



SALTORA NETAJI CENTENARY COLLEGE
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

SEMESTER –IV

COURSE CODE: AHHST 403 C-10

COURSE TITLE: HISTORY OF INDIA (1757-1885)

TOPIC: CABINET MISSION (1946)

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Introduction

From the time of the Shimla Conference, and more particularly after the revolt of Royal Indian Navy, it became evident to the British government that independence to India could no longer be withheld. On the day following, the revolt of the Royal Indian Navy, i.e., 19th February, 1946, Prime Minister, Clement Attlee declared in the Parliament his decision to send three ministers of the British Cabinet to hold discussions with the Indian leaders to evolve some means for the constitutional reforms of India. This is commonly known as the Cabinet Mission.

Preparation

Pursuant to the declaration of February 19, 1946, Clement Attlee, sent Lord Pathick Lawrence, Sir Stafford Cripps, Mr. Alexander , to India on March 23, 1946. No united demand could be placed before the Cabinet Mission, due to the opposition of Jinnah and his Muslim League. The Cabinet Mission ultimately rejected Jinnah's demand for Pakistan and even observed that Pakistan demand was prejudicial from the point of view of the Muslim minorities. For, if transport, communication, railways, telegraphs etc., were divided, the progress of India would be retarded. Likewise, division of the army into two parts would be dangerous.

Provisions of the Cabinet Mission

The Cabinet Mission put forward a plan with the following provisions:

1. There would be an all-India federation, and the provinces would enjoy self government.
2. The Indian provinces would be divided into three categories. The Hindu majority provinces would be in category “A”, Muslim majority provinces in category B”, and Bengal and Assam would be in category “C”.
3. The mode of election of the members to the Constituent Assembly provided in the plan was very complex.
4. An Interim Government would be formed till such time that the constitution was drawn, with the representatives of the major political parties of the country.

Criticism

This was a very complex arrangement no doubt, but considering the complexities of the situation at that time, there was no other alternative. The plan was an attempt by the Cabinet Mission to effect a harmony between the demands of the Congress and Muslim League. The Congress did not agree to join the Interim government but accepted the other part of the plan. Jinnah finding that the Pakistan plan had been indirectly accepted, he further demanded that in absence of the Congress, the Muslim League should be unilaterally allowed to form the interim government. But Lord Wavell did not agree to form an interim government unless the Congress agreed to join it. This came as a damper to the Muslim League enthusiasm and it rejected the plan as a whole and threatened direct action.

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THANK YOU