

12th History Lesson 6 Notes in English

6] Religion in Nationalist Politics

Introduction

- Before the establishment of **British Raj, Mughals** and their agents had ruled large parts of the country.
- Large sections of **the Muslims** therefore enjoyed the advantages of being the co-religionists of the ruling class many of whom were sovereigns, landlords, the generals and officials.
- **The official and court language was Persian.** When the British gradually replaced them they introduced a **new system of administration.**
- By the mid-nineteenth century **English education** predominated.
- **The 1857 rebellion** was the last gasp of the earlier ruling class.
- Following the brutal suppression of the revolt, the Muslims lost everything, their land, their job and other opportunities and were reduced to **the state of penury.**
- Unable to reconcile to the condition to which they were reduced, the Muslims retreated into a shell.
- And for the **first few generations after 1857** they hated everything British.
- Besides they resented competing with **the Hindus** who had taken recourse to the new avenues opened by **colonialism.**
- With the emergence of Indian nationalism especially among the educated Hindu upper castes, **the British saw in the Muslim middle class** a force to keep the Congress in check.
- They cleverly exploited the situation for the promotion of their own interests.
- The competing **three strands of nationalism** namely **Indian nationalism, Hindu nationalism,** and **Muslim nationalism** are dealt with in this lesson.

Origin and Growth of Communalism in British India

(a) Hindu Revivalism

- Some of the early nationalists believed that nationalism could be built only on a **Hindu foundation.**
- As pointed out by **Sarvepalli Gopal, Hindu**, revivalism found its voice in politics through the **Arya Samaj, founded in 1875,** with its assertion of superior qualities of Hinduism.
- The organization of cow protection leagues in **large parts of North India** in the late nineteenth century gave a fillip to **Hindu communalism.**
- The effort of organizations such as Arya Samaj was strengthened by the Theosophical movement led by **Annie Besant** from 1891.
- Besant identified herself with **Hindu nationalists** and expressed her ideas as follows:
- 'The Indian work is first of all the revival, strengthening and uplifting of ancient religions.'

- This has brought with it a new self respect, a pride in the past, a belief in the future and as an inevitable result, a great wave of patriotic life, the beginning of the rebuilding of a nation.'

(b) Rise of Muslims Consciousness

- Islam on the other hand, to quote **Sarvepalli Gopal** again, was securing its articulation through **the Aligarh movement**.
- The British, by building the **Aligarh college** and backing **Syed Ahmed Khan**, had assisted the birth of a **Muslim national party** and **Muslim political ideology**.
- **The Wahabi movement** had also created cleavage in **Hindu-Muslim relations**.
- The Wahabis wanted to take Islam to its pristine purity and to end the superstition which according to them had sapped its vitality.
- From the **Wahabis** to the **Khilafatists**, grassroots activism played a significant role in the politicization of Muslims.
- **Muslim consciousness** developed due to other reasons as well.
- **The Bengal government's order** in the **1870s** to replace **Urdu by Hindi**, and the **Perso-Arabic script** by **Nagri script** in the courts and offices created apprehension in the minds of the **Muslim professional group**.

(c) Divide and Rule Policy of British

- **The object of the British** was to check the development of a composite Indian identity, and to forestall attempts at **consolidation** and **unification of Indians**.
- The **British imperialism** followed the **policy of Divide and Rule**.
- **Bombay Governor Elphinstone** wrote, 'Divide at Impera was the old Roman motto and it should be ours.'



Elphinstone

- **The British government** lent legitimacy and prestige to **communal ideology** and **politics** despite the governance challenge that communal riots posed.

- The consequence of such **sectarian approaches** by all parties led to increasing animosity between **Hindus and Muslims** in **northern India** which had its fall out in other parts of India as well.
- The last decades of the nineteenth century was marked by a number of **Hindu–Muslim riots**.
- Even in south India, there was a major riot in **Salem in July–August 1882**.

(d) Cow Slaughter and Communal Riots

- In **July 1893**, a dispute arose between **Hindus and Muslims** in **Azamgarh district** in the **North-West Provinces**.
- The riots that followed spread over a vast area, encompassing the **United Provinces, Bihar, Gujarat and Bombay**, claiming over a hundred lives.
- **Gaurakshini Sabhas** (cow protection leagues) were becoming more militant and there were reports of forcible interference with the sale or slaughter of cows.
- The riots over **cow-slaughter** became frequent after 1893 and 15 major riots of this type broke out in the **Punjab** alone between **1883 and 1891**.
- Cow protectionists in the Punjab, the activities of **Gaurakshini Sabhas** in the **Central Provinces**, the campaigners for the recognition of **Devanagiri** as official language in courts and government offices in the **United Provinces** were also involved in the **Congress organization**.

(e) Failure of Congress and Government to combat Communalism

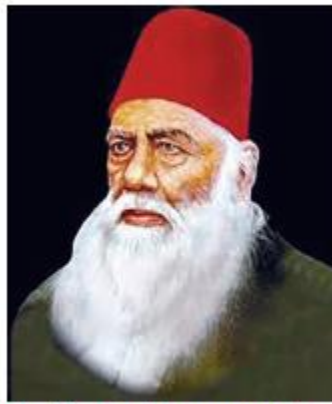
- The **Indian National Congress**, despite its secular and nationalist claims was unable to prevent the involvement of its members in the activities of **Hindu communal organisations**.
- This was a major factor in the **Muslim distrust of the Congress**.
- Congressmen's participation in **shuddhi** and **sangathan** campaigns of the Arya Samaj further estranged Hindus and Muslims.
- The British government could have adopted measures to outlaw **Cow Protection Associations** or to **arrest the rank communalists** who were causing distrust among the people.
- But the British deliberately dodged the issue, as the identification of the **Congressmen with revivalist and communal** causes provoked **anti-Congress** feelings among **Muslims in North India**.
- The **Secretary of State Hamilton** considered the development a happy augury for he was earlier worried over the growing solidarity among various social and religious groups in the context of the **foundation of the Indian National Congress**.
- 'One hardly knows what to wish for, unity of ideas and action would be very dangerous politically; divergence of ideas and collision are administratively troublesome.
- Of the two, the latter is the least risky, though it throws anxiety and responsibility upon those on the spot where the friction exists.'- **Hamilton to the Viceroy Elgin**

(f) Moves of the Congress

- Though many congress men had involvement in Hindu organisations like **Arya Samaj**, the **Congress leadership** was secular.
- When there was an attempt by some Congressmen to pass a resolution in the third session of the Indian National Congress, making cow killing a penal offence, the Congress leadership refused to entertain it.
- The Congress subsequently resolved that if any resolution affecting a particular class or community was objected to by the delegates representing that community, even though they were in minority, it would not be considered by the Congress.

(g) Role of Syed Ahmed Khan

- **Sir Syed Ahmed Khan**, the founder of **Aligarh movement** was initially supportive of the Congress.



Sir Syed Ahmed Khan

- Soon he was converted to the thinking that in a country governed by Hindus, Muslims would be helpless, as they would be in a minority.
- However, there were Muslim leaders like **Badraddin Tyabji**, **Rahmatullah Sayani** in **Mumbai**, **Nawab Syed Mohammed Bahadur** in **Chennai** and **A. Rasul** in **Bengal** who supported the Congress.
- But the majority of Muslims in north India toed the line of Syed Ahmed, and preferred to support the British.
- The introduction of **representative institutions** and of open competition to government posts gave rise to apprehensions amongst Muslims and prompted Syed and his followers to work for close collaboration with the Government.
- By collaborating with the **Government Syed Ahmed Khan** hoped to secure for his community a bigger share than otherwise would be due according to the principles of number or merit.
- The foundation of the **Indian National Congress in 1885** was an attempt to narrow the **Hindu-Muslim divide** and place the genuine grievances of all the communities in the country before the British.

- But Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and other Muslim leaders like **Syed Ameer Ali**, the first Indian to find a place in **London Privy Council**, projected the Congress as a representative body of only the Hindus.
- Of the **seventy-two delegates** attending the **first session of the Congress** only two were Muslims.
- **Muslim leaders opposed the Congress** tooth and nail on the plea that Muslims' participation in it would create an unfavourable reaction among the rulers against their community.

(h) Religion in Local Body Elections

- **Democratic politics** had the unintended effect of fostering communal tendencies.
- **Local administrative bodies** in the **1880s** provided the scope for pursuing communal politics.
- **Municipal councillors** acquired vast **powers of patronage** which were used to build-up one's political base.
- Hindus wresting the control of municipal boards from the Muslims and viceversa led to communalisation of local politics.
- **Lal Chand**, the principal spokesperson of the **Punjab Hindu Sabha** and later the leader of **Arya Samaj**, highlighted the extent to which some Municipalities were organised on communal lines:



Lal Chand

- **'The members of the Committee** arrange themselves in two rows, around the presidential chair.
- On the left are seated the representatives of the banner of Islam and on the right the descendants of old **Rishis of Aryavarta**.
- By this arrangement the members are constantly reminded that they are not simply **Municipal Councillors**, but they are as **Muhammedans** versus **Hindus and vice-versa....'**

(i) Week-kneed Policy of the Congress

- At the dawn of twentieth century, during the **Swadeshi Movement** in **Bengal** (1905–06), Muslim supporters of the Swadeshi movement were condemned as "Congress touts."
- The silence of the Congress and its refusal to deal with such elements frontally not only provided stimulus to communal politics but also demoralized and discouraged **the nationalist Muslims**.

- **Hindu communalism** had also gathered strength round this time. It derived its sustenance from the view that the **history of Muslim rule in India** was characterised by degradation of the Hindus through forcible conversion, imposition of **jizya**, strict application of the **shariat** and the destruction of the places of worship.
- History textbooks and literature based on the prejudiced views of British writers added fuel to such views.
- **Hindu and Muslim Communalism** were products of middle class infighting utterly divorced from the consciousness of the **Hindu and Muslim masses**. –Jawaharlal Nehru
- The situation took a turn for the worst in the **first decade of the twentieth century** when **political radicalism** went hand in hand with religious conservatism.
- **Tilak, Aurobindo Gosh** and **Lala Lajpat Rai** aroused anti-colonial consciousness by using religious symbols, festivals and platforms.
- The most aggravating factor was Tilak's effort to mobilise Hindus through the **Ganapati festival**.
- **The Punjab Hindu Sabha founded in 1909** laid the foundation for Hindu communal ideology and politics.
- Lal Chand spared no efforts to condemn the Indian National Congress of pursuing a policy of appeasement towards Muslims.

Formation of All India Muslim League

- On 1 October 1906, a 35-member delegation of the Muslim nobles, aristocrats, legal professionals and other elite sections of the community mostly associated with **Aligarh movement** gathered at **Simla** under the **leadership of Aga Khan** to present an address to **Lord Minto, the viceroy**.
- They demanded proportionate representation of **Muslims in government jobs**, appointment of **Muslim judges in High Courts** and **members in Viceroy's council**, etc.
- Though the Simla deputation failed to obtain any positive commitment from the Viceroy, it worked as a catalyst for the foundation of the **All India Muslim League (AIML)** to safeguard the interests of the **Muslims in 1907**.
- A group of **big zamindars**, erstwhile **Nawabs** and **ex-bureaucrats** became active members of this movement.
- The League supported **the partition of Bengal**, demanded separate electorates for Muslims, and pressed for safeguards for Muslims in Government Service.

Objectives of All India Muslim League

- The **All India Muslim League**, the first centrally organized political party exclusively for Muslims, had the following objectives:
- To promote among the Muslims of India feelings of loyalty to the **British Government**, and remove any misconception that may arise as to **the instruction of Government** with regard to any of its measures.

- To protect and advance the **political rights and interests of Muslims of India**, and to respectfully represent their **needs and aspirations to the Government**.
- To prevent the rise among the Muslims of India of any feeling of hostility towards other communities without prejudice to the aforementioned objects of the League.
- Initially, AIML was an elitist organization of **urbanized Muslims**.
- However, the support of the **British Government** helped the League to become the sole representative body of **Indian Muslims**.
- Within three years of its formation, the **AIML** successfully achieved the status of separate electorates for the Muslims.
- It granted separate constitutional identity to the Muslims.
- **The Lucknow Pact (1916)** put an official seal on a separate political identity to Muslims.
- **Separate Electorate or Communal Electorate**: Under this arrangement only Muslims could vote for the Muslim candidates.
- **Minto-Morely Reforms, 1909** provided for eight seats to Muslims in the Imperial Legislative Council, out of the **27 non officials to be elected**.
- In the **Legislative Council of the provinces seats** reserved for the Muslim candidates were: Madras 4; Bombay 4; Bengal 5.

(a) Separate Electorates and the Spread of Communalism

- The **institution of separate electorate** was the **principle technique** adopted by the **Government of British India** for fostering and spreading communalism.
- The people were split into separate constituencies so that they voted communally, thought communally, judged the representatives communally and expressed their grievances communally.
- That the British did this with ulterior motive was evident from a note sent by one of the **British officers** to **Lady Minto**:
- 'I must send your Excellency a line to say that a very big thing has happened to-day. A work of statesmanship, that will affect **Indian History** for many a long year.
- It is nothing less than pulling of 62 million people from joining the ranks of seditious opposition.'
- **Communalism**: Organising a religious group on the basis of its hostility towards the followers of other religions to fight even material issues.
- Communalism as an **ideology** or **movement** has been defined in various ways by various scholars.
- According to Nehru, communalism is one of the obvious examples of backward-looking people trying to hold on to something that is wholly out of place in the modern world and is essentially opposed to **the concept of nationalism**.

- According to another scholar, communalism denotes 'organised attempt of a group to bring about change in the face of resistance from other groups or the government through collective mobilisation based on a narrow ideology.'
- The announcement of separate electorates and the incorporation of **the principle of "divide and rule"** into a formal constitutional arrangement made the estrangement between **Hindus and Muslims total**.

Emergence of the All India Hindu Mahasabha

- In the wake of the formation of the Muslim League and introduction of the **Government of India Act of 1909**, a move to start a Hindu organisation was in the air.
- In pursuance of the resolution passed at **the fifth Punjab Hindu Conference at Ambala** and the sixth conference at **Ferozepur**, the **first all Indian Conference of Hindus** was convened at **Haridwar in 1915**.
- **The All India Hindu Mahasabha** was started there with **headquarters at Dehra Dun**.
- **Provincial Hindu Sabhas** were started subsequently in UP, with headquarters at **Allahabad** and in **Bombay and Bihar**.
- While the **sabhas in Bombay and Bihar** were not active, there was little response in **Madras and Bengal**.
- Predominantly urban in character, the **Mahasabha** was concentrated in the larger trading cities of north India, particularly in **Allahabad, Kanpur, Benares, Lucknow and Lahore**.
- In **UP, the Mahasabha**, to a large extent was the creation of the educated middle class leaders who were also activists in **the Congress**.
- **The Khilafat movement** gave some respite to the separatist politics of the communalists.
- As a result, between 1920 and 1922, the Mahasabha ceased to function. The entry of ulema into politics led Hindus to fear a revived and aggressive **Islam**.
- Even important Muslim leaders like **Ali brothers** had always been **Khilafatists first and Congressmen second**.
- The power of mobilisation on religious grounds demonstrated by the Muslims during the Khilafat movement motivated the Hindu communalists to imitate them in mobilising the Hindu masses.
- **Suddhi movement** was not a new phenomenon but in the **post-Khilafat period** it assumed new importance.
- In an effort to draw Hindus into the boycott of the visit of **Prince of Wales in 1921**, **Swami Shradhananda** tried to revive the Mahasabha by organizing cow-protection propaganda.
- Before the **World War I**, Britain had promised to safeguard the interests of the **Caliph** as well the **Kaaba** (the holiest seat of Islam).
- But after **Turkey's defeat** in the War, they refused to keep their word.
- The stunned **Muslim community** showed its displeasure to the British government by starting **the Khilafat movement** to secure **the Caliphate in Turkey**.

- The bloody **Malabar rebellion of 1921**, where Muslim peasants were pitted against both the British rulers and Hindu landlords, gave another reason for the renewed campaign of the **Hindu Mahasabha**.
- Though the outbreak was basically an agrarian revolt, communal passion ran high in consequence of which **Gandhi** himself viewed it as a **Hindu-Muslim conflict**.
- Gandhi wanted Muslim leaders to tender a public apology for the happenings in **Malabar**.



Malabar Rebellion, 1921

(a) Communalism in United Provinces (UP)

- The suspension of the **non-cooperation movement in 1922** and the **abolition of the Caliphate in 1924** left the Muslims in a state of frustration.
- In the aftermath of **Non-Cooperation movement**, the alliance between the **Khilafatists** and the **Congress** crumbled.
- There was a fresh spate of communal violence, as **Hindus** and **Muslims**, in the context of self governing institutions created under the **Act of 1919**, began to stake their political claims and in the process vied with each other to acquire power and position.
- Of 968 delegates attending the sixth annual conference of the **Hindu Mahasabha** in **Varanasi** in **August 1923**, **56.7 %** came from the U.P.
- **The United Provinces (UP)**, the **Punjab**, **Delhi** and **Bihar** together contributed **86.8 %** of the delegates.
- **Madras**, **Bombay** and **Bengal** combined sent only **6.6%** of the delegates. 1920s was a trying period for the Congress.
- This time the communal tension in the United Province was not only due to the zeal of Hindu and Muslim religious leaders, but was fuelled by the political rivalries of the **Swarajists** and **Liberals**.
- In **Allahabad**, **Motilal Nehru** and **Madan Mohan Malaviya** confronted each other.



Motilal Nehru

- When Nehru's faction emerged victorious in the **municipal elections of 1923**, Malaviya's faction began to exploit religious passions.



M.M. Malaviya

- The District Magistrate Crosthwaite who conducted the investigation reported:
- 'The Malaviya family have deliberately stirred up the Hindus and this has reacted on the Muslims.'

(b) The Hindu Mahasabha

- In the Punjab **communalism** as a powerful movement had set in completely.
- In 1924 Lala Lajpat Rai openly advocated the partition of the Punjab into **Hindu** and **Muslim Provinces**.
- The Hindu Mahasabha, represented the forces of Hindu revivalism in the political domain, raised the slogan of '**Akhand Hindustan**' against the Muslim League's demand of separate electorates for Muslims.
- Ever since its inception, the Mahasabha's role in the freedom struggle has been rather controversial.
- While not supportive of **British rule**, the Mahasabha did not offer its full support to the **nationalist movement** either.
- Since the **Indian National Congress** had to mobilize the support of all classes and communities against foreign domination, the leaders of different communities could not press for **principle of secularism** firmly for the fear of losing the support of religious-minded groups.

- The Congress under the **leadership of Gandhi** held a number of unity conferences during this period, but to no avail.

(c) Delhi Conference of Muslims and their Proposals

- One great outcome of the efforts at unity, however, was an offer by the **Conference of Muslims**, which met at **Delhi on March 20, 1927** to give up separate electorates if four proposals were accepted.
 1. **the separation of Sind** from Bombay
 2. Reforms for the **Frontier and Baluchistan**
 3. Representation by population in the **Punjab and Bengal** and
 4. **Thirty-three per cent seats** for the **Muslims** in the Central Legislature.
- Expressing anguish over the development of **sectarian nationalism**, **Gandhi** wrote,
- 'There are as many religions as there are individuals, but those who are conscious of the spirit of the nationality do not interfere with one another's religion.
- If Hindus believe that India should be peopled only by Hindus, they are living in a dream land.
- **The Hindus, the Sikhs, the Muhammedans, the Parsis and the Christians** who have made their country are fellow countrymen and they will have to live in unity if only for their interest.
- In no part of the world are one nationality and one religion synonymous terms nor has it ever been so in India.'
- **Motilal Nehru** and **S.Srinivasan** persuaded the All India Congress Committee to accept the Delhi proposals formulated by the **Conference of the Muslims**.
- But communalism had struck such deep roots that the initiative fell through.
- **Gandhi** commented that the **Hindu-Muslim issue** had passed out of human hands.
- Instead of seizing the opportunity to resolve the tangle, the Congress chose to drag its feet by appointing committees,
- one to find out whether it was financially feasible to separate **Sind from Bombay** and the other to examine proportional representation as a means of safeguarding **Muslim majorities**.
- **Jinnah** who had taken the **initiative** to narrow down the breach between the two, and had been hailed the **ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity** by Sarojini,



Sarojini

- Felt let down as the **Hindu Mahasabha members** present at the **All Parties Convention held in Calcutta in 1928** rejected all amendments and destroyed any possibility of unity.
- Thereafter, most of the **Muslims were convinced** that they would get a better deal from Government rather than from the Congress.
- In despair **Jinnah left the country**, only to return many years later as a rank communalist.

(d) Communal Award and its Aftermath

- **The British Government** was consistent in **promoting communalism**.
- Even the delegates for the **second Round Table Conference** were chosen on the basis of their communal bearings.
- After the failure of the Round Table Conferences, the **British Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald** announced the **Communal Award** which further vitiated the political climate.
- **The R.S.S. founded in 1925** was expanding and its volunteers had shot upto 1,00,000.
- **K.B. Hedgewar, V.D. Savarkar and M.S. Golwalker** were attempting to elaborate on the concept of the **Hindu Rashtra** and openly advocated that **'the non-Hindu people in Hindustan must adopt the Hindu culture and language...**



V.D. Savarkar

- They must cease to be foreigners or may stay in the country wholly subordinated to the Hindu Nation claiming nothing.'
- **V.D. Savarkar** asserted that '**We Hindus are a Nation by ourselves**'.
- Though the Congress had forbidden its members from joining the Mahasabha or the R.S.S. as early as 1934,
- It was only in **December 1938** that the **Congress Working Committee** declared Mahasabha membership to be a disqualification for remaining in the Congress.

First Congress Ministries

- The nationalism of the Indian National Congress was personified by Mahatma Gandhi, who rejected the narrow nationalism exemplified by the **Arya Samaj** and the **Aligargh movement** and strove to evolve a political identity that transcended the different religions.
- Notwithstanding the **state-supported communalism** of different hues, the **Indian National Congress** remained a dominant political force in India.
- In the **1937 elections**, **Congress** won in seven of the eleven provinces and formed the largest party in three others.
- **The Muslim League's performance** was dismal. It succeeded in winning only 4.8 per cent of the **Muslim votes**.
- The Congress had emerged as a mass secular party.
- Yet the Government branded it a **Hindu organisation** and **projected the Muslim League** as the real representative of the Muslims and treated it on a par with the Congress.
- Seeing this dismal performance, the **Muslim League** was convinced that the only choice left to it was to whip up emotions on communal lines in provinces like **Bengal and Punjab**.
- The over confidence of the Congress, given its overwhelming victory in the elections, made it misjudge Muslim sentiment.
- **Jinnah** exploited the emotional campaign of '**Islam in danger**' to gain mass Muslim support after the 1936-37 elections – a divisive cause in which the Hindu Mahasabha came to its help through coalition ministries.

Observation of Day of Deliverance

- **The Second World War broke out in 1939** and the Viceroy of India **Linlithgow** immediately announced that India was also at war.
- Since the declaration was made without any consultation with the Congress, it was greatly resented by it.
- **The Congress Working Committee** decided that all **Congress ministries** in the provinces would resign.
- After the resignation of Congress ministries, the provincial governors suspended the legislatures and took charge of the provincial administration.

- The Muslim League celebrated the end of **Congress rule** as a day of deliverance on **22 December 1939**.
- On that day, **the League passed resolutions** in various places against Congress for its alleged atrocities against Muslims.
- The demonstration of Nationalist Muslims was dubbed as anti-Islamic and denigrated.
- It was in this atmosphere that the League passed its resolution on 26 March 1940 in Lahore demanding a **separate nation for Muslims**.
- Though the idea of **Pakistan** came from the **Muslim League platform in 1940** it had been conceived ten years earlier by the **poet-scholar Mohammad Iqbal**.
- At the League's annual conference at **Allahabad (1930)**, Iqbal expressed his wish to see a consolidated **North-west Indian Muslim State**.



**Muhammad Ali
Jinnah**

- It was then articulated forcefully by **Rahmat Ali, a Cambridge student**.
- The basis of League's demand was its **"Two Nation Theory"** which first came from **Sir Wazir Hasan** in his presidential address at **Bombay session of League in 1937**.
- He said, **"the Hindus and Mussalmans** inhabiting this vast continent are not two communities but should be considered two nations in many respects."
- Neither **Jinnah** nor **Nawab Zafrullah Khan** then had considered creation of separate state for Muslims practicable.
- However, on **March 23, 1940**, the **Muslim League** formally adopted the idea by passing a resolution.
- **The text of the resolution** ran as under: "Resolved that it is the concerted view of this session of the **All India Muslim League** that no constitutional scheme would be workable in this country or acceptable to Muslims unless it is designed on the following basic principles, viz. that **geographically contiguous units** are demarcated into regions which should be constituted with such **territorial readjustments** as may be necessary,

- That the area in which the Muslims are numerically in majority should be grouped to **constitute Independent State.**"
- The League resolved that the **British government** before leaving India should effect the partition of the country into **Indian union** and **Pakistan**.

Direct Action Day

- **Hindu communalism** and **Muslim communalism** fed on each other throughout the early 1940s.
- Muslim League openly boycotted the **Quit India movement of 1942**.
- In the **elections held in 1946 to the Constituent Assembly**, Muslim League won all 30 seats reserved for Muslims in the Central Legislative Assembly and most of the reserved provincial seats as well.
- **The Congress Party** was successful in gathering most of the general electorate seats, but it could no longer effectively insist that it spoke for the entire population of British India.
- In 1946 Secretary of State **Pethick- Lawrence** led a **three-member Cabinet Mission** to **New Delhi** with the hope of resolving the **Congress-Muslim League** deadlock and, thus, of transferring **British power to a single Indian administration**.
- **Cripps** was primarily responsible for **drafting the Cabinet Mission Plan**.
- The plan proposed a three-tier federation for India, integrated by a central government in Delhi, which would be limited to handling foreign affairs, communications, defence, and only those finances required to take care of union matters.
- **The subcontinent** was to be divided into **three major groups** of provinces:
- **Group A**, to include the **Hindu-majority provinces** of the **Bombay Presidency, Madras Presidency, the United Provinces, Bihar, Orissa, and the Central Provinces**;
- **Group B**, to contain the **Muslim-majority provinces** of the **Punjab, Sind, the North-West Frontier, and Baluchistan**; and
- **Group C**, to include the **Muslim-majority Bengal** and the **Hindu majority Assam**.
- The group governments were to be autonomous in everything excepting in matters reserved to the centre.
- **The princely states** within each group were to be integrated later into their neighbouring provinces.
- **Local provincial governments** were to have the choice of opting out of the group in which they found themselves, should a majority of their people desire to do so.
- **Jinnah** accepted the **Cabinet Mission's proposal**, as did the **Congress leaders**.
- But after several weeks of behind-the-scene negotiations, on July 29, 1946, the Muslim League adopted a resolution rejecting the Cabinet Mission Plan and called upon the Muslims throughout India to observe a '**Direct Action Day**' in protest on August 16.
- **The rioting and killing** that took place for four days in **Calcutta** led to a terrible violence resulting in **thousands of deaths**.

- Gandhi who was until then resisting any effort to vivisection the country had to accede to the demand of the **Muslim League for creation of Pakistan**.
- **Mountbatten** who succeeded **Wavell** came to **India as Viceroy** to effect the partition plan and transfer of power representing **Hinduism** and **Wahabi** and **Khilafat movements representing Islam**.
- **Hindu nationalism, Muslim nationalism and secular nationalism** competed with each other to politicise the people in their fight against British colonialism.
- **Cow Protection Associations** and their attempt to prevent killing of cows led to riots and **spread of communalism**.
- Use of **religion in politics** and its fallout in north India created estrangement between Hindus and Muslims.
- **Government's encouragement of communalisation** of politics resulted in the formation of **All India Muslim League**.
- The granting of separate electorate to Muslims encouraged it further to demand a separate state for Muslims.
- **Campaigns of Hindu Mahasabha for a Hindu Rashtra** contributed to a total estrangement between Hindus and Muslims.
- The latter celebrated the **resignation of Congress ministries** in provinces in the wake of **Second World War** as a day of deliverance.
- Jinnah's obstinacy in arriving at a settlement based on **Cabinet Mission Plan** and his call for **Direct Action Day in 1946** led to a **civil war** like situation in Calcutta, ending in the partition of the country into **India and Pakistan**.