

Origin of Indian National Congress



THE FIRST INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS, 1885.

Program: B.A. Honours

Subject: History

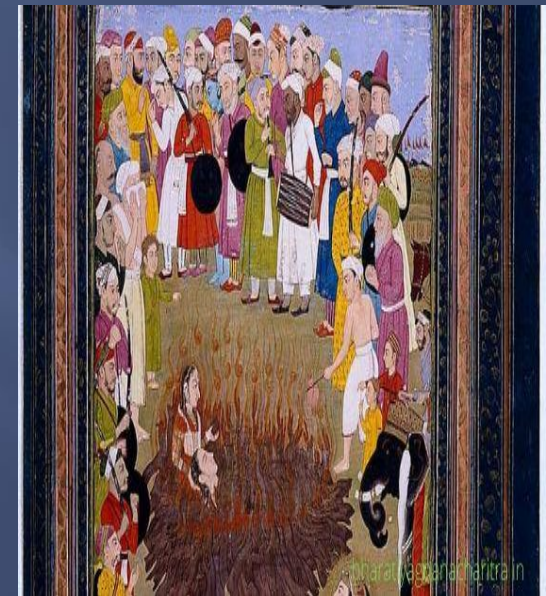
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Political Background before Origin of INC

- ❑ The foundation of the Indian National Congress came as a culmination of a series of unfortunate events going back to the 1860's.
- ❑ The Indian Sub-continent was subject to recurrent famines during the 1860's and 1870's, which brought about large scale deaths caused by starvation as well as wreaked havoc on the purchasing power of the local population.
- ❑ Colonial legislation also contributed to the highest degree to the widening gulf between the inhabitants of India and the British Colonial Government in post-Revolt era.
- ❑ The defeat of the Ilbert Bill, among other reasons, made the Indians realize, for the first time, the fact that sporadic efforts of individuals were useless as well as fruitless; hence, they learnt the importance and value of organization. This was an important factor that led to the establishment of the first organized nationwide political party speaking one voice, and representing the whole inhabitants of India

Brahmo Samaj

- The Brahmo Samaj founded by Raja Mohan Roy was an attempt to express religious life and thought afresh in the assimilation of some of the ideas and usages presented by the West. The Brahmo Samaj or the Society of God was founded in 1828 by Raja Ram Mohan Roy.
- Raja Ram Mohan Roy served the East India Company for a number of years. He was a critic of the unjust actions and policies of the British Government in India. He protested against the curbs on the freedom of the press.
- He is remembered for his help in the **abolition of sati** and in modernization of educational practices. It was due to the efforts of Raja Ram Mohan Roy that Lord William Bentinck abolished sati system in 1829 by declaring it an offence.



Arya Samaj

- ❑ Swami Dayanand Saraswati was perhaps the first to preach about the spirit of Swadeshi and to claim the principle of India for the Indians.
- ❑ The Arya Samaj was founded by Swami Dayanand Saraswati who was a Hindu revivalist. He wanted to reform Hinduism on the basis of the Vedas. Born in an orthodox Brahmin family of Gujarat, he became a sanyasi.
- ❑ After his death in 1883, his work was carried on by such great men as Mahatma Hans Raj and Lala Lajpat Rai. This movement for instilling pride of their religion and self-confidence in themselves, paved way for the rise of a national movement against the British Rule in India Arya samaj was a deliberate turned aside from western to re-order Hindu life and religion so as to save it from falling in to the hands of the Western influences.



Rama Krishna Mission

- Ramakrishna Mission was established by Vivekananda in 1896. In order to achieve these aims, Vivekananda organized his disciples into an order (Ramakrishna Mission).
- The Belur math, near Calcutta was then centre of the activities of the Mission.
- The vision and mission of Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission is best described in the words of its great founder Swami Vivekananda —
- *“My ideal indeed can be put into few words and that is: to preach unto mankind their divinity and how to make it manifest in every movement in life”.*



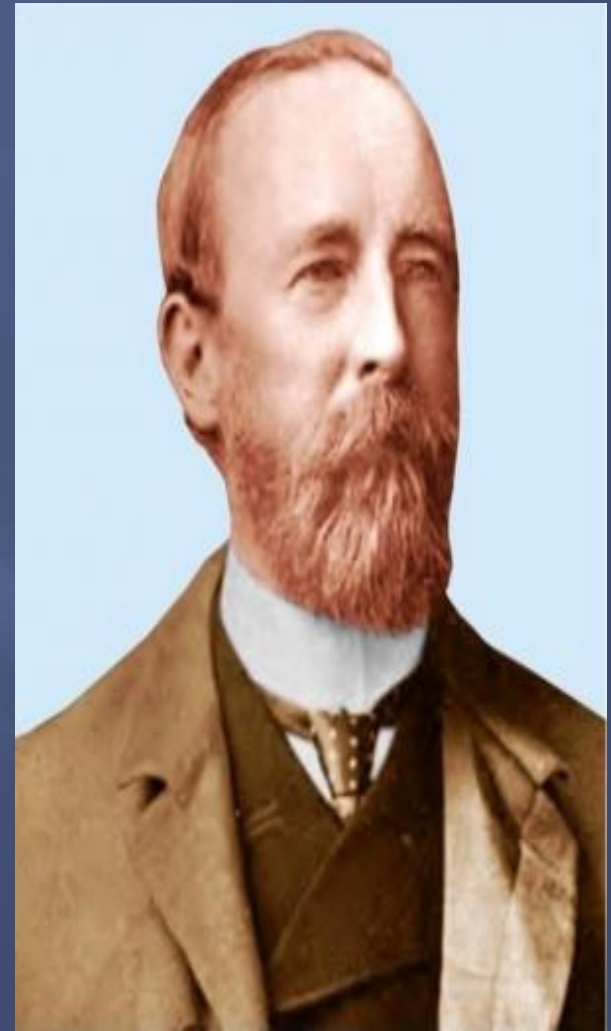
Associations prior to Indian National Congress

- ❑ **The Zamindari Association**, which was later renamed **Landholders' Society**, was established in 1838 by Dwarkanath Tagore, Prasanna Kumar Tagore, Radhakanta Deb, Ramkamal Sen and Bhabani Charan Mitra. It has been described as the first organisation of Bengal with distinct political object.
- ❑ **The Bengal British India Society** was formed in 1843 to protest the interests of general public.
- ❑ Both these organizations merged in 1851 to form **the British India Association** of Bengal. These organizations were provincial in character and lacked national outlook.
- ❑ The East Indian Association was organised by Dadabhai Naoroji in 1866 in London to discuss the Indian question and to influence British public men to promote Indian welfare. Later he organised branches of the Association in prominent Indian cities

- The Poona Sarvajanik Sabha was founded in 1870 by Mahadeo Govind Ranade and others, with the object of serving as a bridge between the Government on the one hand and the people on the other.
- In 1875, the Indian League was founded in Bengal by Sisir Kumar Ghose because prominent political leaders felt that they needed an All India organization to promote a sense of nationalism among the people.
- The Indian Association founded by Surendranath Banerjee and Ananda Mohan Bose in 1876 superseded the Indian League.
- In 1884, the Madras Mahajan Sabha was founded by M. Viraraghavachari, B. Subramaniya Aiyer and P. Anandacharlu.
- The Bombay Presidency Association was started by Badruddin Tyabji, Pherozshah Mehta and K.T. Telang in 1885.

Establishment of INC

- ❑ One of the most important political developments in the country was the birth of Indian National Congress. It is the oldest party of India.
- ❑ It was founded in 1885 to organize constructive and sane nationalism in the country. It has been suggested that the idea was originally conceived in a private meeting of seventeen men after a Theosophical Convention held at Madras in December 1884.
- ❑ The idea was born first in Lord Dufferin's brain and it was launched by an English man **Allan Octavian Hume**, with the sole purpose of serving as a platform for ventilation of grievances and obtaining greater privileges from the British government.



A. O. Hume

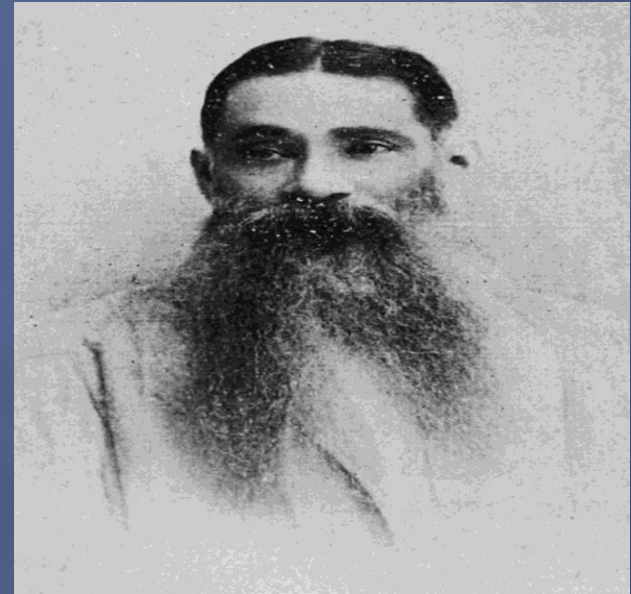
•It was in March 1885 that the first notice was issued convening the first Indian National Union to meet at Poona the following December. but due to a plague outbreak there, the meeting was later shifted to Bombay. The first session of the INC was held at Gokuldas Tejpal Sanskrit College in Bombay, from **28–31 December 1885**, and was attended by 72 delegates.

•Hume assumed office as the General Secretary, and **Womesh Chandra Banerjee** of Calcutta was elected President. Besides Hume, two additional British members both Scottish civil servants were members of the founding group, William Wedderburn and Justice later, Sir John Jardine. The other members were mostly Hindus from the Bombay and Madras Presidencies.



- Founded in 1885 with the objective of obtaining a greater share in government for educated Indians, the Indian National Congress was initially not opposed to British rule.

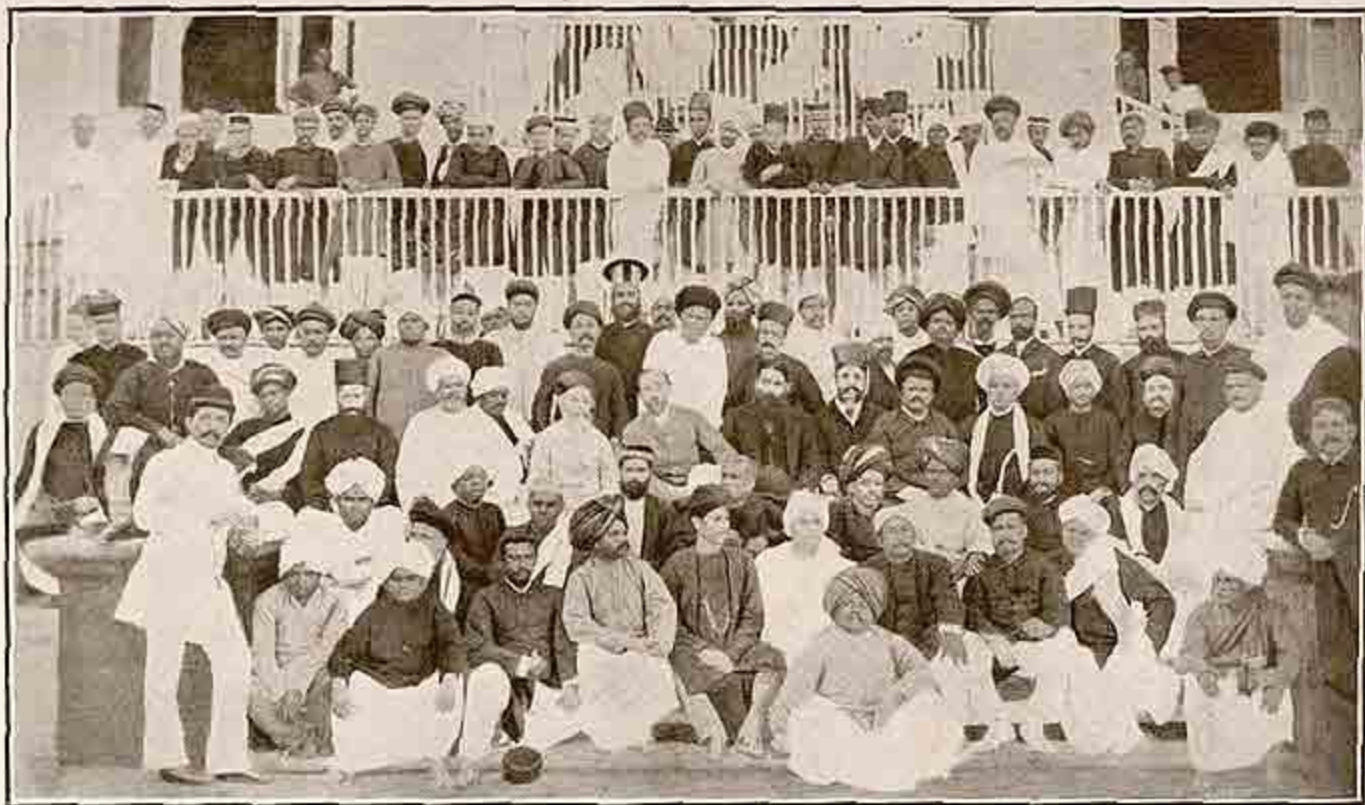
- Some of the great presidents of the congress during the early phase were Dadabhai Naoroji (elected thrice), Badruddin Tyabji, Pherozshah Mehta, P. Anandacharlu, Surendranath Banerjea, Romesh Chandra Dutt, Ananda Mohan Bose and Gopal Krishna Gokhale.



W. C. Banerjee



Dadabhai Naoroji



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Safety Valve Theory

- ❑ There is a theory that Hume formed the Congress with the idea that it would prove to be a 'safety valve' for releasing the growing discontent of the Indians. To this end, he convinced Lord Dufferin not to obstruct the formation of the Congress.
- ❑ The extremist leaders like Lala Lajpat Rai believed in the 'safety valve' theory. Even the Marxist historian's 'conspiracy theory' was an offspring of the 'safety valve' notion.
- ❑ The safety valve theory is, however, a small part of the truth. This theory has been discarded now. Modern Indian historians dispute the idea of 'safety valve'. In their opinion the Indian National Congress represented the urge of the politically conscious Indians to set up a national body to express the political and economic demands of the Indians. Historian Bipan Chandra observes early Congress leaders used Hume as a catalyst to bring together.

Early Objectives of INC

- ❑ To lay the foundations of a secular and democratic national movement.
- ❑ To politicize and politically educate the people
- ❑ To form the headquarters of the movement that is to form an all-India leadership group
- ❑ To increase awareness about the colonial exploitative policies the political rights of Indians.
- ❑ To demand increasing representation in councils, Indianization of civil services etc.
- ❑ To develop and propagate an anti-colonial nationalist ideology;
- ❑ To Promote friendly relations among nationalist political workers from different parts of the country.
- ❑ To formulate and present popular demands before the government with a view to unifying the people over a common economic and political programme.
- ❑ To develop and consolidate a feeling of national unity among people irrespective of religion, caste or province.

Basic Ideology of INC

- ❑ The elements of socialism, liberalism, Gandhism, conservatism form the objective tradition of Congress thought.
- ❑ In its first place, i.e., before 1920, the Congress ideology was influenced more by Western thought currents than the Indian philosophy.
- ❑ During the early days of Congress the influence of the liberal writers like Milton, Burke, J.S. Mill, Macaulay, Spencer etc., was the dominant factor in the development of its ideology.

Importance of INC

- ❑ The birth of Indian National Congress marked an important historical event in the growth of political consciousness and popular resistance in the country. At first, there was only a movement of protest and revolt.
- ❑ A feeling of discontent was developing in the country and the founding of Indian National Congress in 1885 provided an outlet to it.
- ❑ The protest movement had lacked organization and Congress provided it with unified leadership and soon it became the spearhead of nationalist movement.
- ❑ It was the only cementing political factor which unified people from different parts of the country and set a common objective before them. It gave representation to the people of different parts of India belonging to different walks of life. National Congress attempted to fulfill their hope and aspirations.
- ❑ From its foundation on 28 December 1885 until the time of independence of India on August 15, 1947, the Indian National Congress was the largest and most prominent Indian public organization, and central and defining influence of the Indian Independence Movement.

Thank you

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