

British Reaction to Growth of Radical Nationalism (1883–1911)

Background

During the late 19th century, educated Indians started realizing that British rule was exploiting India's economy and resources. The formation of the Indian National Congress in 1885 gave Indians a platform to voice their concerns, but the moderate leaders' polite petitions and loyal approach brought limited results.

Rise of Radical Nationalism

By the early 1900s, frustration grew among younger leaders who believed that only strong actions could bring change. Radical leaders like Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai, and Bipin Chandra Pal encouraged Indians to demand *Swaraj* (self-rule). They promoted the *Swadeshi Movement* and the boycott of British goods, urging people to rely on Indian-made products.

British Reaction

The British became alarmed by the growing unity and nationalist spirit. To control this, they used the policy of *Divide and Rule*, promoting communal differences between Hindus and Muslims. The 1909 *Morley-Minto Reforms* introduced separate electorates to weaken Indian unity.

Repressive Actions

The British began arresting radical leaders, banning newspapers, and censoring speeches. Police surveillance increased, and meetings were restricted. The *Partition of Bengal (1905)* was another tool to divide Hindus and Muslims, causing anger across the country.

Outcome and Impact

Despite the harsh response, the movement became stronger. The radicals' ideas inspired future generations and made nationalism a mass movement. The period between 1883 and 1911 was crucial—it awakened India politically and emotionally, setting the stage for later struggles for independence.