

# **CRIPPS MISSION**

## **INTRODUCTION**

World War-II began in 1939. In war, Na zi Germany and Fascist Italy combined against France, Britain and their allies. With the outbreak of hostilities, Britain made India as a party to it, declaring India to be a country at war. Britain made such a declaration unilaterally in utter disregard to the Indian Public Opinion. In protest against such an action, the Congress resigned the office (in the provinces).

## **WHY WAS CRIPPS MISSION SENT TO INDIA?**

Because of the reverses suffered by Britain in South-East Asia, the Japanese threat to invade India seemed real now and Indian support became crucial.

There was pressure on Britain from Allies (USSR, USA and China) to seek Indian cooperation.

Indian nationalists had agreed to support the Allied powers if the power was transferred immediately and complete independence given after the war.]

The British government, after careful consideration sent Cripps, a brilliant lawyer, a socialist and an intimate friend of Nehru to India. Cripps had long been a serious student of the Indian question and had the reputation of being favourably disposed to Indian aspirations.

## **MAIN PROPOSALS**

Cripps spent three weeks in India and after hectic activities and prolonged discussions, announced his proposals in the form of Draft Declaration on 30<sup>th</sup> March, 1942. It proposed:

The goal of India was to be attainment of Dominion Status.

The Indians were to be given the right to frame the Dominion Constitution after the War.

The Constitution-making body would constitute elected members from the British territories as also the representatives for the Native states.

Any province or state would have the right to reject the Constitution.

For the present, the British government was to continue as before. The responsibility for the security and defence of India was to be retained by the British Government.

## **DEPARTURE FROM THE PAST PROPOSALS**

The proposals differed from those offered in the past in many respects:

The making of the Constitution was to be solely in Indian hands and not 'mainly' in Indian hands as contained in the August offer.

A concrete plan was provided for the constituent assembly.

Option was available to any province to have a separate constitution—a blue print for India's partition.

Free India could withdraw from commonwealth.

Indians were allowed a large share in the administration in the interim period.

### **FAILURE OF CRIPPS MISSION**

The Cripps Mission proposals failed to satisfy Indian nationalists and turned out to be merely propaganda device for USA and Chinese consumption. Various parties and groups had objected the proposal on different grounds.

### **OBJECTIONS BY CONGRESS**

The offer of Dominion Status instead of provision for complete independence.

Representation of the state by nominees and not by elected representatives.

Right to provinces to part as this was against the principles of national unity.

Absence of any plan for immediate transfer of power and absence of any share in defence.

### **OBJECTIONS BY MUSLIM LEAGUE**

Muslim League opposed the creation of Single Indian Union.

League did not like the machinery for the creation of a Constituent Assembly and the procedure to decide on the accession of provinces to the union.

Muslim League thought that the proposal denied the creation of Pakistan.

### **OBJECTIONS BY HINDU MAHASABA**

It opposed the freedom given in proposal to the provinces to join or leave Indian Union and set up separate government of their own.

The Sabha also objected votes on the basis of Communalism as it was against to the democracy and secularism.

**THE SIKHS:** They objected that the partition would take away Punjab from them.

**THE DEPRESSED CLASS:** They thought that partition would leave them at the mercy of the Upper Caste Hindus.

Stafford Cripps returned home leaving behind a frustrated and embittered Indians, who though still sympathising with the victims of Fascist aggression, felt that the existing situation in the country had become intolerable and that the time had come to have a final struggle for complete independence.