

CHAPTER - 29

1937 : ELECTION RESULTS

1. Congress had clear majority in five provinces i.e. United Provinces (U.P.), Bihar, Madras, Central Provinces (C.P.), Orissa.
2. In Bengal, NWFP, Assam and Bombay, Congress emerged as the single largest party.
3. 482 seats were reserved as Muslim seats. The Congress contested 58 and could win only 26 seats.
4. Muslim League could not win a single seat in NWFP. In Punjab it got only 2 of the 84 reserved seats.
5. Congress formed its own government in 7 provinces i.e. Bombay, UP, Madras, Orissa, Central Provinces, Bihar, NWFP.
6. Sikandar Hayat Khan of Unionist party won in Punjab while Bengal was won of Fazlulhaq of Krishak Praja Party.
 - Haripura Session (February 1938) declared Purna Swaraj ideal to cover Princely States.
 - Tripuri Congress (March 1939) favoured active participation in the Princely States because of the federal structure of the 1935 Act and due to assumption of office by the Congress after the 1937 elections.
 - The Tripuri Session witnessed Bose vs. Sitaramya (Gandhi's nominee) conflict. Bose resigned to form the Forward Bloc in 1939.
7. Gandhi and the members of Congress working committee were imprisoned on 9th August, 1942.
8. Mahatma Gandhi was kept in Agha Khan Fort at Poona and others were kept in the Fort of Ahmednagar.
9. Congress was declared illegal.
10. This movement was directionless and leaderless.
11. It is also known as August-Revolution because it started in the month of August.
12. Communist Party of India supported the British Government.
13. Dr. Ambedkar opposed the movement.
14. Princes kept themselves aloof.
15. Merchants kept themselves aloof from this movement.
16. Hindu Mahasabha also opposed this movement.
17. Landlords kept themselves aloof this movement.
18. The Quit India Movement.
 - Witnessed emergence of under ground movement. Some prominent leaders who participated were—Achyut Patwardhan, Aruna Asaf Ali, Ram Manohar Lohia, Sucheta Kriplani, Biju Patnaik and Jai Prakash Narayan.
 - Usha Mehta established Congress Radio in Mumbai.
19. Parallel Governments were established during this movement at Balia, Satara and Tamluk.
20. A slogan "Divide and Quit" was given by Muslim League in 1943 Karachi Session.
21. Muslim League supported the government.
22. Gandhi observed fast for 21 days during his imprisonment to confirm his strung belief in non-violence and for self purification.
23. During imprisonment of Gandhi was personal secretary Mahadeo Desai and wife Kasturba died.

Quit India Movement

1. The meeting of Congress Working committee held on 27th April, 1942 at Allahabad. In this meeting the Congress criticize the policy of the British Government on war front.
2. On July, 1942 the meeting of Congress working committee held at Wardha. The Congress asked the British to Quit India.
3. On 7th August, 1942 the session of congress started in Mumbai. Gandhi presented the historical proposals of "Quit India" on 8th August.
4. Gandhi gave the slogan "Do or Die".

Indian National Army

1. Rashbehari Bose organized a conference in Tokyo in March, 1942.
2. Another conference in Bankok in June, 1942.
3. Out of these conference was born the Indian Independence League and a decision to form an Indian National Army for the Liberation of India.
4. The idea of Indian National Army was first conceived in Malaya in 1942 by Mohan Singh an Indian Officer in British Army who deserted and want to Japanese for help.
5. The Indian prisoners of war handed over by the Japanese to Mohan Singh who recited them in Indian National Army.
6. Taken over and organized by S.C. Bose in 1943 in Singapore.
7. He set up headquarters at Singapore and Rangoon.
8. Andaman and Nicobar was given to S.C. Bose and renamed Sahid and Swaraj respectively.
9. Attack thorough the mountaineous areas of Burma in Feb. 4, 1944.
10. Defeat of Japan shattering all hopes of Indian National Army and failure of its attempt to launch a military attack on British India.
11. Trail of Indian National army soldiers at Red Fort in Aug. 1945.
12. Some prominent INA officers put on trail were gen. shah Nawaz, Gurdial Singh Dhillon, Prem Sehgal etc.
13. Congress declared its support to INA soldiers at Mumbai session in Sept. 1945.
14. Defence of the INA soilders taken up by Bhulabhai Desai, Tej Bahadur Sapru, K.N. Katju, J.L. Nehru and Asaf Ali.
15. The British Government felt it expendient to set INA soldiers free.

The Simla Conference, 1945

- Viceroy Wavell called for Simla Conference (24 June-14 July, 1945) for setting up a new Executive Council at the centre-practically Indian in composition-excepting the Commander-in-chief and Viceroy.
- The Council would have equal representation from the 'Caste-Hindus' and Muslims.
- The Congress refused to be treated as a 'Caste

Hindu' body and staked the right to select the representatives of any community as the congress nominess to the council.

- Abdul Kalam Azad and Abdul Gaffar Khan went to Simla as a Congress delegate.
- The League wanted to be the sole Spokesman of Indian Muslims.
- League demanded a communal vote by asking for a two-third majority in the proposed council on any decision opposed by the Muslim members (or League members).
- Wavell dissolved the Conference his action implied the League is claim to speak for all Muslims was recognized. Thereafter, the satisfaction of the League became a pre-requisite to any major settlement.
- Holding of new election for the Indian legislatures in the winder of 1945-46 was announced.

Elections and the Cabinet Mission, 1946

- The League, following the Simla conference and dangling of the carrot of Pakistan by the British was in favourable situation to deal with its separate Muslim electorate.
- The Congress won 57 out of 102 seats in the Central Legislative Assembly and obtained majorities in all provinces except Sind, Punjab and Bengal.
- The League polled 86 percent of the Muslim votes and won all the 30 Muslim seats in the Central Legislative Assembly.
- League lost NWEF and Assam to Congress and failed to dislodge Unionists from Punjab.
- Cabinet Mission constituted of three British Cabinet Members.
 - Pethrick Lawrence-Secretary of State for India
 - Staford Cripps-President of the Board of Trade
 - A.V. Alexander-First Lord of Admiral
- The Mission rejected the demand for a full-fledged Pakistan (Comprising the whole of all the Muslim majority areas).
- The Mission reasoned that the right of communal self-determination, if conceded to Muslims, had also to be granted to the non-Muslims who formed majorities in West Bengal and Eastern Punjab, as well as in Assam proper.

- The 'truncated' or smaller Pakistan was unacceptable to the League.
- The Mission offered the plan of a very loose union of all the Indian territories under a centre that would control merely the defence, the Foreign Affairs and the Communications, leaving all other subjects to the existing provincial legislatures.
- The provincial legislatures would then elect a Constituent Assembly.
- The members so elected will divide up into three sections.
 - Section A- Non Muslim Majority provinces (Bombay, United Provinces, Bihar, Central Provinces, Orissa, Madras)
 - Section B- Muslim Majority provinces in the north-west (Sind, North Western Frontier Province and Punjab).
 - Section C- Muslim Majority provinces in North east (Bengal, Assam).
- All these sections would have the authority to draw up provincial constitutions and even group constitutions.
- The Mission proposed a short term measure- the formation, immediately, of an interim government at the centre constituted by major political parties, and with the Indians holding all the portfolios.
- At the outset, both the Congress and League were inclined to accept it but problem soon emerged in July 1946.
- The League interpreted the groupings to be compulsory. NWFP (in B) and Assam (in C) would be reduced to minorities within their section. Hence, in future a wholesome Pakistan could become a reality if Section B and Section C provinces so desired.
- The Congress wanted the grouping to be optional. It opposed absence of any elected members from the princely states in the Constituent Assembly.
- The Congress dropped its demand for electing the members of Constituent Assembly on the basis of Universal Adult Franchise.

The Communal Carnage And Interim Government

- Muslim League announced the Direct Action Day on 16 August 1946. Widespread Hindu-Muslim riots occurred throughout the country.
- An interim Government in accordance with

Cabinet Mission's proposal at the centre came into existence in September, 1946, when the Congress leaders formed a Cabinet under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru. Muslim League refused to join initially.

- Wavell persuaded the League leaders to join on 26 October 1946.
- The Interim government, obstructed by its League members and bureaucracy was reduced to a figure head and was unable to control the communal carnage.
- The League refused to participate in the Constituent Assembly which met on 9 December, 1946.

Royal Indian Navy (RIN) Revolt 1946

- On 18 February, 1946, the ratings of 'Talwar' in Bombay harbour went into hunger strike to protest against bad food and worse racial arrogance.
- They elected a Naval Central Committee headed by M.S. Khan and demanded.
 - Release of the INA prisoners and freedom of all other political prisoners.
 - Withdrawal of Indian troops in Indo-China and Java.
 - Equal pay for European and Indian sailors alike.
 - In Karachi, ratings of 'Hindustan' revolted.
 - Vallabhbhai Patel and Jinnah jointly persuaded the ratings to surrender on 23rd February, 1946.

Atlee's Announcement, 1947

- Prime Minister Atlee on 20 February, 1947 announced that the British would withdraw from India by 30 June, 1948 and that Lord Mountbatten would replace Wavell.
- The Muslim League began a civil disobedience campaign in Punjab to bring down the coalition government headed by Khizr Kayat Khan of the Unionist Party.

The 3rd June Plan of Mountbatten

- The League's demand would be accommodated by creating Pakistan, but it would be made as small as possible.
- Mountbatten supported the Congress stand that the princely states must not be given the option of independence.
- Mountbatten considered it vital to retain the goodwill of the Congress.

- The Plan declared that power would be handed over by 15 August 1947 on the basis of dominion status to India and Pakistan.
- The speed with which the country was partitioned enabled the British to forsake of responsibility for the worsening communal situation.

Towards Freedom (1939-1947) Chronology

1. On September 3, 1939 the Second World War broke out and the same day the Viceroy Linlithgow, without consulting the Indian people, declared India to be a belligerent and at war with Germany.
2. The Congress Working committee, which met on September 8-15, 1939, Stressed that the issue of war and peace for India must be decided by the Indian people.
3. When the British Government did not respond favourably, the Congress Ministers in the Provinces to resign; they complied with the directive in October and November 1939.
4. After the resignation of the Congress Ministers the annual session of the Congress was held at Ramgarh (Bihar) in March 1940, where the Congress offered to cooperate with the British Government if a provisional National Government was set up at the centre.
5. In response, the Viceroy Lord Linlithgow offered a set of proposals to the Congress for securing its cooperation during the War, which are popularly known as the "August offer".
6. The Congress rejected the "August offer" Jawaharlal Nehru said that the whole idea of Dominion status, on which the offer was based, was "as dead as a dornail."
7. August Offer
 - Dissillusioned with the August offer the Congress decided to launch Individual Satyagraha.
 - It was launched on October, 17, 1940.
 - The first Satyagrahis was Vinoba Bhave.
 - Mahatma Gandhi suspended it on December 17, 1940.
 - On January 5, 1941, the campaign was started again.
8. Cripps Mission
 - The British Government decided to send Sir Stafford Cripps, a member of the British

Cabinet, to India, to find out a solution in consultation with the Indian leaders.

- Sir Stafford Cripps spent three weeks in India (March-April 1942).
9. The Congress Working Committee, which met at Wardha on July 14, 1942 ratified the Wardha Resolution.
 10. Wardha Resolution.
 - The all India Congress Committee, which met in Mumbai on August 7, 1942, ratified the Wardha Resolution.
 - It sanctioned the non-violent mass struggle under the leadership of Gandhiji.
 11. Wavell Plan.
 - On June 14, 1945 Wavell broadcast a plan, popularly known as the Wavell Plan.
 - The essence of the plan was the formation of a new Executive Council at the Centre, in which all but the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief would be Indians.
 - To consider these proposals and to Progress towards the formation of the proposed Executive Council, a Conference of 21 Indian Political leaders was invited to the summer capital of Simla in June 1945.
 - The leaders included Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, then the President of the Congress M.A. Jinnah the leader of the Muslim League etc.
 12. General Elections.
 - The first step taken by the Attlee Government was to hold general elections in India, which had been held last in 1936.
 - In the election results announced in December 1945, the Congress made its presence felt in the Central Legislative Assembly as also the Provincial Legislatures.
 - In the Central Assembly, the Congress secured 91.3 percent votes in the General Constituencies; the Muslim League won every Muslim seat.
 - In the Provincial Legislature, the Congress won absolute majority in Mumbai, Chennai, United Provinces, Bihar, Orissa and Central Provinces.
 - In the Punjab a Coalition Government of the Congress, Akalis and the Unionists was formed.

- The Muslim League could secure majority only in Bengal and Sind.

13. Naval Mutiny

- On February 18, 1946, a section of Indians serving in the Royal Indian Navy, known as ratings (non-commissioned officers and sailors) mutinied in Mumbai.
- They went on hunger strike in protest against untold hardships regarding pay and food and the most outrageous racial discrimination, in particular derogatory references to their national character.

14. The Cabinet Mission, composed of British Cabinet Minister-Sir Pethick Lawrence, the Secretary of State for India, Sir Stafford Cripps, President of the Board of Trade and A.V. Alexander, First Lord of the Admiralty-arrived in New Delhi on March 24, 1946.

15. Cabinet Mission announced its own recommendations on May 16, 1946.

16. Muslim League at first accepted the Cabinet Mission plan on June 6, 1946 but on July 29 withdrew its acceptance and called upon Muslims "to resort to Direct Action to achieve Pakistan".

17. Interim Government.

- The Viceroy Lord Wavell invited Jawaharlal Nehru, the leader of the largest party in India, to form an Interim Government, which was sworn in on September 2, 1946.
- It was composed of 12 members (including 3 Muslims) nominated by the Congress with Jawaharlal Nehru as its Vice-President.

18. Constituent Assembly met for the first time on December 6, 1946 with Dr. Rajender Prasad as its President.

19. Transfer of Power

- Prime Minister Attlee announced on February 20, 1947, in the House of Commons, that the British would quit India after transferring power "into responsible hands not later than June 1948".
- Attlee also announced the appointment of Lord Mountbatten a Viceroy in place of Lord Wavell. Lord Mountbatten, the 34th and the last British Governor-General and Viceroy, arrived in India on March 22, 1947.
- The Congress leaders had also to consider the widespread communal violence and

bloodshed that was ravaging the country, Jinnha's uncompromising attitude on the issue of partition and the British decision to transfer power as soon as possible.

20. On June 3, 1947, Prime Minister Attlee announced the Partition Plan or the June 3rd Plan in the House of Commons.

21. Partition Plan

- The Congress Working Committee, which met on June 3, 1947 approved of the partition plan; the All India Congress Committee, which met in New Delhi on June 14-15, ratified the approval.
- Pandit Govind Vallabh Pant, who moved the resolution for ratification, said that "this was the only way to achieve freedom and liberty for the country."
- Soon after partition was decided upon, the Indian Independence Bill was drafted, which was passed by the British Parliament in July 1947.