

Role of extremists essay sample



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During the 1916 Congress session at Lucknow two major events occurred. The divided Congress became united. An understanding for joint action against the British was reached between the Congress and the Muslim League and it was called the Lucknow Pact. The signing of the Lucknow Pact by the Congress and the Muslim League in 1916 marked an important step in the Hindu-Muslim unity. The Home Rule Movement (1916)

Two Home Rule Leagues were established, one by B. G. Tilak at Poona in April 1916 and the other by Mrs. Annie Besant at Madras in September 1916. The aim of the Movement was to get selfgovernment for India within the British Empire. It believed freedom was the natural right of all nations.

Moreover, the leaders of the Home Movement thought that India's resources were not being used for her needs. The two Leagues cooperated with each other as well with the Congress and the Muslim League in putting their demand for home rule. While Tilak's Movement concentrated on Maharashtra, Annie Besant's Movement covered the rest of the country.

The Home Rule Movement had brought a new life in the national movement. There was a revival of Swadeshi. Women joined in larger numbers. On 20 August 1917, Montague, the Secretary of State in England, made a declaration in the Parliament of England on British Government's policy towards future political reforms in India. He promised the gradual development of self-governing institutions in India. This August Declaration led to the end of the Home Rule Movement. Revolutionary Movements

In the first half of the 20th century, revolutionary groups sprang up mainly in Bengal, Maharashtra, Punjab and Madras. The revolutionaries were not

satisfied with the methods of both the moderates and extremists. Hence, they started many revolutionary secret organizations.

In Bengal Anusilan Samiti and Jugantar were established. In Maharashtra Savarkar brothers had set up Abhinava Bharat. In the Madras Presidency, Bharathmatha Association was started by Nilakanta Bramachari. In Punjab Ajit Singh set up a secret society to spread revolutionary ideas among the youth.

In London, at India House, Shyamji Krishna Verma gathered young Indian nationalists like Madan Lal Dhingra, Savarkar, V. V. S. Iyer and T. S. S. Rajan. Lala Hardyal set up the ‘ Ghadar Party’ in USA to organise revolutionary activities from outside India.

Indian National Movement (1905 – 1916)

The period from 1905 was known as the era of extremism in the Indian National Movement. The extremists or the aggressive nationalists believed that success could be achieved through bold means. The important extremist leaders were Lala Lajpat Rai, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal and Aurobindo Ghosh. Causes for the Rise of Extremism

The failure of the Moderates to win any notable success other than the expansion of the legislative councils by the Indian Councils Act (1892). The famine and plague of 1896-97 which affected the whole country and the suffering of the masses. The economic conditions of the people became worse. The ill-treatment of Indians in South Africa on the basis of colour of skin. The Russo-Japanese war of 1904 – 05 in which Japan defeated the

European power Russia. This encouraged Indians to fight against the European nation, Britain. The immediate cause for the rise of extremism was the reactionary rule of Lord Curzon: He passed the Calcutta Corporation Act, (1899) reducing the Indian control of this local body. The Universities Act (1904) reduced the elected members in the University bodies. It also reduced the autonomy of the universities and made them government departments. The Sedition Act and the Official Secrets Act reduced the freedoms of all people. His worst measure was the Partition of Bengal (1905).

Main Objective of Extremists

Their main objective was to attain Swaraj or complete independence and not just self-government. Methods of the Extremists The Extremists had no faith in the British sense of justice and fair play. They pointed out the forceful means by which the British had taken control of India. They believed that political rights will have to be fought for. They had the spirit of self-reliance and self determination.

The methods used by the extremists were:

Not cooperating with the British Government by boycotting government courts, schools and colleges. Promotion of Swadeshi and boycott of foreign goods.

Introduction and promotion of national education.

Leaders of the Extremists

Bal Gangadhar Tilak The extremists were led by Bala Gangadhar Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai, Bipinchandra Pal and Aurobindo Ghosh.

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Swaraj is my birth-right and I will have it. Bal Gangadhar Tilak is regarded as the real founder of the popular anti-British movement in India. He was known as 'Lokamanya'. He attacked the British through his weeklies The Mahratta and the Kesari. He was jailed twice by the British for his nationalist activities and in 1908 deported to Mandalay for six years. He set up the Home Rule League in 1916 at Poona and declared "Swaraj is my birth-right and I will have it". Lala Lajpat Rai is popularly known as the 'Lion of Punjab'. He played an important role in the Swadeshi Movement. He founded the Indian Home Rule League in the US in 1916. He was deported to Mandalay on the ground of sedition. He received fatal injuries while leading a procession against the Simon Commission and died on November 17, 1928.

Bipan Chandra Pal began his career as a moderate and turned an extremist. He played an important role in the Swadeshi Movement. He preached nationalism through the nook and corner of India by his powerful speeches and writings.

Aurobinda Ghosh was another extremist leader and he actively participated in the Swadeshi Movement. He was also imprisoned. After his release he settled in the French territory of Pondicherry and concentrated on spiritual activities. Partition of Bengal and the Rise of Extremism The partition of Bengal in 1905 provided a spark for the rise of extremism in the Indian National Movement. Curzon's real motives were Aurobinda Ghosh To break the growing strength of Bengali nationalism since Bengal was the base of Indian nationalism. To divide the Hindus and Muslims in Bengal. To show the enormous power of the British Government in doing whatever it liked. On the same day when the partition came into effect, 16 October 1905, the people

of Bengal organised protest meetings and observed a day of mourning. The whole political life of Bengal underwent a change.

Dadabhai Naoroji Gandhi wrote that the real awakening in India took place only after the Partition of Bengal. The anti-partition movement culminated into the Swadeshi Movement and spread to other parts of India. The aggressive nationalists forced Dadabhai Naoroji to speak of Swaraj (which was not a Moderate demand) in the Calcutta Session of Congress in 1906.

They adopted the resolutions of Boycott and Swadeshi. The Moderate Congressmen were unhappy. They wanted Swaraj to be achieved through constitutional methods. The differences led to a split in the Congress at the Surat session in 1907. This is popularly known as the famous Surat Split.

The extremists came out of the Congress led by Tilak and others. Swadeshi Movement The Swadeshi Movement involved programmes like the boycott of government service, courts, schools and colleges and of foreign goods, promotion of Swadeshi goods, Promotion of National Education through the establishment of national schools and colleges. It was both a political and economic movement. The Swadeshi Movement was a great success. In Bengal, even the landlords joined the movement. The women and students took to picketing. Students refused using books made of foreign paper. The government adopted several tough measures. It passed several Acts to crush the movement.

The Swadeshi volunteers were beaten badly. The cry of Vande Mataram was forbidden. Schools and colleges were warned not to allow their students to take part in the movement or else their aid would be stopped. Some Indian

government employees lost their jobs. Extremist leaders Bala Gangadhar Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai, Bipin Chandra Pal and Aurobindo Ghosh were imprisoned and deported. Achievements of Extremists

The achievements of extremists can be summed up as follows:

They were the first to demand Swaraj as a matter of birth right. They involved the masses in the freedom struggle and broadened the social base of the National Movement. They were the first to organize an all-India political movement, viz. the Swadeshi Movement. Formation of the Muslim League (1906)

In December 1906, Muslim delegates from all over India met at Dacca for the Muslim Educational Conference. Taking advantage of this occasion, Nawab Salimullah of Dacca proposed the setting up of an organisation to look after the Muslim interests. The proposal was accepted.

The All-India Muslim League was finally set up on December 30, 1906. Like the Indian National Congress, they conducted annual sessions and put their demands to the British government. Initially, they enjoyed the support of the British. Their first achievement was the separate electorates for the Muslims in the Minto-Morley reforms.