

Quadrant II – Transcript and related materials

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HSC 105 – Moderate Phase: Methods and Issues

The question that springs to mind is what do you mean by moderates?

The Indian National Congress founded in then Bombay in 1885. It's initial phase was known as Moderate Phase. The early congressmen who dominated affairs of the Indian National Congress from 1885 to 1905 were known as the Moderates. Some of the Moderate leaders were Womesh Chandra Banerjee, Surendranath Banerjee and others.

A brief background about the conditions in India

- Lack of industrialization
- Agriculture in pathetic state
- Lack of Indians in the public service
- India was plagued by famines
- Lack of all India political consciousness
- Growing poverty among Indians

Though Industrial Revolution had made headway in Europe for years, India was still backward. The colonial rulers had made grand promises after the Revolt of 1857. However, there were no big industries worth the name. A few coal mines, iron and steel industries and tea plantations dotted the industrial set up. The conditions of the workers were pathetic. Men, women and children worked for long hours in unhygienic and unsafe conditions.

The agriculture sector was facing a crisis. Most of the top posts in the government were held by the Britishers. Indians had to travel to London to answer civil service exams. During the British rule, there were frequent famines. As a result lakhs of people died. Education system urgently needed reform. People were lacking national political consciousness. To top it all, there was growing poverty among Indians)

Methods of the Moderates

They relied upon the solemn pledges given by the British government to the people of India. For progress, they believed upon constitutional agitation.

Methods

Prayer

Petitions

Requests

Educate the people

Arouse national political consciousness

(as said earlier Indians were lacking political consciousness on a national scale)

Create a united public opinion among Indians spread in the breadth and corner of the country.

Action plan

Organised meetings all over the country.

Criticised the government through the press. (Well, you may know that India had a robust press which was regularly gagged by the colonial government)

Drafted and submitted memorials and petitions to the government and the British Parliament

Prayed that the expenditure on the military may be reduced (large amounts be spent in promoting the welfare and progress of the people.

Success

- Organised a powerful all India agitation against the abandonment of tariff duties on imports and against the imposition of cotton excise duties.
- Carried on agitation for reduction of heavy land revenue payments.
- Urged the government to give cheap loans to the government
- Improvement of conditions of work in the plantation labourers.
- Reform in the existing pattern of taxation

Critical overview

There are some who say that the moderates failed to keep pace with the yearnings and aspirations of the people

They failed to understand the impatience and sufferings of the people under foreign rule

That the British would not give up their rights and privileges without a fight.

They failed to acquire roots among the common people.

The resolutions of the Congress passed year after year had no effect on the government.

Conclusion

This agitation aroused the feeling of the people and helped them to realize the real aims and purposes of British rule in India.

They worked for all sections of the Indian people and represented nation-wide interests against colonial exploitation.

They set a platform for later mass agitations against the British rule.