahi must be **willing to suffer**. This suffering was to be a part of his love for truth.
- Even while fighting the wrongdoer, a true satyagrahi would have no ill will toward the wrongdoer; hatred would be alien to his nature.
- A true satyagrahi would never bow down to evil, no matter what the consequences.
- Satyagraha was only for the brave and strong; it was not for the weak and cowardly. Cowardice was even preferred to violence.
- Thought and practice were never to be separated. To put it another way, the ends could not justify the means.

## 7.6 Gandhi in India

- **In January 1915**, Gandhi returned to India. In South Africa, his efforts were well known not only among the educated but also among the masses.
- He resolved to spend the next year touring the country, observing the people's plight first hand.
- He also resolved not to take a stance on any political issue for at least a year.
- In terms of the political currents that existed in India at the time, he was convinced of the limitations of moderate politics and was also opposed to the Home Rule agitation that was gaining popularity at the time.
- He believed that while Britain was at war, it was not the best time to campaign for Home Rule.
- He was convinced that the only method capable of achieving nationalist goals was non-violent satyagraha.
- He also stated that he would not join any political organization unless it shared his commitment to nonviolent satyagraha.
- **Gandhi was involved in three struggles in 1917 and 1918, in Champaran, Ahmedabad, and Kheda, before launching the Rowlatt Satyagraha.**

## 7.7 Conclusion

With Gandhi's rise, a whole new philosophy permeated every aspect of the Indian psyche. Gandhi's political ideals were simply an extension of his spiritual tenets, which were based on fundamental human values. Gandhi's greatness is found not only in his pioneering of a unique fervor in Indian politics and the rise of the masses but also in the way he revolutionized the entire way of viewing politics as an extension of humanity's inherent greatness, enriched with an innate belief in and commitment to truth.

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## 8. First World War and Nationalist Response

During World War I (1914–19), Britain sided with France, Russia, the United States, Italy, and Japan against Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Turkey. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the world's industrialised capitalist countries began to **compete for, and struggle for, exclusive markets and colonies**. During this time, **Indian nationalism also matured**. After 1919, the struggle against British rule grew into a **mass movement**, involving large numbers of peasants, tribals, students, and women, as well as factory workers on occasion. In this article, we will discuss the first world war and the various responses of Indian nationalists which will be helpful for UPSC exam preparation.

### 8.1 Response of Nationalists to British Participation in First World War

The nationalist response to Britain's participation in World War I was threefold:

- The Moderates supported the empire as a matter of duty;
- The Extremists, including Tilak (who was released in June 1914), supported the war efforts in the mistaken belief that Britain would repay India's loyalty with gratitude in the form of self-government; and
- The revolutionaries decided to use the opportunity to wage a war on British rule and liberate India.

### 8.2 Home Rule League Movement

- The **Home Rule League Movement** was India's less charged but more effective response to the First World War than the response of Indians living abroad, which took the form of the romantic **Ghadr adventure**.
- The home rule league movement, led by stalwarts such as **Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Annie Besant**, grew and flourished all across the Indian independence movement between 1916 and 1918.
- This alliance was to be known as the **All India Home Rule League**, similar to the Irish Home Rule League.
- The goal of the home rule movement was the attainment of home rule or dominion status under the British Empire, similar to that of Canada and Australia.
- The movement was carried out through the two home rule leagues. Tilak and Besant formed separate leagues to avoid conflict.
- As Annie Besant stated, some Tilak supporters were uncomfortable with her, and similarly, some of her own supporters were uncomfortable with Tilak.
- Both leagues, however, coordinated their efforts by limiting their work to their respective areas. They helped where they could.
- The Home Rule League was **popular among the moderates** since it focused on political debate and education.
- The league focused also on demands for separate electorates and minority representation in legislatures, to which the Congress also agreed.
- Many sections of people within the Congress, like the **members of Gokhale's Servants of India Society**, joined the movement after being dissatisfied with the inaction of Congress.

- The **moderates, extremists and the Muslim League** were briefly united through this movement.

### 8.3 Lucknow Session of INC

- The **Lucknow Session of Indian National Congress** was presided over by **Ambica Charan Mazumdar**.
- It was the **31st session of the INC** which was held in Lucknow.
- This session has gained historic importance due to the remarkable decisions made during the session.
- It marks the **reconciliation of the moderates and the extremists** after 10 years of ideological disputes after their split in the **Surat session of 1907**.
- **Bal Gangadhar Tilak** assured the moderates that the extremists would not adopt any agitational strategy or politics while protesting against the British, which led to the reconciliation.
- Also, the demise of Moderate leaders like Gopal Krishna Gokhale and Pherozeshah Mehta reduced the opposition for amalgamation of the factions of Congress (Extremists and Moderates) paving the way for Tilak and Annie Besant to dominate the Congress.
- The historic **Lucknow pact** between **Congress and the Muslim League** was signed in this session.
- This occurred at a time when the Muslim League, now **dominated by younger militant nationalists**, was moving closer to the Congress's goals and becoming more **anti-imperialist**.
- The Lucknow Pact between the Congress and the Muslim League could be regarded as a watershed moment in the nationalistic struggle for freedom.

### 8.4 August Declaration

- On **August 20, 1917**, the Secretary of State for India, **Edwin Samuel Montagu**, made a statement in the **British House of Commons** known as the **August Declaration of 1917**.
- According to the **August Declaration of 1917**, control over the Indian government would be gradually transferred to the Indian people, and a responsible government would be gradually established.
- This declaration also stated unequivocally that India would remain an **integral part of British India**.
- He sympathised with the aspirations of the Indian people and can thus be compared to people such as **Lord Pethick Lawrence and Sir Stafford Cripps**.
- He brought a fresh perspective to his workplace.
- On August 20, 1917, when the Allies' fortunes were at their lowest ebb, he declared,
  - "The government policy is of **increasing participation of Indians** in every branch of administration and gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realisation of **responsible government** in India as an integral part of the British Empire."

### 8.5 Conclusion

After the war, there was a resurgence of nationalist activity in India and many other Asian and African colonies. Both Tilak and Besant recognized that the movement needed the support of a Moderate-dominated Congress as well as the full cooperation of the Extremists. Tilak and Besant decided to restart political activity on their own after Congress failed to reach a Moderate-Extremist rapprochement in 1914. With the emergence of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi on the Indian political scene, the Indian struggle against imperialism took a decisive turn toward a broad-based popular struggle.

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## 9. Home Rule League Movement

The **Home Rule League Movement** was India's less charged but more effective response to the First World War than the response of Indians living abroad, which took the form of the romantic Ghadr adventure. The home rule league movement, led by stalwarts such as **Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Annie Besant**, grew and flourished all across the Indian independence movement between 1916 and 1918. This alliance was to be known as the **All India Home Rule League**, similar to the **Irish Home Rule League**. The goal of the home rule movement was the attainment of home rule or dominion status under the British Empire, similar to that of Canada and Australia. The movement was carried out through the two home rule leagues. This is an important topic as far as the UPSC exams are concerned. We will study this topic in detail through this article.

### 9.1 Background

- The Government of India Act of 1909 fell short of Indians' expectations.
- The national movement slowed when the Congress Party split in 1907 and fiery leader Bal Gangadhar Tilak was imprisoned from 1908 to 1914.
- The release of Tilak and the arrival of Annie Besant, however, resulted in a resurgence of the national movement.
- Annie Besant was an Irish socialist, author, and orator who advocated for Irish and Indian independence. In 1893, she arrived in India.
- India's authorities were split on whether or not to back Britain in the war.
- Tilak realized the necessity for a renewal of the nationalist movement in India after returning from exile in Mandalay.
- He also recognised the Congress Party's growing relevance in India's political landscape. As a result, his first objective was to re-enter the party.
- Due to Annie Besant's influence, the extremists were allowed to rejoin the party at the December 1915 Congress session.
- Besant had also recognised the importance of Congress's acceptance and the radicals' active engagement in the national battle.
- Besant and Tilak, on the other hand, were unable to persuade Congress to endorse their plan to establish home rule leagues.
- Besant persuaded the Congress to commit to educational propaganda and the formation of local groups. It was also decided that if these requirements were not met by September 1916, she would be free to form her own home rule league.
- As a result, in September 1916, she formed her Home Rule League.
- Tilak, on the other hand, was not bound by any such stipulation and had established his league in April 1916.

### 9.2 Factors Leading to Formation of Home Rule League

- The Indian home rule movement began in India during **World War I**.
- The **Government of India Act (1909)** fell short of meeting the demands of national leaders.
- However, due to a schism in Congress and the absence of leaders such as Tilak, who was imprisoned in Mandalay, the nationalistic response was tepid.

- By 1915, a number of factors had converged to pave the way for a new phase of the nationalist movement.
- The rise of Annie Besant (of Irish origin and a staunch supporter of the Irish home rule movement), the return of Tilak from exile, and the growing calls for resolving the split in Congress began to agitate the Indian political scene.
- The Ghadar Mutiny and its suppression created a climate of resentment toward the government.

### 9.3 Objectives

- To achieve self-government in India.
- To promote political education and discussion to set up agitation for self-government.
- To build confidence among Indians to speak against the government's suppression.
- To demand a larger political representation for Indians from the British government.
- To revive political activity in India while maintaining the principles of the Congress Party.

### 9.4 Significance

- The Home Rule League was **popular among the moderates** since it focused on political debate and education.
- The league focused also on demands for separate electorates and minority representation in legislatures, to which the Congress also agreed.
- Many sections of people within the Congress, like the **members of Gokhale's Servants of India Society**, joined the movement after being dissatisfied with the inaction of Congress.
- The **moderates, extremists and the Muslim League were briefly united** through this movement.
- The movement spread political consciousness to more regions in the country.
- Leaders like Motilal Nehru, Jawarhlal Nehru, Chittaranjan Das, Madan Mohan Malaviya, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, Tej Bahadur Sapru and Lala Lajpat Rai, all joined the movement.
- The Home Rule League **functioned throughout the year** as opposed to the Congress Party whose activities were confined to once a year.
- This movement led to the **Montagu Declaration of 1917** in which it was declared that there would be more Indians in the government leading to the development of self-governing institutions ultimately realizing responsible governments in India.
- The League administration would take a more conciliatory approach in 1917. Since the declaration, its claims were no longer considered seditious.

### 9.5 Important Leagues of the Movement

Tilak and Besant formed separate leagues to avoid conflict. As Annie Besant stated, some Tilak supporters were uncomfortable with her, and similarly, some of her own supporters were uncomfortable with Tilak. Both leagues, however, coordinated their efforts by limiting their work to their respective areas. They helped where they could.



## Tilak's Home Rule League Movement

- Tilak launched the Indian Home Rule League in **April 1916 at Belgaum**.
- It was to work in **Maharashtra, Karnataka, Central Province and Berar, excluding Bombay**.
- **Joseph Baptista** was appointed as the **President** and **N.C Kelkar** as the **secretary** of the movement.
- Tilak propounded the slogan 'Swaraj is my birthright and I shall have it.'
- **Maratha and Kesari**, newspapers published by Tilak were the organs for home rule.

## Besant's Home Rule League Movement

- **Annie Besant** founded the All-India Home Rule League in **Madras (now Chennai)** in **September 1916** and expanded to cover the rest of India (including Bombay city).
- **It had 200 branches**, was less organized than Tilak's league, and had **George Arundale** as its organizing secretary.
- **B.W. Wadia and C.P. Ramaswamy Aiyar**, in addition to Arundale, contributed significantly to the project.

## Decline of Home Rule League Movement

The Home Rule agitation was short-lived. **It had dwindled by 1919**. The following were the reasons for the decline:

- There was an **ineffective organization**.
- During 1917–18, there were **communal riots**.
- The moderates who had joined the Congress after Annie Besant's arrest were pacified by talk of reforms and Besant's release.
  - These reforms were contained in Montagu's August 1917 statement, which stated that self-government was the long-term goal of British rule in India.
- From September 1918 onwards, talk of passive resistance by the Extremists kept the Moderates at bay.
- The **Montagu-Chelmsford reforms**, which were implemented in July 1918, further divided nationalists.
- After the reforms were announced, Annie Besant had second thoughts about using the league.
- Annie Besant was conflicted about her reaction to the reforms and passive resistance techniques.
- Tilak was forced to travel abroad in September 1918 in connection with a libel case against Valentine Chirol, whose book, Indian Unrest, blamed Tilak for the agitational politics that had developed in India.
- With Besant unable to provide positive leadership and Tilak away in England, the **movement was left without a leader**.
- **Gandhi's new approach** to the struggle for freedom gradually but steadily captured the imagination of the people, and the growing mass movement pushed the home rule movement to the sidelines until it died out.

- In 1920, Gandhi accepted the presidency of the All India Home Rule League and renamed it the Swarajya Sabha. However, within a year, the league had joined the Indian National Congress.

## 9.6 Factors Leading To the Movement

- A subset of nationalists believed that popular pressure was required to persuade the government to make concessions.
- The **Morley-Minto reforms** disappointed the moderates.
- People were feeling the **burden of wartime miseries** brought on by high taxation and price increases, and they were ready to join any aggressive protest movement.
- The war, which was fought between the major imperialist powers of the time and was backed by open propaganda against each other, exposed the myth of white superiority.
- Tilak was prepared to assume leadership after his release in June 1914, and had made conciliatory gestures—to the government, assuring it of his loyalty, and to the **Moderates**, assuring them that he wanted, like the Irish Home Rulers, a reform of the administration rather than an overthrow of the government.
- He also admitted that the acts of violence had only slowed the pace of India's political progress.
- He urged all Indians to come to the aid of the British government in its hour of need.
- Annie Besant, an Irish theosophist based in India since 1896, had decided to broaden her activities to include the formation of a home rule movement along the lines of the Irish Home Rule Leagues.

## 9.7 Tilak's League

- In April 1916, Tilak established his Indian Home Rule League.
- Tilak's first Home Rule meeting was held in **Belgaum**.
- His league's **headquarters** were in **Poona**.
- His league was limited to **Maharashtra (except for Bombay), Karnataka, the Central Provinces, and Berar**.
- It had six branches, and its demands included **swarajya**, the formation of **linguistic states, and vernacular education**.
- Joseph Baptista was appointed as the President and N.C Kelkar as the secretary of the movement.
- Tilak propounded the slogan '**Swaraj is my birthright and I shall have it.**'
- **Maratha and Kesari**, newspapers published by Tilak were the organs for home rule.

## 9.8 Methods Used by the Leaders

- The league's initial efforts were to appease Congress. Tilak directed his supporters at a meeting "to enlighten the villagers regarding the Congress's objectives and work".
- **Local associations formed** in a number of Maharashtra towns in August and September of that year focused more on emphasizing the need for unity within the Congress than on increasing political activity.

- The leaders of the Home Rule Movement insisted on **using constitutional methods of protest** in order to achieve their objective of Home Rule.
- Tilak's ideas did not reflect any narrow regional linguistic chauvinism or caste bias. He wanted all the **regional languages and cultures to develop** and argued for **education to be imparted** in the vernaculars.
- The league frontally **opposed untouchability**. He also urged Brahmins to be tolerant of the non-Brahmin demands and not oppose them.
- He also urged non-Brahmin not to see their problems of lack of jobs, etc., in terms of Brahmin vs. non-Brahmin, but to understand that it was the greater spread of education among Brahmins that gave them greater access to jobs.
- They did not use radical methods to harass the British government during the First World War.
- Leaders like Bal Gangadhar Tilak **traveled extensively**, criticizing the government for neglecting industrial infrastructure and education in India and the high-handed revenue policy.
- The leaders also **distributed pamphlets** in order to popularize the concept of Swadeshi.

### 9.9 Spread of Ideas Through Writings

- The League printed and circulated pamphlets to educate people on politics and the idea of self-rule.
- Tilak's league published 6 pamphlets in Marathi and 2 in English, of which 47,000 copies were sold.
- Pamphlets were also brought out in Kannada and Gujarati.
- Tilak toured across Maharashtra during the course of which he lectured on and explained the demand for Home Rule.
- **The Propaganda Fund of Besant's League** has sold 300000 copies of 26 English pamphlets discussing mainly the system of government existing in India and the reasons for the demand for self-government.
- Annie Besant and her lieutenants Arundale, C.P. Ramaswamy Aiyar, and B.P. Wadia ran the headquarters in Adyar, which also published the publications '**New India**' and '**Commonweal**'.
- Arundale's column on 'Home Rule' in New India served as a vehicle for sharing news and delivering directions.

### 9.10 Positive Gains from Home Rule League

- The movement shifted the emphasis from the **educated elite to the masses**, permanently deviating the movement from the Moderates' course.
- It established an **organizational link between the town and the country**, which would prove crucial later on, when the national movement entered its mass phase.
- It produced a generation of **zealous nationalists**.
- It prepared the masses for **Gandhian-style politics**.
- The Home Rule agitation influenced **Montagu's August 1917 declaration** and the **Montford reforms**.

- Tilak and Annie Besant's efforts at the Moderate-Extremist reunion in **Lucknow (1916)** resurrected the Congress as an effective instrument of Indian nationalism.
- Many educated Indians joined the movement, which received a lot of support. In 1917, the two leagues had a total membership of roughly 40,000 people.
- This movement brought together moderates, extremists, and the Muslim League for a brief period.
- The movement was successful in spreading political awareness to additional parts of the country.
- This effort culminated in the 1917 Montagu Declaration, which said that there would be more Indians in government, resulting in the establishment of self-governing institutions and the eventual realization of responsible governments in India.
- The desire for home rule would no longer be labeled seditious after this Declaration, commonly known as the **August Declaration**. This was the movement's most significant achievement.

### 9.11 Conclusion

The Home Rule League had its own share of both moderate and extremist ways of voicing their demands. However, it undoubtedly stood for the unity of Hindus and Muslims and that of the country as a whole. They played a huge part in educating and thereby preparing the country for combating the British agendas. Before its final die-down, the League made its waves hit the country when its leaders were arrested by the government, urging more people to join the movement.

Despite an abrupt ending, the movement found success in its own ways. The league acted as the platform for the coming together of the moderates and the extremists. At the climax of its activities in 1917, the combined membership of both the leagues was around 40,000. The All India Home league ended in 1920, when it elected Mahatma Gandhi as its President, when within a year it merged into the Indian National Congress.

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## 10. Annie Besant

**Annie Besant**, born on October 1, 1847, in Ireland, was a well-known political activist, freedom fighter, and supporter of the **anti-Church movement and women's rights**. In the 1870s, Besant joined the **National Secular Society and the Fabian Society**, both of which advocated for freedom of thought and liberation from the tyranny of the Catholic Church in England. Besant traveled to India for the first time in 1893 and later settled there, becoming involved in the Indian nationalist movement. She founded the **Indian Home Rule League**, of which she later became president, in 1916. She was also a key figure in the **Indian National Congress**. In this article, we will discuss the life, ideology, and contributions of Annie Besant which will be helpful for UPSC exam preparation.

### 10.1 Background

- Annie Besant was born in London to an Irish-origin family as Annie Wood. Besant's father died when she was five years old, leaving her family impoverished.
- Her education was paid for by her mother's friend. Besant was instilled with a strong sense of social responsibility from a young age. She had a strong sense of self-sufficiency.
- She married a vicar, Frank Besant, when she was 20 years old. They had two children but divorced legally due to religious differences.
- Besant was a staunch supporter of Irish independence.
- She also began to question her religious beliefs. She went so far as to criticize the Church of England. She was a feminist political and religious activist, which caused her problems in society.
- She advocated for intellectual freedom, secularism, women's rights, birth control, workers' rights, and Fabian socialism. She was particularly opposed to the church meddling in people's lives.
- She was a fantastic public speaker who also traveled extensively.
- After meeting **Helena Blavatsky in 1889**, Besant became a **Theosophist**.
- Her search for socialist movement and spiritual solace led her to the Theosophical Society. During her time as a member of society, she developed an interest in Hinduism and its spiritual ideals.
- From 1907 to 1933, Annie Besant served as the society's president.
- A few days after arriving in India, she was inspired by the ongoing struggle for independence against British rule and gradually became an active participant in it.

### 10.2 Role in India's Independence

- In 1902, Annie Besant wrote that "India was not ruled for its benefit, but rather for the benefit of its conquerors."
- She promoted national awakening while combating social ills such as caste discrimination and child marriage. She devoted a lot of time and effort to improving education in India.
- Annie Besant entered politics when she joined the Indian National Congress. When she first joined, the Congress was merely a debating body whose members deliberated on which resolutions to pass.

- These resolutions were mild in nature, requesting more representation for middle-class Indians in the British government. It had yet to grow into a mass movement demanding complete independence.
- When World War I broke out in 1914, Britain enlisted the help of its colonies against its adversaries. But, according to Annie Besant, this was where India's opportunities lay.
- Annie Besant founded the **All India Home Rule League in 1916**. This was India's first faction to demand complete independence. The league worked all year to establish a network of local branches and organize agitations.
- The colonial authorities, for their part, placed her under house arrest as a result of her activities. Other political parties threatened more riots if she was not released.
- As a result, the government was forced to make minor concessions. One of them was that once the war was over, the possibility of self-rule would be considered.
- In September 1917, Annie Besant was released. In December of that year, she was elected president of the **Indian National Congress** for a one-year term.
- The new Congress leadership would be handed over to Mahatma Gandhi at this time. He was a key supporter of her release from house arrest.
- Annie Besant would fight for India's independence until the end of her life. She would go on speaking tours in India and abroad to spread the word about the independence movement.

### 10.3 Educational Reforms

- Her contributions as an educator include being one of the founders of the **Banaras Hindu University**.
- Annie Besant advocated for research into ancient Indian religions, philosophies, and doctrines.
- She also founded the **Central Hindu School** to promote education.
- By 1918, she had founded the following:
  - Madras Parliament
  - Madanapalle College (now in Andhra Pradesh)
  - Adyar Arts League
  - Bombay Home Rule League
  - Girls' College in Benares
  - Order of the Brothers of Service
  - Women's Indian Association at Adyar— from which grew the All-India Women's Conference in Poona (now Pune) in 1927 and the Women's Indian Association at Adyar.
- Unfortunately, she fell out of favor with the Indian National Congress due to her opposition to Gandhi's non-cooperation and civil disobedience agenda, which she saw as a threat to the rule of law.
- Despite her admiration for Gandhi as a man who lived a life guided by honesty and compassion, she advocated for constitutional methods of bringing about democratic change.
- Gandhi's policies were implemented, and the disasters she had predicted occurred across India. Despite becoming unpopular and losing her political status, she continued to work for India.

## 10.4 Besant's League

- Annie Besant was a **British theosophist**, women's right's activist, writer and orator who supported Indian and Irish home rule.
- Started with **Subramaniya Iyer in Adyar** in September, 1916. **George Arundale** was its organizing **secretary**.
- **B.W. Wadia and C.P. Ramaswamy Aiyar**, in addition to Arundale, contributed significantly to the project.
- The league worked in the rest of India except in Maharashtra, Karnataka, Central Province and Berar where Tilak's league was in function.
- The Home Rule League organized discussions and lectures and set up reading rooms, also distributing pamphlets educating people of what they sought to achieve through this movement.
- The philosophy of the league was a combination of theosophy, social reform, ancient Hindu wisdom and the claims of achievement of the West which had already been anticipated by Hindu Rishis many years before they happened.
- The league influenced a lot of people by its philosophy, primarily because the **Brahmo Samaj and the Arya Samaj** had not reached the majority by then.
- Besant's league had an All India character, but was founded on Besant's Theosophical contacts; it was set up in 1916 and reached its zenith in 1917 with 27,000 members.
- A lot of young men groomed by the home rule movement went on to become future leaders in Indian politics, namely Satyamurti of Chennai, Jitendralal Banerji of Kolkata, Jawaharlal Nehru and Khaliqzaman of Allahabad, Jamunadas Dwarkadas and Indulal Yajnik, among others.
- The Home Rule League had 2600 members in Mumbai and held meetings attended by 10,000 to 12,000 people at the Shantaram Chawl area, comprising government employees and industrial workers.
- The league was also responsible for creating a political awareness in areas like Sindh, Gujarat, United Provinces, Bihar and Orissa.
- Annie Besant's newspapers **New India and Commonweal** were important elements for the movement.

## 10.4 Conclusion

Annie Besant remained a member of the Theosophical Society until she fell ill in 1931. She passed away on **September 20, 1933**, at the age of 85, in Adyar, Madras Presidency. She is well-known in India for her contributions to the advancement of Indian education and as a supporter of Indian self-rule. Throughout her life, she was a courageous and outspoken woman who wore many hats: social worker, religious freedom crusader, and active participant in the freedom struggle of the country she called home.

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