ADVENT OF
INDEPENDENCE

BY

A. K. MAJUMDAR

WITH A FOREWORD

BY

K. M. MUNSHI

1963

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FOREWORD

For a long time I had been planning to publish the various documents — to my mind, of great national importance — relating to the activities of the Constituent Assembly, which I had preserved and donated to the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan. A generous loan from the Government of India and a substantial grant from the Asia Foundation have now enabled the Bhavan to undertake their publication.

The proposed work, to be styled *Indian Constitutional Documents*, (*Munshi Papers*) is being edited by a Committee consisting of Shri N. H. Bhagwati and Shri T. L. Venkatarama Aiyar (both retired Judges of the Supreme Court of India), and Shri Alladi Kuppuswami, with myself as the chairman, assisted by Shri R. Gopalakrishnan, Advocate, and Shri V. G. Ramachandran of the Indian Law Institute. We expect this work to be published in two or more volumes during 1964-5.

When the publication of the "*Indian Constitutional Documents*" was undertaken, the Bhavan also decided to publish the present work as a historical introduction. This work brings together material incidents leading to the convening of the Constituent Assembly, found in recent works not accessible to Indian readers. The author has also made use of important documents, letters and interviews, which have not found their way in published works so far.

The work primarily deals with the transfer of power from British to Indian hands, as also with the early stages of the Constituent Assembly with which I was actively associated. It is, therefore, somewhat embarrassing for me to write a foreword to a work in which one's action is described and to a certain extent commented upon.

The Partition of Bengal, the Congress split at Surat, the Jallianwallabagh massacre, the Partition and its aftermath, the integration of the country, the emergence of the Constitution, might appear to the present generation of readers as historical events; to us, they are part of our life. Whatever, therefore, I may write on this phase of our history is bound to be coloured by subjective outlook.

It has been my good fortune to have known most of the great personalities who dominated the political scene in India from 1914

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onwards. Of them, my relations were fairly intimate with Shri M. A. Jinnah from 1915 to 1929, and with Mahatma Gandhi and Sardar Patel from 1929 to the time of their death.

In passing, I may mention that I cannot imagine a greater contrast than between Shri Jinnah with his hard-headed pragmatism and Gandhiji of flaming ideals. However, in spite of difference in gifts and outlook, they had one thing in common : neither of them would rest content till he dominated the scene. In the nature of things, therefore, it was impossible for them to work together, and as things were, all our political progress for several decades remained conditional upon their agreement. The result was the vivisection of India, to prevent which I had left the Congress in 1941 and with Gandhiji's blessings, started the Akhand Hindustan movement.

* * *

The future historians would probably hold public men of our generation answerable for the Partition. They will probably want to know why Partition was accepted. However, under the circumstances prevailing at the time, it was the only possible solution. As I said, I parted from the Congress in 1941 and worked for Akhand Hindustan. I shed tears when Partition threatened to become a reality. Gandhiji once said that 'only over my dead body' the partition will come. Sardar Patel was also determined to resist it.

I have tersely summarised the position at the time, as I have explained in my letter to the author published in the Appendix:

> In 1947, I think, both Sardar and myself were the guests of G. D. Birla at New Delhi. Whenever Sardar was in a mood, in the course of our daily walks, he used to talk to me of some of the problems which were uppermost in his mind. One day, while talking, he began to tease me: 'Well Akhand Hindustani, we are now going to divide India.' He had come from some conference. I was naturally shocked, because he was all along very strongly opposed to partition and used to criticise Rajaji bitterly for his pro-partition views. Then he fell to convincing me that he was right.
>
> So far as I remember, he strongly put forward two grounds: one was that the Congress being pledged to non-violence, it was not possible for it to resist partition. Resisting would mean the end of the Congress and a long struggle with the Muslim League through large-scale use of violence, with the British Government sitting tight over the country with its police and army. The second ground was that if partition were not accepted, there was bound to be a long-drawn-out communal strife in cities, in some rural areas, and even regiments and police forces would be torn by communal dissensions. If, therefore, such conflict was inevitable, the Hindus, being more disorganized and

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less fanatic might go under for want of a compact organization. If, on the other hand, the strife had to come, it would be best to deal with each other on the basis of organized governments, and perhaps it would be easy to come to a settlement as between two governments rather than as between two communities spread all over the country. By that time I had bitter experience of Hindu-Muslim riots, with the British officers having sympathy for the Muslims and the Hindus coming out very badly. With my knowledge of the Udaipur troops, I was doubtful whether even the armies which were maintained by the Indian rulers had the stamina to stop the communal orgies even in their States.

I remember this conversation very well, because it made me spend some sleepless nights, but at the end of it, after I had one or more discussions with him on this point, I felt convinced that the second ground was unanswerable

The wisdom of Sardar's view was brought home to me when I found that if there had been no partition, the Constituent Assembly, as envisaged by the Cabinet Mission Plan, would have led nowhere.

By that time I was feeling the difficulty of the Constituent Assembly running successfully if the communal manœuvres continued to beset it. Ingenuity had to be exercised to see that the Cabinet Mission Plan did not succed in ultimately placing millions of Hindus under Muslim rule. Even in drafting the Rules of the Constituent Assembly, therefore, I had to try to see that most matters of importance came before the General Assembly, where a decision could be taken by a majority vote, rather than the zonal Councils. And when the Muslim League decided on not joining the Constituent Assembly, we felt greatly relieved — a relief to which I gave expression in a speech in the Assembly.

On 14th July 1947, I said in the Constituent Assembly in course of a debate:

As a matter of fact, very often, if I may express my own sentiment, while examining the plan of May 16 over and over again, the plan looked to me more like the parricide's bag which was invented by ancient Roman law. As you know, under the ancient criminal law of Rome, when a man committed a very heinous crime he was tied up in a bag with a monkey, a snake and a cock, and the bag was thrown into the Tiber till it sank.

The more we saw the plan the more we found the minority struggling to get loose, the sections gnawing at the vitals and we had the double majority clause poisoning the very existence. Whatever other Members may feel, I feel— thank God — that we have got out of this bag at last. We have no sections and groups to go into, no elaborate procedure as was envisaged by it, no double majority clause, no more provinces with residuary powers, no opting out, no revision after ten years and no longer only four categories of powers for the centre.... We have now a homogeneous country though our frontiers have shrunk — let us hope only for the moment — and we can now look forward to going on unhesitatingly towards our cherished goal of strength and independence. And therefore the report that was submitted to the House had to be revised.....

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associating with a war of devastating brutality, and the miracle-worker that he was, his decision to launch the Quit-India movement, which immediately caught the imagination of the masses, left no scope for any second thought.

Today it is easy to speculate what would have happened if the Congress had accepted the Cripps offer. Perhaps India would have remained undivided. Perhaps she would have emerged through and after the War as a stronger nation. But this is all speculation. However, the national strength which India acquired through the Quit-India resistance movement would not have been there.

The day we achieved independence, I said: "No power in history but Great Britain would have conceded independence with such grace and no power but India would have so gracefully acknowledged the debt." For years I had kept no secret of my view, even at the cost of being misrepresented, that Dominion Status in the British Commonwealth would be better for India than independence. This has come true. And my faith in continued Indo-British relations has become stronger during the last sixteen years.

The author has rightly remarked in his Preface that in future Indians will remember the positive side of the British rule: the administrative unity and continuity which it gave to the country; the propulsion of an ancient land into the orbit of the modern world through English education and western contact; laying the firm foundation for the Rule of Law and for democratic freedom. If we suffered under the British rule, it was no more than the pain of progress which a nation has to pay for past ages of inertia.

Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan
New Delhi
December 4, 1963

K. M. MUNSHI.

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PREFACE

The present work forms a political introduction to the *Indian Constitutional Documents* (*Munshi Papers*,) a work which is soon going to be published in two volumes by the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan. It is intended to provide here in outline, the events leading to the formation of the Constituent Assembly of India in December 1946.

Though the period beginning from the Cripps Mission is directly relevant to to the study of the Indian Constitution, I have felt it necessary to trace the dynamics of the political forces, which led to various constitutional changes, from an earlier period. For obvious reasons, therefore, the year 1861 was taken as the starting point. In that year, the Indian Councils Act was passed at the instance of Sir Charles Wood, enabling Lord Canning to introduce three Indians to his Council. And it is interesting to recall that in 1947, Lord Halifax, the grandson of Sir Charles Wood, eloquently supported a measure which led to the enactment of the Indian Independence Act.

This remarkable change within three generations was the result of both evolution and revolution in almost every sphere of life in India. The present work, however, does not deal with most of them, and, one should not expect to find here a complete or even an abridged history of India for this period. For example, the part played by the revolutionaries in the nationalist movement has been practically left out, for they did not play any effective role during the transfer of power.

There is a positive aspect of the British rule in India, and with the passage of time, Indians will gratefully remember the great gifts of the British to India: the administrative unity, the modern army, navy and the air-force, and above all the introduction of the modern age to this sub-continent. None of these topics, however, could be dealt within the limited scope of the present work. On the other hand I had to single out for discussion possibly the worst traits of the British in India: their behaviour towards the Indians and their reaction to the latter's political aspirations.

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Lest there should be any mental confusion between the individual Englishman in India and the British in general, I have used the word 'Anglo-indian' for the former, who were known under that term possibly till the Montagu-Chelmsford Reform. Then they became 'Europeans' and the 'Eurasians' became Anglo-Indians, and the word 'Native' went out of use altogether. But circumspection was necessary lest I should offend the Anglo-Indian community, hence the peculiar spelling, Anglo-indian.

I need hardly add that all the Anglo-indians did not conform to the same type. Apart from Sir William Wedderburn and A. O. Hume, and several others, who either helped or were sympathetic to the nationalist movement, there were many who took up an Indian appointment as a career and discharged their duties efficiently and faithfully. But there were others too, whom a retired Indian member of the I. C. S., once described to me as 'Empire-builders'; many of the non-official British residents in India also belonged to this group, and it is to their activities that I have drawn attention in the following pages.

I wish a similar device could have been invented to relieve me from using the word 'Muslim'. In 1947, India became independent and was divided also, and the last phase of the negotiations becomes incomprehensible unless one delves into the history of Hindu-Muslim relations. This I had perforce to do, but whenever the term Muslim has been used, it should be taken in the sense of the communal Muslims of British India and not the patriotic Muslims of independent India.

Some of my conclusions regarding the Anglo-indians and the communal Muslims and the remarks aimed at them are based on certain hitherto unpublished documents which will be found in the appendices and should be read as an integral part of the text. The appendices have been classified under different headings, but as a letter usually deals with more than one subject, the reader is advised to read all the letters in the appendices.

It has been my privilege to have had interviews in connection with writing this book with Shri Jawaharlal Nehru, Lord Attlee and the late Lord Pethick-Lawrence; Mrs. Evamaria Brailsford and Mr. R. G. Sorensen provided me with important background information; and now it gives me great pleasure to express my gratitude to them, and to others, whom it has not been possible to mention here.

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PREFACE

It is, however, difficult to express adequately the debt I owe to Sri K. M. Munshi in the writing of this book. For exactly one decade he has allowed me to freely discuss with him all aspects of modern Indian politics and politicians. I felt that some of the incidents he narrated to me could be published only on his authority, so he has kindly obliged me by putting them in the form of a letter to me, which I feel to be one of the most important features of the present work. The opinions expressed here are, however, all mine, and I alone am responsible for all the imperfections of the present work.

Sir Winston Churchill once said during the war to those who were searching for scapegoats for British defeat: "If the present tries to sit in judgement on the past, it will lose the future." His wise saying agrees with the maxim of the Indian logicians that, one cannot sit on one's own shoulders. This ideal and this maxim I had constantly in mind while writing this book.

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ABBREVIATIONS

(For details see Bibliography)

C. C.	*Cross Correspondence.*
Foreign Relations	*Foreign Relations of the United States, Diplomatic Papers.*
H. C.	*Hamilton Correspondence.*
Menon	*The Transfer of Power in India* by V.P. Menon.
Menon, *States.*	*The Story of the Integration of the Indian States* by V. P. Menon.
Sitaramayya	*History of the Indian National Congress* by B. P. Sitaramayya.
Source Material	*Source Materials for a History of the Freedom Movement in India, Collected from Bombay Government Records.*

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

While writing history a verse from the *Isopanishad* readily comes to mind :

> With a golden bowl
> The truth's face is covered o'er;
> That thou O Pushan reveal
> For one who seeks the truth to see.[1]

The "Golden bowl" covers all history, but seems to have acquired a peculiar immobility in India. For example, when on August 15, 1947, England abdicated her sovereignty and paramountcy in India, she became free and selected Lord Mountbatten as the Governor-General. Commenting on this K. M. Munshi said : "No power in history but Great Britain would have conceded independence with such grace, and no power but India would have so gracefully acknowledged the debt." Rajendra Prasad's statement in the Constituent Assembly is more comprehensive but no less warm : "Let us gratefully acknowledge", he said on August 15, "while our achievement is in no small measure due to our own sufferings and sacrifices, it is also the result of world forces and events, and last though not least it is the consummation and fulfilment of the historic tradition and democratic ideals of the British race." On the same occasion Nehru said : "Long years ago we made a tryst with destiny, and now the time comes when we shall redeem our pledge, not wholly or in full measure, but very substantially. At the stroke of midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom. . . . We end today a period of ill fortune and India discovers herself again. . . ."

Thus on the dawn of independence Nehru felt it to be the result of inevitable causality which may be his view of all history. Rajendra Prasad tried to analyse the contributory causes of Indian independence, while Munshi saw in it transfer of power by Great Britain to India. It is not enough to say that each statement contains a grain of truth, or that possibly on that historic moment each of them had a vision of truth from their point of view. But between them

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tney articulated the feelings of the Indians on that day, which also saw the end of Indo-British hostility and the beginning of a period of friendship. This was as much due to the Indian's sense of gratitude as to the far-sighted statesmanship of Lord Attlee, Sir Stafford Cripps, Lord Pethick-Lawrence and Lord Mountbatten.

For them too it was the fulfilment of a movement that began almost from the beginning of British ascendancy in India. Indeed it has been claimed that Indo-British history is an example of the gradual development of the representative forms of Government. But as Cripps once put it : "The trouble is that, as always, it (a sympathetic British offer) is likely to come too late to save the situation."[2]

The "trouble" also originated in England, and from the beginning it was a question as to which view would prevail. That makes it difficult to sum up the history of the Indo-British relation without going into details, and further complications arise by the third British party : the British officials and businessmen in India, whom I have called Anglo-indians. They were as a body opposed to constitutional development and one of the reasons of the Labour Cabinet's success in solving the Indian question was due to their indifference to Anglo-indian opinion.

In India on August 15 there was only one party, the Congress; of the other parties, the Muslim League had also succeeded in redeeming their pledge, and the Princes, had ceased to exercise any effective political power, having been discarded by the British.

Thus, though on August 15, an Act passed by the British Parliament took effect, in reality it was the result of a compromise between the British, the Congress and Muslim League ; the Congress claimed victory over the Princes, while the Muslim League claimed the same over the Congress. The Congress had Labour Cabinet in England to help it in gaining its objective, the League had the blessings of the Tories and the Anglo-indians. Indeed the Tories may claim their share of applause for the Indian settlement for it was a message from Sir Winston Churchill to Jinnah which may have decided that implacable man to accept truncated Pakistan without the corridor.[3]

To understand the epilogue of the British hegemony in India, therefore, it is necessary to keep in mind these divergent elements and to have a general view of their past history.

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1. हिरण्मयेन पात्रेण सतस्यापिहितम् मुखम् ।
   तत्त्वम पुषाण अपावृणु सत्यधर्म्माय दृष्टये ॥
   Isa, 15, I have taken liberty in translating *satyadharmaya.*
2. Unpublished Nehru letter, 11, October, 1939; quoted by M. Brecher *Nehru, A Political Biography*, p. 282.
3. A Campbell-Johnson, *Mission with Mountbatten* p. 97.

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CHAPTER II

TWICE TOLD TALE

I

The British came to India as traders and they are still here as traders. In between they founded an empire in 1757 and ended it in 1947.

The empire passed through two phases, first under the East India Company from 1757 to 1858, and for the remaining period under the direct control of the British Parliament, or as it was known in India, Home Government. The latter term seems to be better, for the British Parliament ceased to take interest in Indian affairs after having brought the country under its control. But the constitutional development of India began in 1861, three years after the abrogation of the East India Company.

It is interesting to speculate as to whether the Act of 1861 would have been passed if the East India Company's rule had continued. The answer seems to be that something in the nature of the Act of 1861 was inevitable. For some time the Indians had been agitating for some sort of representation, though the opinion was divided. Raja Rammohan Roy, with his usual foresight, had warned his countrymen against an assembly where the Anglo-indians would be in an overwhelming majority; he therefore pressed for Indian representation in the British Parliament. In a sense the Raja was right : the Indians would need protection against the Anglo-indians, and the Parliament alone could give it. However, there was another party in India which unlike the spirited Raja was unwilling to cross the seven seas, and preferred representation in an Indian assembly. One of their arguments was sound : in England the Indian representative would be beyond the control of his countrymen.

It is of course assuming too much that the Indian agitation, mostly located in Calcutta, had decided the Home Government. But it certainly had some effect. At any rate it showed the Indians that, though the British could crush the Mutiny, results could be obtained if things were done in the approved British way, and their faith was confirmed when Lord Canning in 1862 appointed three Indians to his "Legislative Council".

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Lord Canning also introduced the "portfolio" system under the rules for transaction of business in the Executive Council, and thus introduced a nascent cabinet system of government.

The Queen's proclamation of 1857 assured the Indians that they were entitled to any office in the Government of India, so that henceforth the Indian political demand was concentrated on these points: greater share in law-making and converting the restricted legislative assembly into a Parliament and to have better facilities for joining the Indian Civil Service.

Actually, the British Indian Association of Calcutta (founded on October 29, 1851) had petitioned the Parliament in 1852, when the new Charter Act was under consideration, for the constitution of a Legislative Council composed of seventeen members including three representatives of the people and added that "until the people are considered qualified to exercise the right of electing their own delegates to the Legislative Council, the native members may be nominated by the Governor-General." The petition contained other demands, but the Act of 1861 must have comforted them with the thought that they had won a very important point, though they may have lost the others, for which further agitation was necessary.

II

We now have to go back a little, for the Biritish imperial historians see in the Indian Independence Act of 1947, the culmination of a process which had as its source the Englishman's faith in representative government. This process is broadly divided into two phases; in the first, from Lord North's Regulating Act of 1773 and Pitt's India Act of 1781 the successive Charter Acts up to 1853 sought to transfer the power and authority from the Company to Crown; in the second, while the Crown took care of India, power was gradually transferred from the British Parliament to the Indian Legislatures. In this process the germs of a law making body was sown in India when in 1833 a Law Member was added to the Governor-General's Council, which was expanded in 1852 to include a few additional members of whom two were judges. This council, it has been said showed signs of considering itself "the nucleus of a constitutional parliament", and Dalhousie may have helped to create the illusion by the issue of 136 standing orders and publishing public debates in a Hansard.

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Interesting developments might have resulted from this enlarged Council had it been given a fair trial. But Mutiny intervened, and swept it away along with many other things. However, Sir Charles Wood, who, as President of the Board of Control, had viewed with consternation the incipient parliament under Dalhousie, now became the Secretary of State, and accepted the advice of Sir Bartle Frere who had piloted bills through the existing Council, where, according to him, the judges did the mischief.[1] However, Frere added that the days were gone when India could be governed without taking into consideration the feelings of the "European and Europeanised community" and that the Government of India needed some "barometer and safety-valve in the shape of a deliberative council". He also urged that the new legislative bodies would make fatal mistakes unless they were assisted by Indian members.[2]

Canning agreed with Frere, and Wood accepted their views, with rather gloomy forebodings for the future. His difficulty was, as he explained to the House of Commons on June 6, 1861, that he could neither contemplate the Executive Government alone legislating for India nor could he visualize any method of selecting the real representatives of India. As he wrote to Frere on August 17, 1861: "The future government of India is a problem of the most serious import, utterly unexampled in history, and one of which it seems to me very difficult to foresee the progress".

In the House of Commons, A. H. Layard proposed that a few Indians should be members of the legislative council. Wood refused to make such a statutory provision but assured the House that some of the additional members would be Indians, and in 1862 Canning appointed three Indians as additional members of his Council. Canning, as we have seen, also introduced the "portfolio system" for the transaction of business in his Executive Council, introducing the seed of cabinet government. Thus the man who suppressed the Mutiny, also introduced the germs of modern government in India's body politic.

A peculiar feature of constitutional development in India has been its character of deferred instalment payment. During the regime of the East India Company, the instalments fell due every twenty years when their Charter had to be renewed by the Parliament. After 1858, there was no such compelling necessity yet the force of circums-

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tances changed the constitution of India at almost regular intervals : 1861, 1892, 1909, 1919, 1935 and 1947. This made the Indian constitutions somewhat ephemeral, like the French constitutions, so at least it seems in retrospect.

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III

The Indian Councils Act of 1892 owes its inception to Lord Dufferin whose role as the promoter of Congress will be discussed later. It is difficult to state his aim precisely, and it is possible that he himself was not sure of it himself. On April 26, 1886 in a letter to Lord Cross, the Secretary of State, he referred to the popular agitations and mentioned the "moderate" association formed by Sir Jotindra Mohan Tagore, who had no desire to embarrass the government, and added : "Beside them is a more violent and less respectable party, headed, as far as I can make out, by Mr. Surendranath Bannerjee, who is connected with a cleverly-conducted but vicious paper called the *Mirror*". Dufferin then denounced Surendranath and his party and recommended : "My own inclination would be to examine carefully and seriously the demands which are the outcome of these various movements, to give quickly and with a good grace whatever it may be possibie or desirable to accord, to announce that these concessions must be accepted as a final settlement of the Indian system for the next ten to fifteen years, and then to forbid incendiary speechifying at mass meetings." [3]

Dufferin also proposed the introduction of elective principles which Cross, in his letter of February 17, 1887, described as somewhat absurd in a country of 250 million people. So on March 20, 1887, Dufferin again wrote to Cross urging the introduction of elective principle in legislature through municipalities, universities, etc., saying that it was bound to come.

> "Of course," Dufferin wrote, "as an autocratic power, with an army of more than 200,000 men at our disposal, we can afford for a time to ignore their demands, but it will be only for a time, Some of these days the arrangements made by Sir Charles Wood have to be modified, but for the present there is no hurry in the matter if you are disinclined to take it up."

Next day (March 21, 1887) Dufferin wrote to Lord Kimberley that during the last few weeks there had been mass meetings of peasants in various parts of Bengal.

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> "For the present," Dufferin added, "of course the effect of such devices is not likely to do much harm, but I cannot help asking myself how long an autocratic government which everyone will admit for many a long year to come must in its main features remain autocratic—will be able to stand the strain implied by the importation *en bloc* from England, or rather from Ireland, of the perfected machinery of modern democratic agitation."

On April 5, 1887, Cross wrote to Dufferin : "I feel quite sure that you will not propose any 'hasty, inconsiderate, or imprudent' changes in the Legislative Councils. You may feel quite sure that any matured plan you may send will receive the most careful consideration at my hands. It is a most delicate and difficult subject." In his next letter to Dufferin on April 14, 1887, Cross wrote that he was "not in the least alarmed at your (Dufferin's) suggestion as to the applying of the elective principle....." Here Cross formulated his objections which were to guide the Tories till 1947. "I shall be very glad," Cross added, "to consider any really matured plan, because I am quite alive to the present situation of affairs in India, but in any step that may be taken, the interests of the Mahommedans must be considered quite as much as the interests of the noisy Bengalee Baboo....."

On June 29, 1887, Dufferin forwarded along his letter a paper from the Military Secretary, General Chesney and a letter from Sir Auckland Colvin, Financial Member of his Council (later Governor of U.P.). Chensey pointed out that though men like Sir Madhava Rao and others had joined the Congress it was really run by a class of extremists. "What was in 1885 only an experiment," Colvin added, "in 1887 bears the appearance of becoming, as they call it themselves, a prominent national institution".

> "A strong feeling of insecurity" wrote Dufferin, "inherent in our rule has been shared by some of the ablest Indian administrators: Mountstuart Elphinstone, Lord Metcalfe, Sir Thomas Munro, have given expression to it in vivid terms—feeling that the people at large may some day combine to make our government impossible, that a movement may arise too widespread to make head against. There is strong evidence, I believe, that the beginning of such a movement are now to be discerned, a movement directed by the agitators who are 'running' the Congress, which if not stopped will produce an outbreak in which the sympathies of the native army might or might not be enlisted, but the great danger of which consist in its wide extent. Hitherto in all our struggles the people of the country, if not on our side, have not been against us. Our wars have been carried on with mercenary armies against mercenary troops, and when the enemy had been con-

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quered in the field, the people in the country have quickly accepted our rule. What difficulties we have encountered hitherto would be nothing compared to the difficulties that would arise if the people of the whole country or even any large part of it were to become actively hostile to our rule. This is the result which the agents who are working the National Congresss are trying, whether they mean it or not, to bring about."

Cross, however, refused to entertain any idea of election and on December 21, 1888, suggested that instead of election the Viceroy should ask universities, municipalities etc. to nominate persons who would be normally appointed as members of the Legislative Council, and this actually was done in 1892.

The fact, however, remains that Dufferin's tenacity in the face of Cross's obstinate refusal to change was largely responsible for the Act of 1892, as Cross admitted in a letter to the next Viceroy, Lansdowne :

"One thing, however in Lord Dufferin's last letter, I was not quite prepared for. He shadowed out a marvellous Reform Bill for India. Whatever he wrote in his private letter mattered nothing, but he has by this mail sent a formal despatch, which I have not yet personally seen, but which, I presume, proceeds on the same lines as the long private memorandum which he sent me....Lord Dufferin adds that a Minute of his own is coming by the next mail...."

But a worse judgement was reserved for Dufferin. Hamilton, the Secretary of State wrote to Curzon, then Viceroy, on May 17, 1900 :

"....Dufferin, who is one of my very oldest friends, is quite delightful in conversation but he is a thorough Irishman; and I do not believe he has been in any single place of responsibility and authority in which he did not more or less purchase popularity by leaving to his successors unpleasant legacies. I attribute largely to his mismanagement and want of judgement the origin and development of the Congress party; and he could as you say, at that time have effected restrictions in the admission of Natives to the higher ranks of the service that at present are quite impossible."

This, from the Indian view point, is high testimony and entitles Dufferin to a place near Ripon. What he could have accomplished if instead of Cross there had been an imaginative Secretary of State like Wood may be conjectured. But Dufferin was extremely sensitive to the Calcutta Press and to Surendranath Banerjee, who represented to him the extremist section. He therefore wanted to come to an

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agreement with the moderate elements, and to strengthen their hands, by introducing the elective principle.

The Conservative Government in England radically differed from Dufferin, and when the Bill was introduced in the House of Lords in February 1890, all reference to the principle of election was omitted from the papers which were circulated along with the Bill. Only two of Dufferin's recommendations were accepted, namely, that budgets should be presented annually and discussed, and that private members would be allowed to ask questions. During the debate which followed Lord Salisbury formulated the Tory doctrine by pointing out that the idea of democracy was foreign to the Oriental countries, and laid stress on the Hindu-Muslim differences. He also ridiculed the idea that the virile Rajputs and Muhammedans could be represented by educated Indians indirectly elected through the municipalities.[4]

However, though the Bill passed quickly through the House of Lords, it was never taken up in the Commons which was too busy with the Irish affairs. A fresh bill was therefore introduced in the House of Lords in February 1892 which sedulously eschewed the term "election" but allowed the Governor-General to frame regulations prescribing conditions of nominations of the additional members, which in reality meant election by various local bodies. That is, the Tories yielded the substance while denying the form of election. It is interesting to note that Curzon piloted the bill in the House of Commons as Under-Secretary of State; in 1861, Ripon had conducted the bill in the House of Lords in the same capacity. Curzon however had to satisfy Gladstone that the Governor-General's selection would be made after an election; after this there was no opposition to this bill which was passed on May 26, 1892.

IV

The Act of 1892 was known, at least in India, as Lord Cross's Act. This seems to be appropriate for practically from the beginning political opinion in India criticized it for not containing those provisions which Cross in his wisdom had felt was unapplicable to Indian conditions. Violent revolutionary activity started in Maharashtra, and was soon adopted as the model of resistance by the "Ben-

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gali Baboos" goaded first by Curzon's appalling rudeness followed by his blunder. The cumulative result of all this agitation was the Morley-Minto reform of 1909, which Amery once described as "the first response to the growing nationalist movement in India itself." [5]

Amery, as befitted the occasion, was indulging in the British habit of understatement. His "growing nationalist movement" had already taken the shape of the struggle for independence. Indeed the decade following Cross's Act practically decided the line of action of the Indian national movement. The "response" to it is best described in Minto's agitated letter of May 28, 1906 to Morley: "As to the Congress..... we must recognize them and be friends with the best of them, yet I am afraid there is much that is absolutely disloyal in the movement and that there is danger for the future.....I have been thinking of a good deal lately of a possible counterpoise to Congress aims. I think we may find a solution in the Council of Princes or in an elaboration of that idea, a Privy Council not only of native rulers, but of a few other big men to meet say once a year for a week or fortnight at Delhi for instance. Subjects for discussion and procedure would have to be very carefully thought out, but we should get different ideas from those of the Congress." [6]

Morley's reply was practically a snub : "Everybody warns us that a new spirit is growing and spreading over India... You cannot go on governing in the same spirit; you have got to deal with the Congress party and Congress principles whatever you may think of them. But be sure that before long the Mohammedans will throw in their lot with the Congressmen against you." [7]

It has been deduced from this letter that Morley was hinting at perpetuating communal difference. It seems to be more probable that he was merely pointing out a persistent fact to bring his Viceroy to a sense of reality. Minto, being obsessed with the idea of finding out counterpoise to the Congress, must have eagerly welcomed the communal electorate, the idea of which was quite old.[8]

On October 1, 1906, a Muslim deputation headed by Aga Khan presented to Minto their famous demand for communal electorate and the same evening an exultant Anglo-indian wrote to Lady Minto:

"I must send Your Excellency a line to say that a very big thing has happened today. A work of statesmanship that will effect India and Indian

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history for many a long year. It is nothing less than pulling back of sixty-two millions of people from joining the ranks of seditious opposition..." [9]

Prophetic words, but the Viceroy was not quite so jubilant. India was depressing Minto and in the summer of 1907 he wrote to Morley :

"We all feel that we are mere sojourners in the land, only camping and on the march." Morley's reaction was a premonition: "Your way of putting things," he replied to Minto, "helps me to realise how intensely artificial and unnatural is our mighty Raj, and it sets one wondering whether it can possibly last. It surely cannot, and our only business is to do what we can to make the next transition, whatever it may turn out to be, something of an improvement." [10]

There is a difference in the approach of Minto and Morley : both had forebodings about the approaching end of the British Raj, the political struggle left no doubt about the future; the Tory Minto resolved to face it with a counterpoise, the 62 million Muslims; the old Liberal Morley resigned himself to the inevitable and bent his energies to find a suitable method of transition. While Minto, in accepting the nationalist challenge, initiated a new policy, Morley failed to find any, and with all his autocratic behaviour he allowed himself to be tied to Minto's design.

Probably Morley was convinced that there is always a middle way which is the best; his resignation at the outbreak of the war shows his deep conviction, and there is no doubt that he was convinced that the course he had adopted was best for both England and India. Thus, after the conclusion of a round of interviews with Gokhale, Morley wrote to Minto on August 2, 1906 : "Yesterday, I had my fifth and final talk with Gokhale. He made no secret of his ultimate hope and design : India to be on the footing of a self-governing colony. I equally made no secret of my conviction that for many a long day to come—long beyond the short space of time that may be left to me—this was a mere dream. 'For reasonable reform in your direction', I said to him, 'there is now an unexampled chance'."

Morley's qualifications of "long day" is revealing. About "reasonable reforms" he must have had his mental reservations. He had told Gokhale that what was really wanted "a million times beyond political reforms was access of Indians to the higher administrative post of all sorts". This was undoubtedly true and Morley acted up

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to his implied promise. But this also reveals his inability to correctly gauge the Indian situation. "Only one thing can spoil it" Morley had told Gokhale, "perversity and unreason in your friends. If they keep up the ferment in East Bengal that will make it hard or even impossible for government to move a step. I ask you for no sort of engagement. You must, of course, be the judge of your duty and I am aware that you have your own difficulties. So be it. We are quite in earnest in our resolution to make an effective move. If your speakers or your newspapers set to work to belittle what we do, to clamour for the impossible, then all will go wrong." [11]

Morley must have been extremely sensitive to press criticism and Gokhale on August 3, 1906 was imploring his friend N.A. Dravid,

> " . . . . to prevent any *ungenerous* criticism of Mr Morley in the press. See Mr. Kelkar and with him see Mr. Tilak, if necessary," Gokhale wrote and added "and beg them, in my name to exert their influence for the sake of our common country to discourage any declaration on the part of the Indian Press just at present of want of faith in Mr. Morley. By all means let us criticize what he says or does freely, but let us assume for a little while longer that he is a real friend, not one who merely makes professions of sympathy and that where he fails to give satisfaction it is due partly to his ignorance and partly to the extraordinary difficulties which surround him on all sides. Remember that he can act only through his officials on the spot and he is bound to give them a full hearing, even when he is satisfied that they have not acted rightly and further that in matters in which he has a doubt he cannot set aside the view of men responsible for the administration lightly." [12]

Gokhale had unerringly spotted Morley's difficulties : his ignorance of Indian affairs and dependence on officials who had quite different ideas. Gokhale, however, had no doubt about Morley's personal inclination and in the same letter compared him to Ripon as a true friend of Indian aspirations and at the end added : "He (Morley) is the one friend fighting night and day in our interests (and I know this to be no more than the truth) against overwhelming odds by his comparative ignorance of Indian questions and let us not leave the true ememies alone and direct our arrow at him". About the "true enemies" Gokhale had written to Dravid on July 6 :

> "...My principle work here now has resolved itself into a tug of war with the officials of the India Council as to who should capture Mr. Morley's mind. I am only one; and they are so many, and my opportunities of access to Mr. Morley are far more restricted than theirs." To resolve this difficulty Gokhale found a solution: "I told Mr. Morley freely that as his position

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was most difficult between two sets of conflicting representations, the best way out of the difficulty was to appoint a Royal Commission, consisting say, of seven men, to go out to India and enquire whether the present association of the people with the administration of their own affairs was adequate, considering the spread of education in the country, and if not what measures might be adopted to make it adequate. There should be two Anglo-Indian officials on this Commission, two men from our side (one of them should be Sir William Wedderburn and the other an Indian) and three independent English politicians (one being Unionist and the other two good Liberals to give the Commission, a slightly predominant Liberal character as it was a Liberal Government that would be appointing it).

"The proposal has been very favourably received by Mr. Morley and he is considering it at present. I want him to make an announcement on this subject on July 20. If he does that and if he removes Fuller and Emerson from their present positions before that date and if he appoints Mr. Dutt to his Council at an early date, public feeling in India, will I think, be conciliated to some extent and while the Commission is holding its enquiry Mr. Morley will have time to study the different questions for himself. The Commission will give him the two things that he wants at the present moment, time and a definite lead." [13]

Gokhale's suggestions were the best and most practical, and Morley evidently liked it to begin with, but later stiffened under the pressure of the officials. He refused to face his equivocal position; he would neither go out to India himself as Montagu did later, nor send a Commission as was done in 1928. If he had only anticipated the annulment of the partition of Bengal by two years, his reform would have had a much better chance of survival and would have strengthened the Indian Liberals. Instead, with a pedantic assurance he set on the one course which would neither satisfy the nationlist sentiment nor the Anglo-indians.

Gokhale did not criticize the Morley-Minto reform as such, but found fault with the detailed regulations made by the Government of India under that act to implement it. But he could not be jubilant either. Indian politics under Tilak had become too explosive for his genuine Liberalism, which ceased to have any meaning for Indian nationalists after 1909. This was an unexpected by-product of the Morley-Minto reform, but the one which was to be most momentous. Gokhale and Pheroze Shah died in 1915, and with them Gladstonian Liberalism died in India. Next year Tilak returned to Congress at the Lucknow session and secured for Gandhiji a place in the

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A.I.C.C. Hindus and Muslims compromised their differences and the Lucknow Pact was signed. In 1919 Surendranath Bannerjee left the Congress and founded the National Liberal Federation of which little was ever heard.

Montagu therefore started his work against odds and finished it under the insuperable obstacles raised by the Jallianwallabagh massacre.[14] The fact is that after the Jallianwallabagh incident no nationalist leader could cooperate with the Government and initiative passed into Congress hands. So long the people were accustomed to find out what the Biritsh Government intended to do, from now on the interest shifted to Gandhiji and the Congress.

The new reforms were inaugurated in 1921 and in 1924 a Reform Enquiry Committee (popularly known as the Muddiman Committee) was formed which submitted its report in December, the minority recommending the appointment of a Royal Commission.[15] Looking back now it does not seem to be a very radical demand, considering that the Act of 1919 provided for the appointment of a Statutory Commission in 1929 to report on the working of the reforms. But Lord Birkenhead, the Secretary of State, had his ideas about the Commission. On December 10, 1925, he wrote to the Viceroy, Lord Reading :

> "I always had it plainly in mind that we could not afford to run the slightest risk that the nominations of 1928 Commission should be in the hands of our successor. You can readily imagine what kind of a Commission in its personnel would have been appointed by Col. Wedgewood and his friends. I have, therefore, throughout been of clear opinion that it would be necessary for us as a matter of elementary prudence to appoint a Commission not later than the summer of 1928. I should, therefore, like to receive your advice if at any moment you discern an opportunity for making this a useful bargain counter or for further disintegrating the Swarajist party. I am sure that having regard to political contingencies in this country we must keep the nomination of the personnel of the Commission in our own hands. In this matter, we cannot run the slightest risk. My present view, therefore, is—and I believe that the Prime Minister shares it—that we shall in any event be playing for safety if we are driven to nominate the Commission in the middle of 1927. If such an acceleration affords you any bargaining value, use it to the full and with the knowledge that you will be supported by the Government." [16]

Birkenhead repeated the mistake of his predecessors : Dufferin had attempted to crush Surendranath Bannerjee ; Morley had spurned Gokhale's advice, and now Birkenhead aimed at disintegrat-

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ing the Swarajist Party, the only group who could and probably would have worked the constitution. Already the Swarajist Party was losing ground, the Simon Commission finished it. From the time of Gokhale, Indians had been demanding a joint commission of Indians and British. Arguments put forward in support of this "all-white commission", as it came to be called, was that Indians could not be included since it was a Parliamentary commission. The answer was, firstly, Parliamentary commission was not an imperative; a Royal Commission would have served the purpose equally well, and secondly, even in Parliament there were two Indian members—Lord Sinha in the House of Lords and Shapurji Saklatwala in the Commons—who might have been included. Any way, Indians saw through Lord Birkenhead's manouvres. All sections protested, and a manifesto was issued, signed among others by such staunch Liberals as Sir Chimanlal Setalvad, Sir Dinshaw Petit, the President of the Federation of the Indian Chambers and of the Industrial and Commercial Congress, Sir Ali Imam, an ex-member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, Sir Abdur Rahim, President of the Indian Legislative Assembly, Sir S. P. Sivaswamy Aiyar, ex-member of the Executive Council of the Governor of Madras, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, ex-Law Member of the Government of India, Sir Purushottamdas Thakurdas, Mr. (later Sir) H. P. Mody, Mr. M. A. Jinnah, President of the All India Muslim League and the leaders of the Independent Party in the Indian Legislative Assembly.[17]

It now seems incredible that the Biritish politicians failed to realize the consequences of Birkenhead's rashness; and the Commission, which could have altered the Indo-British relation and paved the way for a united Dominion of India, led to a decade of frustration, embittered relations and great struggles to prove the obvious to the British statesmen that, Indian aspiration could not be thwarted by political quibbles and sophistry.[18]

One of the good things about this Commission was that Attlee came out as a member. He wrote several chapters of the Report which he says "were realistic recommendations".[19] However, in a tone of studied understatement he writes :

> "I think that it was a mistake not to have appointed simultaneously a committee from the Indian Legislature. We endeavoured to correct this error by getting the Government to invite the Indian Legislature to appoint a Committee to collaborate with us. This was done, but the Con-

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> gress party would not co-operate, with the result that we tended to hear a great deal more of communal differences than might otherwise have been the case." [20]

This seems to have been the intention of those who precipitated the crisis with the Congress.

Attlee points out that progress at the centre "was difficult because of three outstanding difficulties". The first was the communal problem, the second was the position of the Native States, and the third was the position of the armed forces.[21]

It was indeed a disaster that the communal problem which was not so acute in 1927 should have gained such prominence, undoubtedly due to the careful selection of witnesses by the Anglo-indian officials. As will be shown later, the communal differences were there in India, if one may use a metaphor, like scattered pieces of bricks. These were carefully gathered and built into a wall by the Anglo-indians to contain the nationalist movement inside it. It appears to us even now that, at the time of the Simon Commission, the wall dividing the two communities was not the impregnable barrier which it became by the time the Commission finished their labour.

The British position in respect of the Princes was difficult, and the solution of the British Parliament, that is, the Act of 1935 was quite fair to the Princes, though they had paid no heed to the anomalous fact of the perpetuation of autocratic regimes without any limit. However, the terms of reference to the Simon Commission excluded the States.

Regarding the troops, the position was that British troops were kept in India both for defence as well for internal security.

> "It was not possible", Attlee states, "to separate the forces for these two duties, and it would have been quite wrong and contrary to all precedent to place British troops at the disposal of a government not responsible to the House of Commons. The position was very different in 1947, when there were well trained senior officers available." [22]

The bulk of the present Indian army, and practically the entire complement of its officers, were raised between 1940-46. If that could have been done during the war, it is difficult to see why it could not have been done during a period of undisturbed peace. However, this was no doubt a decisive factor with the Commission and on

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which only the Anglo-indian officials were competent to form an opinion. This point, however, was never explained to the Indian leaders, possibly, lest they should press for rapid Indianization of the army.

Amery, replying to one of Churchill's more pessimistic speeches during the third reading of the Government of India Act, stated :

> "..India is not what he has called a 'geographical abstraction.' We are dealing with a vast body of men, educated, able, active-minded, taught our thoughts, bred in our political traditions, believing that they are capable of playing a greater part in the Government of their own affairs than they have played in the past, and believing that they have a right to play that greater part. It is no answer to say that they may not do it as well as we can. If we object to the proposals that are put forward, our objections should at any rate include some measures of understanding and of sympathy for these people whose aspirations and views are, after all the essence of the Indian problem." [23]

This indeed was the problem, but sympathy and understanding was hardly a factor in British-Indian policy from the beginning of Lord Curzon's Viceroyalty. I do not mean Churchill's irresponsible Indian speeches which few took seriously in India except as providing munition for equally rabid anti-British propaganda; but Hoare and Baldwin lost all chances of success in their negotiations with Gandhiji, by their communalizing all political issues. The communal problem was there, but the British statesmen could never remove the Indian suspicion that this was a British creation.

In 1929 Lord Irwin declared that he was authorized by the Government to state that it was 'implicit in the Declaration of 1917 that the natural issue of India's constitutional progress is the attainment of Dominion Status'. Nobody bothered to explain as to why this very important elucidation was not made explicit in the 1917 statement. Even so, late as the statement was, it would still have gratified Indian opinion had there been an indication as to the time when the Indians might expect to have Dominion Status. Amery commenting on Irwin's statesman's writes :

> "In one sense this (India's attainment of Dominion Status) was obvious. But it was widely felt, and not only by Conservatives, that the declaration would be promptly fastened on in India as a pledge of immediate advance far beyond what had been contemplated in the Declaration." [24]

Thus it was implicit in Irwin's declaration that Dominion Status

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was not to be granted immediately. But when ? No British statesman came forward to answer this very natural query. That it would take a pretty long time was obvious to the Emperor of India, whose Private Secretary was writing to the Secretary of State on March 31, 1938 :

> "The King hopes that his visit (to India) will not have to wait until Dominion Status has been attained, for he feels that this would mean relegating it at least to his old age." [25]

References

1. Frere to Wood, April 21, 1861, J.Martineau, *Life of Sir Bartle Frere*, I.p. 331.
2. ibid., pp. 336-41.
3. All the letters of Dufferin and Cross are from the Cross correspondence, India Office MSS. The letter to Kimberley is not signed, but it is apparently from Dufferin. For the texts of the letters see Appendix.
4. Hansard, March 6, 1890; pp. 60-100.
5. Speech delivered at the English speaking Union, November 21, 1940; L. S. Amery, *India and Freedom* p. 23.
6. Lady Minto: *India Minto and Morley*, pp. 28-9.
7. Lady Minto, op. cit. p. 30.
8. For the origin of the Communal electorate see below chapter V.
9. Lady Minto, op. cit. pp. 47-8.
10. ibid, p. 153.
11. Quoted by T. V. Parvate, *Gopal Krishna Gokhale*, p. 214.
12. ibid, pp. 212-13.
13. ibid p, 211.
14. For details of Jallianwallabagh tragedy see below.
15. The Muddiman Committee actually submitted two reports; the minority report demanding greater scope for the Commission was signed by Jinnah.
16. Quoted by Chimanlal Setalvad, *Recollections and Reflections*, P. 341.
17. ibid, p. 342.
18. A warning was given by Rammohan in 1829: "Supposing that 100 years hence the Native character becomes elevated from constant intercourse with Europeans and the acquirement of general and political knowledge as well as of modern arts and science, is it possible that they will not have the spirit as well as the inclination to resist effectually unjust and oppressive measures serving to degrade them in the scale of society? It should not be lost sight of that the position in India is very different from that of Ireland, to any quarter of which the English fleet may force its ways in the requisite direction and succeed in suppressing every effort of a refractory spirit. Were India to share one-fourth

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of the knowledge and energy of that country, she should prove from her remote situation, her riches and her vast population, either useful and profitable as a willing province, an ally of the British empire, or troublesome and annoying as a determined enemy."

Rammohan made these observations[c] in course of a petition against the Jury Act of 1827. See Miss Collet's biography of Rammohan Roy in the *Centenary Publicity Booklet* No. 1. pp. 82-3.

19. Lord Attlee, *As it Happened*, p. 66.

20. ibid, p. 65.

21. ibid, p. 67. In 1960 I asked Lord Attlee as to why he did not recommend Dominion Status in 1928 while in 1946 he was prepared to grant independence. In reply he repeated practically the sentence I have quoted here, but did not say anything about the communal problem or the Princes.

However though Lord Attlee gives three reasons for not recommending "progress at the centre," Amery gives only one: "The Simon Commission had, in view of the cleavage between Hindus and Moslems, ruled out responsible parliamentary government of the British type at the centre for British India," L. S. Amery, *My Political Life*, III p. 97.

22. Attlee, op, cit, p. 67.

23. Amery: *My Political Life*, III. p. 107.

24. Amery, op. cit. p. 96.

25. J. W. Wheeler-Benett: *King George VI*, 304 f.n. .

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CHAPTER III

BLACK AND WHITE

With the gradual growth of representative government the anti-British attitude increased, and it is significant that this racial hatred was a late development. For example, if the bitterness of feeling against the British had been as strong in Maharashtra in 1818 as it was during Tilak's trial, the early days of British administration of Bombay would have been far more difficult. The Punjab was occupied in 1849 after fiercely contested battles, but submitted to British rule without any of Dyer's atrocities. The reason was that in the early days the British rule was often much better than native rule, and the early British administrators were more just, and less conscious of their racial superiority than their successors of the twentieth century.

Rev. Long of the *Nildarpan* fame said during the course of a lecture in 1868 : "The Court of Directors was very severe on any party convinced of treating them (the Indians) badly, though there was a practice enforced in parts of the country, that if a native when riding met an European, he was to dismount until the latter had passed." [1]

Obnoxious as the practice of dismounting Indians must have been, the proliferation of such habit was checked drastically. In 1802, a judicial officer at Dacca forced the Indian pleaders to remove their shoes before admitting them to his presence. The pleaders protested to Calcutta and Wellesley immediately ordered the judge to withdraw the absurd regulation.[2] The importance of Wellesley's forthright decision was that it created a tradition among the lawyers that redress could be obtained from the highest quarters against the tyranny of petty officialdom.

The British courts also punished crimes quite severely even when committed by Englishmen.

For example, in 1807 John Grant, a young ensign, while drunk, set fire to the hut of the one Kinu in Calcutta. In his defence his counsel pleaded that while drunk, Grant had asked his Indian servant to hand him a flaming torch, which the latter did, and in a fit of drunkenness he had set fire to the hut, and that he was prepared to pay the cost of the hut several times over. The Indian servant denied

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having handed him the torch; the court believed the servant and came to the conclusion that Grant had set fire to the hut. The judges considered Grant's offer of compensation and rejected it. The judges then observed that it was the primary duty of a government to protect its subjects; a rich man could appoint guards to protect his house, but a poor man could not; hence it was all the more necessary for the government to extend them protection and punish all who flouted the law. The punishment for incendiarism in those days was death, and so Grant was sentenced to death. His sentence was later commuted by the Crown to seven years transportation.[3]

In 1807, Peter MacDonald, a British soldier, was hanged for murdering an Indian in Mysore, and for a similar offence John Kennedy suffered the same fate in 1809, while in 1806 an European was executed for the murder of a Malayan woman.[4]

This state of affairs ended before the East India Company's rule, and racial element was brought into an agrarian conflict by the Anglo-indian indigo-planters. Their behaviour and methods were causing concern to the Indians from about 1820, but Rammohan gave them a testimony which shows that even in 1829, the British planters were not an unmixed evil.[5]

It is remarkable that the "indigo agitation" gripped Bengal in 1859-60, that is after the Mutiny. But by the time the agitation started, a change had taken place since Rammohan's days : the Bengali Zamindars were espousing the cause of the *ryots*. But in this they were joined by the Christian Missionaries which took away the racial sting out of the acrimonious controversy. Indeed in 1856 the Missionaries had sent a memorial to the Government for the appointment of a Commission of Enquiry into the condition of the Bengali *ryots*. Nothing came out of it, but when in 1860 the Indigo Commission was appointed, it consisted besides two civil servants and a representative of the Indigo Planters Association, a Missionary and a representative of the British Indian Association.

But one of the greatest heroes of the 'Indigo agitation' was an English clergy, Rev. James Long, or Padre Long as he was affectionately called by the Bengalis.

Rev. Long suffered in consequence of his having translated into English the *Nildarpan*, the pungent Bengali drama of Dinabandhu Mitra, depicting the methods and morals of the indigo-planters.

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Long was prosecuted by the planters for defamation, but they were actually furious with the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Seton Karr, who had distributed Long's translation under Government frank. Seton Karr had been the Chairman of the Indigo Commission in 1860 and his action showed that he supported whatever Dinabandhu Mitra (a government official) had written in the *Nildarpan* and Long's statement in the Introduction, that whatever Dinabandhu had written was "plain but true". Long was prosecuted for libel and sentenced to a month's imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 1000/-. An Indian paid the fine; Padre Long immediately became a martyr and ballads were composed about his sufferings.

The planters—tea and indigo—had their revenge in 1883, when Ripon introduced the famous Ilbert Bill, which broadly speaking, would have allowed Indian magistrates to try European delinquents.

Within a few weeks of the introduction of the Bill (Feb. 1882) the entire Anglo-indian community united in condemning it at public meetings in intemperate and sometimes indecent language. A correspondent wrote in the *Englishman* : "The only people who have right in India are the British. The so-called Indians have no right whatever". Townshend, former editor of the *Friend of India*, wrote in the *Spectator* : "Would you like to live in a country where at any moment your wife would be liable to be sentenced on a false charge of slapping an ayah to three day's imprisonment, the magistrate being a copper-coloured Pagan who probably worships the *linga*, and certainly exults in an opportunity of showing that he can insult white persons with impunity". A ladies Committee was also formed to oppose the Bill.[6] Ripon ultimately withdrew the Bill, and substituted for it a very moderate measure.[7]

The Ilbert Bill agitation was purely racial and the rising Indian middle class accepted it as such. The tone of the Indian Press, which had been freed by Ripon, became bitter, often prejudiced, and Sir Alfred Lyall, began to speculate as to how far it could possibly "be despised as impotent and absurd".[8]

Ripon, however, gained a personal popularity which saved the prestige of the British in India; people still could retain faith in the ultimate British sense of justice and fair play.[9] Setalvad writes :

> "On his (Ripon's) departure, right from Parel, where the Government House was in those days, to the Apollo Bunder, the whole town was

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beflagged and decorated and a solid mass of humanity lined the streets all the way from Parel to Apollo Bunder. In what is called the Moti Bazar near Mumbadevi, the merchants had hung garlands of pearls and diamonds. Ripon's carriage was stopped at Bhuleshwar and the Brahmin priest blessed him and applied kumkum and rice to his forehead. They presented silver trays to him with cocoanuts placed in them. I was present at the Apollo Bunder when he sailed and I saw him walking contented and pleased as any human being would be who was the recipient of such heartfelt gratitude from millions inhabiting this country. His Private Secretary, Mr. Primrose, was walking proudly beside him with the silver tray and cocoanuts." [9]

These demonstrations produced no effect on the British ruling class. Three years after Ripon's departure Lord Cross, the Secretary of State, was writing to Bourke, the Governor of Madras : "When you have a little leisure tell me your views about Natives and Native aspirations. I am afraid that the last Viceroy has done much harm in this respect. I do not believe myself that the people of India have the slightest wish of availing themselves of Native rulers, however educated, in place of the English rule of justice and fairness to all classes, castes and creeds". The attitude against Ripon hardened, and a decade later Hamilton wrote to Elgin : "The increase of our unpopularity (which men like Chalmers who knew India thirty years back admits) and the increased racial feeling which I fear Ripon so aggravated.... " [10]

In 1899 Curzon came as the Viceroy and the last phase of the Indo-British relation began. He has often been described as the greatest administrator that England sent out to India; he was also the rudest. He worked very hard, but no assessment has been made of the improvement which followed his labour, nor what personal weakness was concealed under his sonorous phrases. He manged to destroy faith in British intentions, and Indian suspicion of British honesty and integrity can be traced to the reactions to his intemperate speeches and inconsiderate actions. His partition of Bengal was partly ill-judged and partly vindictive, and his methods introduced in Indian politics an element of acerbity which was absent before. He irreparably damaged the position of the Viceroy by his resignation and his failure to protect Indians against outrages by British soldiers as the correspondence given in appendix II will show.

Curzon not only failed to protect the Indians, he publicly absolved the unruly elements of the British army. In this he was helped by some of the British newspaper correspondents, particularly of the

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Times. As early as 1887, Dadabhai was writing to a friend; "The *Times* correspondent from Calcutta grossly misrepresents everything." [11] The following news item from the *Times* is a good example : "Several unprovoked assaults upon British soldiers have occurred in the Murree hills this summer. These and other cases show that there are two sides to the question of the relation between soldiers and the natives, the latter being frequently the agressors".[12] It is difficult to believe that Indians would have assaulted the British soldiers except under the gravest provocation, but the *Times*' failure to publish details raises the presumption that some trivial incident was magnified or was given a completely different character.[13]

The other factor in Indian politics of these days was the Anglo-indian officials. About their character and capabilities Hamilton, the Secretary of State wrote to Curzon :

> "Jennings seems much the sort of man that the Queen (Victoria) wanted for Indore. I wish there was not such a prejudice against the Indian civilian. No doubt he is at times a prig, and being largely recruited from the middle classes, he lacks at times the manners and consideration that the hereditary exercise of influence so often gives to families of long pedigrees and power. But he is wonderfully loyal, conscientious and hard working. The rut into which the administration of India has settled is that made by the utilitarians or Manchester school. From 1832 to 1885 the ideas, policy and precepts of this most narrow, parochial, uninteresting, political party dominated the policy of Great Britain. The school was at the height of its power when the Mutiny broke out, and the Government of India put upon a Parliament foundation. Competitive examination was to be the instrument by which the world was to be regenerated and political economy, and abstract reasoning were to sweep away sentiment, tradition, pageantry and aspiration. In no country could be found less appreciative elements of those ideas than in India. If you can, as you say, endow the administrative services with a novel initiative and bigger ideas, you will have done something to make personal Government more palatable and less angular in India than it now is." [14]

Unfortunately, scions of good family did not always prove quite capable, as Hamilton admitted in another letter to Curzon :

> "Your experience of Sandhurst is identical with my own. I tried every method I could think of, suggestion, persuasion, direction, orders, all in vain. I came to the conclusion that he is incorrigibly dense. That is the universal opinion entertained of him by all his brother officers in the Guards. He is conscientious, hard working and a thorough gentleman. His qualification for Bombay is that he is Spencer's brother-in-law. When things were really bad in Bombay some years back I had seriously to consider whether or not some change should not be made—but I came to the conclusion

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that the political bias I should create on the other side against myself and consequently the acts of the India Government, more than counteract for the administrative benefit I should gain, so I abandoned the idea...." [15]

Within two month's Hamilton again wrote to Curzon :

"I have quite a pathetic letter from Sandhurst, imploring me to point out to him where he has failed in supplying either you or me with all necessary information, as his one desire is heartily to co-operate with the Home and Indian Government. I understand from his old brother officers that he was looked upon as a man into whose head it was impossible to put any new idea, that he was obliged to leave his regiment because he could not, after repeated efforts, pass the examination qualifying for Captain. I can quite believe it." [16]

Incidentally, Lord Sandhurst was the Governor of Bombay from 1895-99, that is during the plague riots, and Tilak's trial.

If the competition-wallas and the aristocrats were not quite the strong, silent empire-builders of English novels, the intellectuals who were sent out to India, to educate the Indians, were hardly better. The higher educational appointments were monopolized by Anglo-indians of whom Curzon wrote to Hamilton :

"The other day I saw with pleasure that you had appointed to the Indian Educational Service a young and distinguished Indian graduate (from Cambridge I think) named Mr. Harinath De. I think this was a wise step. Our English professors and lecturers out here about whom I think I wrote recently to Godley, take such little interest as a rule in their pupils, and perform their duties so mechanically, and with so little real enthusiasm in their work, that perhaps a Native of ability and who has received a good University training in England, may do better." [17]

It is typical of this period that initiative for such appointments came from England and though Curzon praised such appointments and criticized the Anglo-indians, he could neither suggest any effective remedy, nor, it seems, was he capable of putting through any remedial measure which would affect the Anglo-indians. His great gift lay in writing long minutes, sometimes pedantic, often supercilious and not infrequently contemptuous of his subordinates. But lost in the labyrinthine details of administration, the great pro-consul took the tree for the forest, and, with the help of a group of officials who would look at neither, obstinately pursued his chimera of administrative reforms as answer to political demands.

Curzon was proud of the Archaeological department which he practically created and wrote to Hamilton : ".....I think that

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almost the most lasting external effect of my term of office will be the condition in which I shall leave the priceless treasures of architecture and art that we possess in this country". [18] This is a surprisingly accurate estimate of his work in India, for Curzon is today remembered in India for his efforts to maintain properly the great monuments like the Taj Mahal or Akbar's tomb at Sikandra. This was great work, but lacked the wider human appeal of Warren Hastings, under whose patronage Sir William Jones and Sir Charles Wilkins had inaugurated the study of Indology.

References

1. Rev. J. Long: *Peep Into Social Life in Calcutta A Century Ago.* This paper was read before the Bengal Social Services Association on July 24, 1868. I.O. Library, Tract No. 384.

2. For the order see Appendix.

3. *Asiatic Annual Register*, X, 1808, pp. 24-29; see also ibid, 1807, Bengal Occurrence.

4. ibid, IX, 1807, p. 6; ibid, XI, 1809, Chronicle, p. 58; ibid, VIII, 1806, Chronicle, p. 104.

5. In reply to Nathaniel Alexander's query, Rammohan Roy wrote: "The advances made to ryots by the indigo planters have increased in most factories in consequence of the price of indigo having risen, and in many, better prices than formerly are allowed for the plant. I am positively of opinion that upon the whole the indigo planters have done more essential good to the natives of Bengal than any other class of persons. This is a fact which I will not hesitate to affirm whenever I may be questioned on the subject either in India or in Europe. I at the same time must confess that there are individuals of that class of society, who either from hasty disposition or want of due discretion have proved obnoxious to those who expected milder treatment from them. But my dear Sir, you are well aware that no general good can be effected without some partial evil, and in this instance I am happy to say that the former greatly preponderates over the latter. If any class of the natives 'would gladly see them all turned out of the country', it would be the Zamindars in general, since in many instances the planters have successfully protected the ryots against the tyranny and oppression of their landlords." Rammohan confirmed his favourable opinion of the indigo-planters in a speech at the Calcutta Town Hall on December 15, 1829 in course of which he said: ". . . . As to the indigo-planters, I beg to observe that I have travelled through several districts of Bengal and Behar and I found natives residing in the neighbourhood of indigo plantations evidently better clothed and better conditioned than those who lived a distance from such stations. There may be some

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partial injury done by the indigo-planters; but, on the whole they have performed more good to the generality of the natives of this country than any other class of Europeans, whether in or out of service." (Quoted by U. N. Ball: *Rammohun Roy*, pp. 222-23.)

6. Quoted by Sir Chimanlal Setalvad: *Recollections and Reflections*, p. 269.
7. Ripon stated his reasons for doing so in a letter to Lord Kimberley on 22 December, 1883: "I do not deny, however, that the great weakness of the Government for dealing with a European disturbance weighed with me as it did with my colleagues. I had no idea till I came to Calcutta that the European Police Force at the disposal of the Bengal Government was so very small (between 60 and 70 men all told). In any riot, the least serious, we should have had at once to call out troops and I felt and feel still that to employ soldiers, against Europeans in this country would be a step of the gravest kind." To Northbrooke he wrote on the eve of his retirement (November 28, 1884) "..I could not honestly speak of the principles or proceedings of my unscrupulous opponents of last year, or of the lamentable weakness which marked the conduct of the Civil Service as a body." Quoted by Sir Chimanlal Setalvad: *Recollections and Reflections*, pp. 269-70.
8. Durand, *Life of Lyall*, p. 283; quoted in CHI, VI, (Delhi ed.) p. 548.
9. Setalvad, op. cit. p. 272.
10. Lord Cross to Hon'ble R. Bourke, Governor of Madras, March 11, 1887. Cross correspondence, I. O. Library *MSS*. 1. p. 150. Lord Hamilton to Lord Elgin, August 26, 1897, Hamilton Correspondence, I.O. Library *MSS* II, p. 416.
11. Dadabhai to Malabari, January 30, 1887; quoted by R. P. Masani: *Dadabhai Naroji*, p. 112.
12. "From our Own Correspondent," The Times, June 26, 1906, p. 7.
13. For an example of such misrepresentation see Curzon's letter to Hamilton of January 29, 1903 Appendix II, letter No. 16.
14. Hamilton to Curzon, September 6, 1899, Hamilton correspondence, I. p. 306. I.O. Library, *MSS*: see also Appendix II, letter no. 9.
15. Hamilton to Curzon, 16 June, 1899, ibid, I. p. 181.
16. Hamilton to Curzon 3 August, 1899, ibid, II, p. 255. For Sandhurst see also Setalvad op. cit. p. 451 ff. Sandhurst had twice served as Under-Secretary of State for War; these are the drawbacks of democracy.
17. Curzon to Hamilton, 1 October, 1901, ibid. Harinath De, the greatest Indian linguist, acquired proficiency in thirty-two languages before his untimely death. He received a Cambridge tripos in classical languages. Several years later he met the Pope at Rome, whom he addressed in Latin. When the audience was over, the Pope congratulated him on his knowledge of Latin but said that it was a pity that he did not know modern Italian. Harinath immediately delivered a complimentary address in Italian. Hamilton also wrote to Elgin for increasing the salary of J. C. Bose, later Sir Jagadish Chandra Bose.
18. Curzon to Hamilton, January 13, 1903 ibid.

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Chapter IV

THE PARTITION

It has been said that every school children in England knew two incidents of Indian history, the Black Hole Tragedy and the massacre at Cawnpore. Similarly, Indian children were brought up on two incidents, the partition of Bengal and the Jallianwallabagh tragedy.

A more strident demand for emancipation than the loyal appeal for constitutional advancement, as the Congress used to make in those days, was inevitable, and this inarticulate emotion was precipitated into a positive violent nationalist movement by Curzon's partition of Bengal.

One Ali. C. Ariff, in a long letter in the *Manchester Guardian* of 2 November, 1907 gave the following reasons for unrest in India: (1) abolition of the liberty of the Press by means of Official Secrets Act; (2) Curzon's insulting behaviour to the Princes during the Delhi Durbar; (3) unmerited abuse of the Hindus at the Calcutta University speech; (4) appointing young Englishmen as Magistrates; (5) the failure of the administration to administer justice between Indians and Englishmen; (6) disgraceful treatment of the Indians in Natal; and (7) 'the recent dismemberment of Bengal.' This is a perspicacious analysis of the contemporary political situation but the first six reasons either singly or taken together could not have led to any mass movement: they were too diffuse and their causes were spread all over India and in those days there was no organization which could promote far less sustain an all-India movement. Bengal was a compact area, where the intellectual and emotional vitality was both animated and sustained by a social and literary resurgence from the beginning of the nineteenth century; this had given place from the eighteen-sixty's to an acute national awareness.

The Congress was founded by moderate Indians and Englishmen with a hope that it might be a venue for discussing the grievances of the Indians. It was intended to be a loyal organization and its criticisms of the Government were commented upon even in England for being too mild. But the Partition suddenly roused the Congress into a semblance of action, which usually took the form of unequivocal denunciation of the Government, which they had refrained from doing

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so far. This was due in a great measure to their distaste for the Partition, and the blatant flouting of public opinion. Bengal was in those days the centre of political activity in India, and no Bengali leader could expect to retain his position if he did not support the anti-Partition movement. Extremist leaders like Aurobindo and Tilak found a large section of the educated youth eager to follow them; their ground had been prepared by the causes mentioned by Ariff but particularly by the Partition to which they reacted spontaneously.

The reaction to the Partition was much more bitter and prolonged than expected, indeed it was the beginning of the end. Before 1905, the Indian political leaders accepted gladly whatever constitutional advancement was given them, only like Oliver Twist they always wanted a little more. After 1905, the mood changed into rejecting whatever the British offered and a consequence of this attitude was that any leader who compromised with the British lost his leadership, like Surendranath Bannerjee; Gokhale was venerated because he had never accepted any office and had criticized at least the rules formed under the Morley-Minto reform. That and all subsequent reforms were rejected by the rising sections of the nationalists. The reasons varied in details, the rejection was constant; and the communal differences which clouded Indian politics and led to the partition of India was a projection of the motivation that led to the Bengal Partition into all-India politics. For, the Indians of that generation had understood Curzon's intention quite well and had few illusions left about him or the British politicians, particularly the Tories, who, except for about a decade, held power in England during the first half of the twentieth century.

The reason for the partition advanced at that time and since then by Curzon's admirers is that it was an administrative necessity, and, if determinedly held on, would have resulted in vast improvement in administration. Lord George Hamilton in a public speech declared that he "would predict with the utmost confidence that in ten years, so beneficial would be the operation of the change, the only remark then would be made concerning it, even by those who were opposed to it, would be, 'why was not this done before' (cheers)." [1]

I do not call this remark fatuous, because a sustained and intense propaganda had probably convinced the British ruling class that the Partition of Bengal was a great administrative achievement,

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in fact the crowning achievement of Curzon's Viceroyalty. It was really Curzon's biggest folly.

The idea of Partition was first mooted by Elgin, but it was given up as a result of a minute written by Sir Henry Cotton, and the opinion expressed by the High Court of Calcutta that it would be a "retrograde and mischievous" measure and these were public knowledge in 1905.

Curzon's arguments for the Partition is set at length in Risley's letter to the Chief Secretary of Bengal, which was later sent to the Secretary of State, Brodrick, with a covering letter that as Risley's letter was based upon Curzon's minute, it was not necessary to forward the same to Brodrick. Sir Charles Stevens, who, after serving in Bengal in various capacities including a year as the Lieutenant-Governor (1897-98), had retired in 1898, wrote an even bigger minute on Risley's letter. [2]

Stevens clearly showed that Curzon's ideas such as river boundaries were based on ignorance, and the administrative relief, which the Partition was claimed to afford to the Governor of Bengal, was mainly fictitious. For, Curzon's scheme was not merely to partition Bengal, but to add to reduced West Bengal, the Sambalpur district and the Native States from the Central Provinces and the Ganjam District and the Ganjam and the Vizagapatam Agency from Madras, so that while the burden of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal would be lessened by about three-and-a-half million people, four-and-a-half million people from the Orissa districts and States would be added to his charge. So Stevens pointedly remarked: "The fact, however, seems to be that the main purpose of this part of the scheme is agglomeration of the Uriya speaking people; the convenience of the Administration concerned is merely an incidental consideration." This was justified by Curzon on the ground that people speaking one language should be under one administration, and Risley buttressed this argument by citing a petition which the Government of India had received from the people of Ganjam and a "prayer" from Raja Baikuntha Nath of Balasore that "all the districts and states speaking the Uriya language be united and placed under one common administration." On this Stevens remarked: "If the Uriya speaking people desire to be united, is it not *a fortiori* natural that the greatly more numerous, more advanced and more important speakers of Bengali

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should strongly object to be divided, and a part of them to be attached to a far less developed administration. How is it that when the local Uriya opinion is quoted with some sympathy and support, objections from Eastern Districts are, so to speak, discounted by the remark that 'No temporary opposition in the transferred towns or areas, no artificial agitation or interested outcry, should be permitted to divert the efforts of the Government?'" Stevens, therefore, suggested the alternative of forming one province with all the Bengali speaking districts with which Assam must not be attached, and another province with the Hindi and Uriya speaking people (that is Bihar and Orissa) which was the scheme practically adopted in 1911. If Curzon had the good sense to adopt Stevens's scheme in 1905, the history of Indo-British relations might have been different, and possibly the communal problem and the ultimate partition of India could have been avoided. For, with the Partition the Muslim separatist movement also began.

One of Curzon's hopes was that his Partition scheme would be hailed with joy by the two leading landlords of East Bengal; but the Maharaja of Mymensingh told Curzon bluntly that he was opposed to this mischievous scheme; the Nawab of Dacca too at first described it as "beastly" but he was heavily in debt and Curzon purchased his support by advancing him a government loan of £100,000/- on extremely easy terms. After this the Muslims came out overwhelmingly in support of the Partition seduced by the Government officials including the Viceroy, who explained the Partition as greatly benefitting the Muslims who had so far been mistreated by the Hindus. The Muslims, therefore, came to regard the new province with the same emotional attitude which Pakistan later held out for them and the more the Hindus agitated for annulling the Partition, the more the Muslims were convinced of their conflicting interests. Economically the Muslims were gainers, for, one of the main items in the anti-Partition programme was the boycott of British textiles; the substitutes at the time were mainly the handloom products, and the weaving community in East Bengal was Muslim.

This Hindu-Muslim problem shall be discussed in the next chapter, and it is sufficient to say here that the dormant problem became acute in Bengal directly due to the Partition, a year after which the Muslim League was formed at Dacca, the capital of the new province, under the patronage of the so-called Nawab of Dacca, whose debts Curzon had paid off.

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Along with the deterioration of the Hindu Muslim relations, the relation between the Hindus and British officials also changed. The entry of the educated Hindus in the higher civil service had alarmed the Anglo-indians,[3] and after the Partition their relations with the Hindus became openly hostile.[4] The Anglo-indians were convinced that the danger to their empire came from the educated Hindus, so to preserve the empire it was necessary to curb their activities by denying them education. Some of the young Hindus were also convinced that, their enemy being the officials, independence would be achieved if they were murdered. Thus the young Bengal revolutionaries began the "subterranean intermittent warfare against the Government," though the idea owed its origin to the Maharashtrian Chapekar.[5] The effect of this revolutionary movement has not yet been assessed. It is apparent, however, that it hardened the British attitude towards the Hindus, particularly Bengali, though this movement at one time covered the entire North India and had a few ardent Muslims in its ranks.

Faith in British justice had been shaken by the Ilbert Bill agitation and the atrocities committed by individual Anglo-indians in India, which went practically unpunished. But the favour shown to the Muslims, consequent to the Partition, shattered all faith in British justice and sense of human values. The Hindu nationalists were usually the cream of their society, while some of the Muslims who came out in favour of East Bengal were the scum; their leaders, who were decent men, had no control over these people who committed atrocities, and the leaders found excuse for them under the cloak of religion.

It is possible that Curzon had not understood the implications of his action but was motivated by an urge to crush the incipient nationalist movement. On November 18, 1900, Curzon had written to Hamilton "My own belief is that the Congress is tottering to its fall, and one of my greatest ambitions while in India is to assist it to a peaceful demise." [6] The problem was how to attack and destroy an organization which avowed loyalty to the British Crown? It was not possible to declare the Congress illegal, which would have roused even the most complacent Parliament against the Government of India. It was, however, possible to weaken the people, who were most vocal in demanding reforms, into submission; they were the Bengalis, or the Babus, as they were contemptuously referred to by the Anglo-indians. For example, Dufferin was writing to Cross on February 1, 1887:

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"...The Baboo witnesses who appear before it (Civil Service Commission) are showing their hand so prematurely that all non-baboo classes are taking alarm, and are beginning to see that under the ideal Babu regime they would be completely left out in the cold." [7] To this Cross replied on February 25, that the masses of the people do not want to be ruled by the Baboo's and again on April 14, 1887, Cross wrote to Dufferin: "....The interests of the Mahommedans must be considered as much as the interests of the noisy Bengali Baboo." [8] Hamilton writing to Elgin on September 16, 1897 made it explicit: "....If we can keep the affection of the fighting races and higher orders of society in India, we can ignore the dislike, and the disaffection of the intellectual non-fighting classes, the Baboos, students and pleaders[9]." Sir Syed Ahmad Khan,on the eve of the third Congress session at Mad ras appealed to the Muslims to boycott it and said: "If you accept that the country should groan under the yoke of Bengali rule and its people, lick the Bengali shoes, then, in the name of God! jump into the train, sit down, and be off to Madras [10]."

A blow struck at the solidarity of the Bengalis, therefore, could be a prelude to the dissolution of the Congress. This was apparent not only to Curzon but to the nationalist Indians as well, and the Partition therefore became an all-India issue, condemned by all sections of nationalist opinion.

Nevinson, the correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian*, has recorded the popular belief that Brodrick, the Secretary of State, was at first not in favour of the Partition, but ultimately agreed to it having decided against Curzon on the Kitchener dispute.[11] Support is lent to this view by the accusation levelled against Brodrick that he had gone back on his promise to lay the papers relating to the Partition before the Parliament prior to taking any decision.[12]

It is said that the Calcutta Press was in some measure responsible for Curzon's vindictive pugnacity. Many Viceroys before Curzon had found the nationalist Indian Press rather offensive, which was due, partly at least, to the Indian habit of using superlatives, a tradition derived both from Sanskrit and Persian. Anyone who has heard ordinary politeness or common bickerings in an Indian language will understand what I mean; translated into English, they become fulsome or foul. This habit found expression in their English too, and along with the use of wrong idoms and fondness for long words, gave rise

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to the Baboo English.

The Baboo English was, however, quite effective in offending the Anglo-indians, and Curzon, at an evil moment, selected the Calcutta University convocation address to preach homily on truth, in which he said in effect that Indians had little regard for veracity, or in plain words, the Indians were liars. Next day the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, which then had an all-India circulation, reproduced Curzon's statement from his book that while he was in China someone had asked him his age, and thinking that his extreme youth might be a disadvantage, he had added ten years to it. All India laughed at Curzon, and he was not a man who liked to be laughed at. When the Partition came, the Indians were convinced that Curzon was punishing the Bengalis for showing him up for what he actually was, a pompous fraud. Curzon and his friends would have certainly denied any motivation based on a personal pique, but the damage was done.[13] And the time was particularly ill chosen for a European nation to thwart an Asiatic people; Japan had just defeated Russia.

References

1. *Times*, December 8, 1905, p. 5.
2. See Appendix III.
3. "....I was obliged to telegraph to you about the recommendation of the Public Service Commission as to the raising of the age of the examination of candidates before the Civil Service Commissioners; though I am favourable to it myself, the large majority of my Council are against me for two reasons—first they think too many natives will get in, second they think that it will be very hard upon parents of English boys to keep them at school so long .." Cross to Landsdowne, June 6, 1889. Cross Correspondence, *MSS*. I.O. Library.
4. "....I look upon the Congress movement as an uprising of Indian Native opinion not against British rule, but Anglo-Indian bureaucracy...." Hamilton to Curzon, October 20, 1899; Hamilton Correspondence, I, p. 362. This is a very interesting remark and correct too.
5. Hamilton paid Chapekar grudging tribute: "....Sandhurst has sent me...amongst other documents....the autobiography of Damodar P.A. Chapekar, who not only assassinated Rand. but also formed the Murder Club which subsequently committed other outrages. It is painful reading. The man was a fanatic and a desparado, but he was prepared to take his life in his hands...." Hamilton to Curzon October 11, 1899. Hamilton Correspondence, I .O. Library, *MSS*.

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6. Hamilton Correspondence, I.O.L. *MSS.*
7. Cross Correspondence, I.O.L. *MSS.*
8. ibid.
9. Hamilton Correspondence, I.O.L. *MSS.*
10. Syed Ahmed Khan, *On the Present State of Indian Politics*, pp. 11-12. However Sir Syed organized and presided over a meeting at Aligarh addressed by Surendranath Banerjee, which passed a resolution in favour of holding simultaneous examinations for the Indian Civil Service On this occasion Sir Syed paid a unique tribute to the Bengalis. "They are," he said, "the only people in our country whom we can properly be proud of, and it is only due to them that knowledge, liberty and patriotism have progressed in our country. I can truly say that really they are the head and crown of all the different communities of Hindustan." *Eminent Mussalmans*, published by G. Natesan & Co. Madras, p. 32. See below chapter V, note 17.
11. Nevinson's report; *Manchester Guardian* of January 10, 1908, p. 5.
12. See letters of Herbert Roberts M.P. and St. John Brodrick, Secretary of State for India; *Times*, September 26, 1905, p. 5.

    Roberts alleged that on August 9 Brodrick had undertaken to present to the House of Commons papers relating to the Partition of Bengal, which led him to believe that no definite step regarding the Partition would be taken until the Parliament had passed its verdict. Brodrick in his reply denied that he had given any such undertaking though he had promised to publish papers relating to the Partition.
13. For an account of the Partition of Bengal, see Appendix III.

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Chapter V

HINDUS AND MUSLIMS

Were the Indians a nation, and if so what was the basis of their nationality? These two questions assumed pivotal importance practically from the last decades of the nineteenth century. Answers differed according to the inclination of the writer, and conflicting evidence of history were arranged to suit particular view point.

The difficulty in giving categorical answers to these two questions are that nation and nationality are not susceptible to any immutable definition. Regarding India, judgement on nationality proceeded on the basis of race, language and religion, it being assumed by one group that the Indians lacked these three essential elements of nationality, while the other group held that in spite of superficial differences there was a basic cultural unity which linked the Indians together.

Both the groups missed the point that common race, language and culture are not enough to make a nation, or there would not be so many Spanish speaking States in Latin America, who, moreover, had a common tradition. In our own days we have seen the emergence of number of Arab States where also race, language and religion are common.

In India, however, Muslims claimed to be a nation on the basis of a common religion. The origin of this religious nationalism may be traced to the Islamic exclusiveness with an inherent tendency to segregate the Muslim *millat* from the non-Muslims, a tendency which was shared by the Hindus also. In course of time the Hindus, as they advanced in their struggle for independence, laid the basis of a secular nationalism, while the Muslims, who conceived their struggle as mainly against the Hindus, developed a religious nationalism. But all along, the Muslims maintained a double approach, one group approaching the British officials for patronage and recognition of their exaggerated claims, the other group putting pressure on the Congress to fulfil their somewhat modified demands. But even in the Congress the Muslims never coalesced with the Hindus to lose their identity as did the Parsis; the ultimate product of the Congress movement were the Nationalist Indians or Hindus and the Nationalist Muslims.

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It is possible to recreate the idea of the existence of an Indian nation from remote antiquity, and a verse from the *Vishṇu-Purāṇa* may serve as a definition for Indian nationality today:

Uttaram yat samudrasya
Himādreś-ch-aiva dakshiṇam
Varsham tad Bhāratam nāmā
Bhāratī yatra santatiḥ

(The country lying north of the ocean and south of the Himalayas is called Bhārata; children (i.e. inhabitants of that country) are called Bhāratī.')[1]

There is also undoubtedly an assumption of the unity of the entire subcontinent in the Epics, Puranas and in the Smriti texts. It is, however, useless to pretend that the country was ever united in the manner the nationalists imagined it to have been. They really desired to unify the country on a basis of consent and toleration but, for reasons not quite clear, always harped on the Mauryan or Mughal imperial-unity, which must have been quite repugnant to the conquered people. However, this point was never raised during the nationalist movement, which was fostered on the facile assumption of an ancient Indian political unity and therefore nationhood.

The danger of this assumption was that it had to be buttressed by evidence from Hindu religious scriptures, and indeed an analysis would reveal that whatever unity the Hindus possessed was due to their common religious system and Sanskrit as the language of the learned.

The British were right in holding that when they conquered India and for a long time thereafter, there was no Indian nation and no sense of nationality. It was a product of the mid-nineteenth century, and those who borrowed this European concept tried to model future India on the lines of the nation-states of Europe particularly France and England. This was, however, a new ideology, which, to their credit, was largely successful in fostering a sense of unity among the Hindus. One of the reasons for this success was that the common opposition to the British rule and the cult of nationalism, which was really an anti-British agitation with little positive content, impregnated the country with an emotional fervour bringing together Marathas, Sikhs, Tamils, Bengalis and others on a common platform of action.

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This was surprising, and shows the extent of anti-British sentiment in India. This was happening during the last three decades of the nineteenth century, and to anybody who knew the history of India at the beginning of the century would have appeared incredible. The early leaders must have drawn from this the satisfactory conclusion that the Muslims too would respond to their call and a few of them did. But in those days, when there was no question of mass movement, it was not possible to judge their importance vis-a-vis those who did not.

It must have been common knowledge to the Indian leaders of the nineteenth century that the Marathas had not come to Orissa and Bengal at the invitation of the Bengalis and the Oriyas, nor was their eruption a non-violent procession headed by a couple of saints. The history of the Sikh hegemony in the Punjab was of more recent memory. They also knew of the barrier that existed between the Hindus and the Muslims which sometimes broke out into open riots. But having brought the different linguistic groups under the banner of the Congress, the leaders felt that the Muslims could be brought into its fold with equal ease. Their expectations were belied, but narrowly.

The Indians' lack of unity and the history of their internecine warfare was very well known to the Anglo-indians. Therefore, when the first nationalist movement started in Bengal, no importance was attached to it, as it was not thought possible that the Bengali Hindus would be able to attract either the Muslims or the non-Bengali Hindus. This belief of the Anglo-indians was supported by the beginning of the nationalist movement which was essentially Hindu and Bengali in character. Raja Rammohan Roy, the father of Indian nationalism was also the father of Bengali prose, and was a Hindu religious and social reformer. He was followed by a galaxy of great men in Bengal, Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Keshub Chandra Sen, Swami Vivekananda, and others, who, while they moulded the national character, were essentially Hindu religious or social reformers. Rajnarain Bose, (maternal grandfather of Sri Aurobindo) who started the idea of nationalism in Bengal, used to preach the superiority of Hinduism and Hindu society over Christianity and Christian society. Though he never said so, we can be almost certain that he was convinced of the superiority of Hinduism over Islam. Rajnarain's idea took shape in the Hindu-mela, which met annually from 1867 to 1880, and for which Tagore

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wrote two charming songs. Inspired by the Hindu-mela,the 'National Society' was founded in 1870 to promote unity and national feeling among the Hindus. When objection was taken to the use of the word "national" in connection with an organization which was essentially Hindu, the *National Paper*, the organ of the Hindu-mela, asserted: "We do not understand why our correspondent takes exception to the Hindus who certainly form a nation by themselves, and as such, a society established by them can very properly be called a national society."[1a]

At the other end of India, a neo-Hindu movement gathered momentum under the inspiring leadership of Swami Dayananda.

There were non-communal organizations like the Landholders Society formed in 1837 and the Bengal British India Society formed in 1843, which amalgamated in 1851 to form the British Indian Association, and began to correspond with similar organizations in Poona, Madras, and Bombay. The British Indian Association, though loyal to the British, petitioned for inclusion of Indian representatives in the legislature, and for other constitutional and administrative reforms.

A more intense form of nationalism was developing in Bengal under the leadership of Surendranath Banerjee who established the Indian Association in 1876 with the avowed object of "unification of the Indian races and peoples upon the basis of common political interest and aspirations, the promotion of friendly feeling between the Hindus and the Muslims, and the inclusion of the masses in the great public movements of the day."[2] Thus the idea of Indian nationalism was born, though it is difficult to understand as to why Surendranath differentiated between the "unification of the Indian races" and the "promotion of friendly feeling between Hindus and Muslims" unless by races he understood the Hindus who alone could be fused into a homogeneous body, while it was only possible to maintain friendly relations with the Muslims.

In this connection it is interesting to note that in those days and even later the term "Bengali" meant only the Hindu residents of Bengal, while the Muslims of Bengal were invariably referred to as Muslims. The only other large group of Muslims were to be found in the Punjab, but the Bengalis invariably referred to the Sikhs when speaking of the Punjabis, and it was the martial exploits of the Sikhs which raised an echo in the heart of the Bengali nationalists. They

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also took to heart the struggle of the Marathas and the Rajputs against the Muslims. Bankim wrote several historical novels painting the Rajput Princes as the flower of chivalry and the Muslims—with one exception—as discomfited villains. These novels were translated in all the Indian languages and their effects can be imagined. Bankim's novels were based on Tod's *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, which sustained the Hindu revivalist movement to a degree not usually appreciated. Later playwrights also borrowed from Tod, and their explanation was that, since a frankly anti-British plot would certainly be proscribed, it was safe and discreet to present an anti-Muslim struggle. This was true, but it is difficult to see as to how the Muslims could be convinced by these pragmatic arguments. Marathas too were not neglected and R. C. Dutt wrote two novels based on Maratha history. Tagore wrote poems on Rajput, Sikh and Maratha heroes, but except for the solitary poem on the Tajmahal where he had to bring in Shahjahan, no figure of Muslim India stirred his imagination to bring out a verse.

The result was that the Bengali language which developed during the nineteenth century produced a "Hindu" literature. Raja Rammohan Roy knew both Persian and Arabic but none of his successors did, who were all Sanskrit scholars.[3] The other modern Indian languages also developed rapidly during the nineteenth century; of the South Indian languages, Tamil had a long tradition behind it, but entirely Hindu, and was developed by the Hindu writers. Modern Marathi inherited the tradition of the medieval saints like Namadeva and Jnanadeva; Gujarati, Oriya, and Assamese, also followed similar trends. The literary movement in India, of which they felt justly proud, was essentially the work of Hindu writers, based largely either on Sanskrit or medieval Bhakti literature; new ideas were borrowed from English literature. This was possible because in all these areas Muslims were an insignificant minority, and in Bengal far behind the Hindus intellectually; but trouble arose in the Hindi speaking area where Urdu had so far been the dominant language.

In the early nineteenth century Hindustani, or the language of Upper India, really signified Urdu. It is difficult to determine as to when the Hindus began to agitate against Urdu, but beginning from 1869 the Hindus are found organizing meetings to mobilize public opinion and appealing to the government to replace Urdu, a Muslim

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language, by Hindi, 'the national language of the country.'[4] In Bihar, then a part of Bengal, orders were issued to replace Urdu by Hindi written in Nagari characters; persistent attempts were made to ignore the order and was only given effect to in 1881 after peremptory orders had been issued by Sir Ashley Eden, the Lt.-Governor.[5] The opposition came not only from the Muslims but from the Hindus also, for at that time a large number of Hindu officials, particularly the Kayasths knew Urdu much better than Hindi.

During this period the Hindus also launched the anti-cow slaughter movement, which reached sufficient proportion to interest Queen Victoria,[6] and induce Sir Syed to advise the Muslims to stop killing cows. He argued that the friendship of the Hindus was more valuable than cow-sacrifice.[7]

Another factor in the resurgence of the Hindus was the discovery of their ancient history, mainly by European scholars and followed by a band of devoted Indians. So long the Hindus had an intuitive sense of their past greatness, but now they exulted beyond measure at their international recognition.

II

As the Hindus had inherited a vague notion of geographical nationality, the Muslims also had inherited the tradition of conquerors. Few Indian Muslims, as was repeatedly pointed out, had any non-Indian blood in him, but the Muslims tenaciously clung to the idea that they were the conquering race and therefore the ruling race by divine grace. This conception led to the other, namely that the Muslims can only live in Islamic country (*dar-ul-Islam*), all other countries being enemy territory (*dar-ul-harb*). The question first cropped up when the Marathas established their supremacy; as the Marathas were non-communal the Muslims decided to acquiesce in their hegemony till more propitious times. The Muslims were however never reconciled to the Sikhs, and the Wahabi movement was first directed against them. After the fall of the Sikh kingdom the Wahabis turned against the British and their rebellion was in fact the earliest attempt to free India from British rule. Their power of organization and leadership was also of a high order. Distinct from the Wahabis, but similar in nature were the Faraizis of Bengal. One of the results of these movements was that in Bengal, the poorer classes of Muslims shed

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many of their practices which they had inherited from their Hindu ancestors.

The Wahabis had their headquarters at Patna, but their field of activities lay in the rugged mountains of the North-West Frontier, where the British had to lead several costly campaigns before the Wahabi strongholds could be crushed. Then began a series of State trials from 1864 to 1871 in which a large number of Wahabis were sentenced to transportation and their movement died out. The result of the post-Mutiny activities of the Wahabis, however, was inimical to the interests of their community. The British became convinced that neither the Sikhs nor the Marathas, but the Muslims were their real and implacable enemy. The Muslims of Bengal had taken the most active part in the Wahabi movement, while those of U.P. were quite indifferent to it. So the Bengali Muslims were gradually deprived of government patronage and jobs, while no harm befell the U.P. Muslims. The result was that, when in 1882 the Bengali Muslims put in as a grievance of the entire Muslim community of India that they were backward compared to the Hindus, it was pointed out that while in U.P., the Muslims formed 10 p.c. of the population, Muslim students numbered about 25 p.c. of the total. The U.P. Muslims retained this advantage, and in the 1930's held about 25 p.c. of the clerical jobs and about 50 p.c. of police appointments in U.P.

It may be noted here that employment of the Bengalis, that is Bengali Hindus, had started from the time of Murshid Quli and accelerated by Alivardi Khan, who deliberately employed the Hindus as a counterpoise to the Muslims; and it is from the time of Alivardi that large number of Bengalis were employed in Bihar.[8]

The gradually decreasing percentage of the Muslim employees of the Government was as much due to the Government policy as to the Muslims' stubborn refusal to learn English. In the U.P., knowledge of English was not essential for several important appointments, but it was made obligatory in Bengal where the Muslims stood aloof from the new schools and colleges. Possibly about half-a-century of anti-British teaching by the Maulvis had rendered everything connected with the British anathema to them, but there may have been another reason: the frightfully moist climate of Bengal repelled the Muslim aristocrats, who either settled in Bihar, U.P., or the Punjab even after serving in Bengal, during the Mughul period. The bulk

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of the Bengali Muslims belonged to the non-literate class, peasants, weavers etc. like the scheduled caste Hindus, from whom they had been converted. These people never acquired proficiency in a foreign language, neither Persian nor English,[9] while the caste Hindu *bhadraloks*, that is the literary classes, easily mastered the foreign languages. Thus while it is true that the Hindus were rapidly gaining proficiency in English education and monopolizing government jobs, really the *bhadraloks* were meant.[10] In rest of North India, the situation was different. Secondly, the Bengali *bhadraloks* preponderated in the Government service not only in comparison to the Muslims, but to other Indians, that is, Hindus as well. This was, however, passed unnoticed and the Muslims made a grievance out of it.

The Muslims of Bengal soon became conscious of their predicament. In 1835 they had publicly opposed the new Government policy that all Government grants should in future be spent on English education. But in 1863, Nawab Abdul Latif, who had been opposing the Wahabi movement, founded the pro-British Muhammedan Literary Society, and five years later (January 30, 1868) made a vigorous plea for the English education of Muslim boys and suggested the elevation of the Anglo-Persian department of the Calcutta Madrassa to the status of a college. Abdul Latif's idea was partly realized in 1873, when the munificent legacy of Muhammad Mohsin was converted into a Trust Fund to pay two-thirds of the fees of any Muslim student in any English school or college in Bengal. Even with this advantage, Muslims made little progress in education, and persisted in claiming their share of Government jobs on the basis of their numbers irrespective of merit or even any standard of qualification.

With the coming of Mayo as Viceroy in 1869, a new policy towards the Muslims seems to have been adopted to wean the loyalty of the Muslims from the Wahabis. Gently prodded by the British, a large number of Muslim theologians, including several Muftis of Mecca, declared the Wahabi movement to be wrong, and British-India a *Dar-ul-Islam*, so long the Muslims could practise their religious observances without any hindrance. Abdul Latif and Sir Syed Ahmad Khan took prominent part in propagating this new idea among their co-religionists.

But another factor now crept in to confuse the education of the Bengali Muslims. Their leaders like Amir Ali and Abdul Latif

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insisted that Urdu and not Bengali was the language of the Bengali Muslims, and that instructions should either be given in Urdu or in a highly Persianized Bengali. Though the Government remained somewhat indifferent to this demand, the Muslims took it up seriously till the formation of Pakistan, after which the East-Pakistani Muslims began to agitate for the recognition of Bengali as their national language, and a few Muslim students were shot dead at Dacca by the Muslim Police. But till 1947, the Bengali Muslims considered Bengali as a Hindu language, and Urdu as their mother tongue. The non-Bengali Muslims, like Amir Ali, or Abul Kalam Azad never learned Bengali, and this ignorance was a hall-mark of aristocracy in Muslim Bengal. Thus the Bengali Muslims failed to give any lead or indeed to show any conspicuous advancement during the British period. The lead came from U.P.

The great leader of Muslim resurgence was Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, an aristocrat, who had acccepted service under the British and had actively dissociated himself from the Mutiny and the Wahabi movement. He and some other Muslim gentlemen opened a High School for Muslim boys at Aligarh in 1875, and within three years upgraded the school to a college. The Hindus donated freely towards the establishment of the institution, so it was declared open to them also, but it was named Mahomedan Anglo-Oriental College. This clumsy name really expresses what the institution stood for: a place where the Muslims could learn English without prejudice to their Islamic faith.

Sir Syed was the greatest Muslim leader of modern India, and one of the greatest Indians of the nineteenth century. He was originally moved by the praiseworthy feeling that his co-religionists were wrong, and attempted to correct them at considerable risk to his life. He correctly held that in British India one needed a good English education to prosper in Government service and took active steps to provide English education for the Muslims. In all this he was mindful of his community, but many contemporary Hindus were doing the same, and Sir Syed in his early days was not anti-Hindu. As befits a leader, he was a man of strong views, and sincerely believed in non-political work for the upliftment of his community. We shall see later as to how far he was exploited by Beck.

While Sir Syed was working for improving the Muslims through English education, Amir Ali, whose ancestor had come with

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Nadir Shah's invading army, organized in 1877 the Central National Mohammedan Association, which he guided for quarter of a century. What prevented Amir Ali from joining Surendranath's Indian Association is not known; possibly Amir Ali thought that without a purely Muslim organization they would not get their due share of offices. Whatever the reason, though a communal organization it was not anti-national and enjoyed Hindu support. The Association became popular through Amir Ali's exertions, who, like Surendranath, travelled extensively and opened fifty-three branches scattered over Bengal, Bombay, Madras, the Punjab, the U.P., and Bihar.

In 1882, Amir Ali found that the Muslims of Bengal stood little chance in competing with the Hindus, and he presented a memorial to redress this grievance, that is, to substitute selection for competitive examination. This was unnecessary for Sir Syed; for, in his province, the U.P., the Muslims were over-represented in the subordinate services, so he pressed for the selection of Muslims only for the Indian Civil Service. Surendranath and others, who felt that Hindus would be able to compete with the British on equal terms, agitated for simultaneous examination, and increasing the age limit of candidates.[11]

The positive contribution of Amir Ali to Muslim politics was to organize them politically, prove their loyalty to the British, and, by harping on the inequality of Muslims and Hindus, prepare the Muslims for the separatist movement, in which Amir Ali took a prominent part in England.

It is almost certain, however, that without the Aligarh College (later University) the Muslim separatist movement would not have been successful. By an irony of fate, Sir Syed's institution, instead of fulfilling his ambition of educating the Muslims, became in effect a political seminary. Between 1882 and 1887 Aligarh produced only ten graduates. The total number of Muslim graduates for 1898-1902 for the whole of India was 1,184, of which 220 were from Aligarh, 410 from Allahabad, 398 from Calcutta and 255 from the Punjab.[12] This lacuna in education was filled by political activities which Sir Syed avowedly abjured.

It is difficult to determine Sir Syed's responsibility in setting the tone and pace of Aligarh politics, which, from the beginning, was dominated by the twenty-four year old English Quaker, Theodore Beck,

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who joined the college as its Principal in 1883. Sir Syed died in 1898 and Beck the next year, but during this short period Aligarh had taken a definite shape. Sir Syed's expression of loyal sentiment was of a negative character, inasmuch as he did not want to offend the British in any way, but after the arrival of Beck he assumed a positively determined attitude against any anti-Government movement or sentiment. This became apparent after the foundation of the Indian National Congress.

III

The Congress seems to have been founded under the patronage of Dufferin to win over the educated Indians from Surendranath's extremist Indian Association. Surendranath, however, dissolved his Association, joined the Congress in the second session (1886) and influenced it sufficiently for Dufferin to change his opinion.[13] Immediately the Muslim opinion responded to the Viceroy's displeasure. Here was an opportunity to win the rulers' favour.

On June 18, 1843, Ellenborough in a despatch to the Duke of Wellington had written: "I cannot close my eyes to the belief that that race (Muslims) is fundamentally hostile to us and our true policy is to reconciliate the Hindus."[14] He had even suggested the creation of two chambers of legislature for India, one for the Hindus and the other for the Muslims, but the idea was rejected by Pearychand Mitra of the British Indian Association.[15] Later, we find Elphinstone, while Governor of Bombay, suggesting in his minute of May 14, 1858: "*Divide et Impera* was the old Roman motto, and it should be ours."[16] The middle class Hindu movement, which started in India in the 1860's, particularly in Bengal, where the boycott of British goods was advocated as early as 1874, could not have failed to deeply impress the British, and, as noted above, during the Viceroyalty of Mayo (1872-76) efforts were made to obtain decrees from Muslim divines that British India was a fit country for Muslims to live in. Though Mayo was stabbed to death by a Wahabi (Chief Justice Norman of the Calcutta High Court had been murdered by another Wahabi in 1871) no political significance was attached to it, and certainly the Muslim community as such were not held responsible. During 1872-1885 Sir Syed and Amir Ali had been consolidating Muslim opinion, though in different manners.

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In 1887, Surendranath came to Aligarh on behalf of his Indian Association, and Sir Syed associated himself with Surendranath by demanding at a public meeting equal opportunities for Indians to join the Indian Civil Service.[17] That was possibly the only time he united with a nationalist leader to present a joint demand. However, as already stated, Sir Syed did not consider political activities to be of much importance, and neither joined Surendranath's nor Amir Ali's association. But with the coming of Beck a change is perceptible.

Even before leaving England, Beck had declared that parliamentary system of Government was unsuitable for India, for the Muslims would resent being under the Hindus. Later in the same year (1883) Sir Syed almost echoed Beck's opinion and concluded: "The system of representation by election means the representation of the views and interests of the majority of the population." An extension of this view was dissociation from the Congress and to overlook its importance. Very soon Sir Syed was to find confirmation of the soundness of his tactics.

The *Times*, came out with a significant editorial after the first Congress (1885) expressing jubilation that the entire Muslim population had abstained from the Congress. Then with a mordant venom against the rising middle-class, the *Times* added:

> "But it was by force that India was won, and it is by force that India must be governed, in whatever hands the Government of the country may be vested. If we were to withdraw it would be in favour not of the most fluent tongue or of the most ready pen, but the strongest arm and the sharpest sword. It would therefore be well for the members of the late Congress to reconsider their position from this practical point of view."[18]

The suggestions were ominous and clear. The ruling class in Britain, did not want the Muslims to join the Congress. Quite a few Muslims had participated in the deliberation of the first Congress, and actually Amir Ali's Central Mohammedan Association had helped in organizing it and Amir Ali himself had openly welcomed it. But the *Times* by ignoring the palpable facts bestowed the crown of recognition on Sir Syed and his Aligarh group which had stood aloof. Secondly, the barbed hint, that the British would return the empire to the strongest people, could mean the Muslims, as opposed to the Bengalis. Two lessons were, therefore, clear: to gain British recognition as the leader of "all the Indian Muslims", one had to be hostile to the nationalist movement and stress the difference between the

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Hindus and Muslims, and the importance of safeguarding Muslim right in any form of election which in any conceivable form of democracy would reduce them to a minority.

Next year (1886) Sir Syed actively began to oppose the Congress, and the Central Mohammedan Association too dissociated themselves from the Congress pointing out in a lengthy explanation that "until the Mahommedans are on a par with the Hindus in political development and educational progress" the Congress programme, that is election to the legislatures and greater participation of Indians in the Government services, "will end in the absolute effacement of the Mohammedans as a community in this country."[19]

In spite of Sir Syed and Amir Ali, several notable Muslims had joined the Congress, and for long they valiantly competed with those two leaders to attract the Muslims to the Congress. But not even all the Muslims who had joined the Congress were prepared to accept a supra-religious nationality.[20] During the fourth session of the Congress Hume said: "Indians are Indians. Why there should be majority or minority"? The Muslims immediately challenged him, one demanding that the representation of Hindus and Muslims in a Council should always be equal, while another Muslim member of the Congress demanded that "the number of Muslim members in the councils should be thrice that of the Hindus."[21] Calmer counsel prevailed, and Muslim members voted against such exaggerated communal claims, and at the end a cumbrous resolution was passed recognizing the claim of all the religious minorities, Parsis, Christians, Mohammedans and Hindus, to have adequate representation in any election.

It now seems that it was a mistake to have walked into the trap of recognizing religion as the criterion of representation. It fortified the arguments of the Anglo-indians that elective principle was not suitable for the Indians, for nothing is more difficult than to device a means whereby a democracy can provide a minority with the same control over affairs as the majority; indeed it is impossible. What the Congress had done was only to assure the Muslims (the Christians and Parsis never demanded any protection) but in effect they had admitted that Hindus and Muslims had different interests, which had to be safeguarded by returning adequate number of representatives from each community and that the interests of one community was not safe in the other's hands. Thus began the Congress policy of

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attempting to win over the Muslims and present a united front by accepting their main and characteristic demands, while disagreeing with their fundamental principle.

But, as in future, in the present instance also, the Congress failed to placate either Sir Syed or Amir Ali. Sir Syed, knighted with a K.C.S.I. the previous year (1888), had with the help of Beck, started the United Indian Patriotic Association and admitted in a private letter to Graham, a police officer and later his biographer: "I have undertaken a heavy task against the so-called National Congress, and have formed an Association."[22] The aim of this association was to disseminate such news to the members of the Parliament which would prove the hollowness of the Congress claim to represent all sections of Indian opinion.[23]

Beck became the honorary editor of the Patriotic Association and prepared the intellectual background of the future activities of the separatist Muslims and some of his writings could very well be used by the advocates of Pakistan in 1946.[24] It has never been explained as to why this young Englishman, born in a Quaker family, with a decent education became such a rabid protagonist of extreme communalism. Equally mysterious is his selection for the post of the Principal of the Aligarh College. But of the pernicious effects of his work there is no doubt. He made Aligarh not a seat of Islamic learning, but of Muslim communal politics. The Aligarh graduates became in effect political campaigners for communal politics. When Bradlaugh brought a bill before the Parliament in 1889 to introduce some sort of election to Indian legislature, Beck sent groups of Aligarh students to collect signatures protesting against it, and himself with a group proceeded to Delhi. On a Friday, Beck and his students stood before the Jama Masjid at Delhi, and collected signatures explaining that it was a Memorial intended to protest against the Hindu move to stop cow slaughter. Thus he managed to collect 20,735 signatures and presented it to the Government.

There have been speculations as to whether Beck was guided by Sir Syed, whom he sometimes referred to as his 'revered chief', or really did guide him. The latter seems to be more probable. Not that Sir Syed was a weak character, but Beck opened to him the door at which he had been incessantly knocking since the Mutiny: favour of the Government for his community. It may be assumed that Beck

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had open access to Anglo-indian officials and his advice would appear almost as directives from quarters which Sir Syed always wanted to please; and Beck's advice always yielded results.

Sir Syed, at the beginning of his political career, was less communal than aristorcatic, and one of his reasons for antipathy towards the Congress was, as he explained, that he did not like that "commoners even if they possessed B.A. or M.A. degrees should sit in the legislative councils," and added: "Imagine the Viceroy calling these men 'my colleagues' or 'my honourable friends.' The Viceroy cannot invite them to dinners and State functions in which great dignitaries like Dukes and Earls participate."[25] Some like-minded Hindus also joined the Patriotic Association, and it began to develop into an anti-Congress organization of the aristocrats. This did not suit Beck who founded in 1893 the Mahommedan Anglo-Oriental Defence Association of Upper India; only Europeans and Muslims could be members of this organization; Beck was the founder-secretary.

Apart from demanding elected members to the Legislative Councils the Congress was pressing for the following during Sir Syed's time:

1. Abolition of the Indian Council (1885).
2. Simultaneous Civil Service Examination (1885).
3. Equitable apportionment of military expenditure between England and India (1885).

All these demands were of equal concern of Hindus and Muslims. It is not that a man of Sir Syed's intellectual attainment failed to perceive this, but he was lured by Beck and Anglo-indian officials' promise of an exclusive prize for his community, and he failed to resist the temptation.[26]

Hume in a letter (November 5, 1885) to Tyabji wrote: "Lord Dufferin *now* is *against* us. In the first place he has become afraid. So *long* as we were a mere consultative body, purely native, whose views he could adopt when it suited him or ignore when they did not he was strongly in favour of it." This indeed was true, Dufferin was disillusioned about the Congress. Hume being a retired official had useful official contacts so had Sir Syed; did Sir Syed know the solicitations on behalf of the Muslims which the Secretary of State Cross was writing to the Governor of Bombay?[27]

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IV

The Anglo-indians with the Viceroy at their head were sore with the Congress and its leaders, but they could hardly do anything about it. For, the Congress leaders had adopted the British methods to such purpose that it was difficult for an Englishman to outlaw the organization, or even to summarily reject all their demands. The usual Anglo-indian description of the Congress therefore was: (1) the Congress leaders were irresponsible busybodies; (2) they were Bengali Babus on whom the martial races and the Muslims looked down with contempt; (in this connection it is worth noting that neither the Bengali Muslims nor the Bengali Hindus were recruited in army, a fact which the Anglo-indians never talked about); (3) Congress demands were impractical; (4) time was not yet ripe to introduce such revolutionary changes.

Here I may be allowed to digress a little to point out a peculiar Anglo-indian trait. Imitation is supposed to be the best form of flattery, but it only exasperated the Anglo-indians who bore a special grudge against those Indians in particular who appreciated the English literature. The upper class Hindus, with a great literary tradition behind them, took to English literature with an unbelievable passion. The Anglo-indians were first amused, then annoyed,but they became really angry when the Hindus began to esteem British constitutional law, and their political system. It is true that the British system is the result of a long historical development and needs certain characteristic social features to work it out successfully. But human ingenuity has found only the British and the American models as satisfactory systems of democratic government. However, it is difficult to say whether the Anglo-indians disliked more the Congress demand for elected representatives or simultaneous examinations; possibly they felt that both were aimed at their interests. The Bengalis were the particular targets of the Anglo-indians, for they were the first Indians to compete successfully for the civil service.

The Anglo-indians felt themselves safest with the people who as a class shunned English education,—like the various tribes,—and in course of time developed great fondness for the frontier Pathans. The Naga head-hunters also received their blessings and the *Bangali-Kheda* (Drive out the Bengali) movement was organized by the Anglo-indians in the present N.E.F.A. area. The fabulous Maharajas too

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became the object of their protective care.

The Viceroy was the head of the Anglo-indian society, and though he was independent of them, in fact he had to defer to their advice. Similarly the Secretary of State was largely guided by the retired Anglo-indians. The Indian nationalist leaders were conscious of the power wielded by the Anglo-indians hence their insistence on adopting measures whereby a large number of Indians could join this service, as also for the abolition of the Secretary of State's Council.

The early Congress movement was not directed against British sovereignty or parliamentary supremacy, but against the privileges enjoyed by the Anglo-indians: the rising Indian middle class attempted to share the preserves of a group of English middle class. The Congress had other ideals too, but it was this aspect of their activities which alarmed the Anglo-indians and made them their sworn ememy. It was however difficult to fight the Congress on the ground that they had selected, so another group of Indians had to be picked to fight their battle and alliance was formed with the extremist section of the Muslims.

From the correspondence between Dufferin and Cross given in the appendix, it will be seen that Dufferin was eager to introduce election in Indian legislatures. Possibly he too like Hume felt that the question was not, "Is it too premature?" but "Is it too late?" There is an urgency in Dufferin's insistence on the introduction of the elective principle in India, which Cross tried to foil by insisting on the necessity of giving due representation to Muslim interest. Dufferin's minute ultimately resulted in the Councils Act of 1892. Curzon, at that time the Under-Secretary, assured Gladstone that Indian members of the legislature would be selected after their election by suitable constituencies such as the British Indian Association (which Lord Ripon had already used to suggest additional members for discussion of the Bengal Tenancy Act), the Chambers of Commerce, the corporation of great cities and various great religious associations. Sir Richard Temple, a retired Anglo-indian, expressed their thought with a warning against entrusting more political powers to the Indians until they showed "greater moderation, greater sobriety of thought, greater robustness of intelligence, greater self-control all of which qualities build up the national character";[20] one might have added all the qualities lacking in the Anglo-indians vividly exhibited a decade ago during the Ilbert Bill agitation.

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The mentality of the Tory ruling group was expressed by Salisbury, who, speaking against election, exclaimed: "But we must be careful lest, by the application of occidental machinery, we bring into power not the strong natural vigorous, effective elements of Indian society, but the more artificial and weakly element which we ourselves have made and have brought into prominence. It would be a great evil, if, in any system of Government which we gradually develop, the really strong portions of Indian society did not obtain share in the Government to which their natural position among their own people traditionally entitles them."[29]

Salisbury's pronouncement is important because it not only provided the food for Curzon's policy, but for all the Tory diehards up to Churchill.

On the face of it the statement, like most British statements of this age, is a venomed barb against the rising Bengali intelligentsia. But what Salisbury and others hid under a cloak of euphemism is that the Bengalis, though important, were not the only people who had been created by the British. The Muslims led by Sir Syed, was more a British creation than anything known to India. (Contrary to popular belief, English education was not introduced in Bengal by Macaulay, but by the Bengalis themselves at the beginning of the century.)[30] Secondly, the Marathas and the Sikhs were certainly "strong elements of Indian society", and Gokhale and Tilak should have fulfilled the qualifications laid down by both Salisbury and Temple, but when the time came Gokhale never received the encouragement from the Government such as Sir Syed had enjoyed, and Tilak, who wanted to revive Hindu vigour, spent years in gaol.

Basically, Salisbury and the Tories were conducting a clever propaganda to project the picture of the Muslims as a virile, warlike Oriental people, strong, united and attached to the British crown by the ties of the strongest loyalty, but contemptuous of the Babus (that is Hindus), and fearful lest democracy should place them under these poltroons.

This was a distortion of past history and contemporary facts, but the only people in England who could point out the fallacy were the Anglo-Indians who were interested in spreading the myth. Their typical attitude towards the Hindus was revealed by Sir H. Verney Lovett, Reader in Indian History, Oxford, who concluded a chapter in the *Cambridge History of India* with the statement: "No orthodox high-

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caste Hindu can really desire to see democracy established in India."[31]

Actually Dufferin was conscious of the danger of exploiting the communal differences, though he was sympathetic towards the Muslims. In reply to his farewell address at Calcutta on March 23, 1888, he said: "I confess I would rather see the Europeans, Hindus and Muhammedans united in criticising the Government than that Hindus and the Muhammedans, the Europeans and the Natives, should become estranged from each other by unworthy prejudices or animosities of race or religion. God forbid that the British Government should ever seek to maintain its rule by fomenting race hatred among its subjects." A year before, just after the second session of the Congress at Calcutta, he had written to Cross: "Indeed I do not think that we could make a greater mistake than to sow the seeds of dissension, suspicions (between Hindus and Muslims), or jealousy; such a policy would in the long run recoil upon our own heads."[32]

With all these forebodings, however, Dufferin was constantly pointing out to Cross that Muslims were holding themselves aloof from the Congress; Cross had none of the Dufferin's scruples and frankly advocated the principle of separate Muslim interests mainly in order to put obstacles in the way of introducing elective principle in India, to which Cross was opposed and was searching for means to avoid it.

Hamilton, the next Secretary of State, who had the perspicacity to perceive "the Congress movement as an uprising of Indian Native opinion against, not British rule, but Anglo-Indian bureaucracy", found the remedy in increasing the communal trouble. "I am sorry to hear of the increasing friction between Hindus and Mahommedans in the North East and the Punjab", Hamilton wrote to Elgin on May 7, 1897, and added, "One hardly knows what to wish for—unity of ideas and action would be very dangerous politically; divergence of ideas and collision are administratively troublesome. Of the two, the latter is the least risky...." Hamilton in a letter expresses his approval of Elgin having secured "the support of the educated Mahommedans." In another letter Hamilton puts his crude politics more clearly: "Sandhurst (Governor of Bombay)" he wrote, "sent me some details about the riot at Dhulia. The Mahommedans were clearly in the wrong. These outbreaks are, from an administrative point of view, regrettable but they do seem to me to strengthen our position generally...." About the attitude of the Muslims, Hamilton was in no doubt. "I have had

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a letter from a Missionary of Ludhiana," he wrote to Elgin, "The writer seems a sensible person, but is evidently alarmed at the attitude and (as he avers) the determination of the Mahommedans to pick a quarrel with the Hindus. This confirms what you have told me...." In yet another letter to Elgin, Hamilton writes: "The only really ugly feature (of the Calcutta riots) was that though the riot ostensibly began with Mussulmans against the Hindus, towards the close both parties seemed inclined to combine against the Europeans."[33]

Hamilton's cynical policy was the natural corollary of Salisbury's affectionate regard for "the strong, natural, vigorous, effective elements of Indian life," which was just an euphemism for the riotous Muslims and their leaders. But the British tolerance of these riots, which grew in intensity and frequency as the British rule drew to its close, had the unhappy result of creating an alliance between the Muslim political leaders and gangsters. Sir Syed was an aristocrat, who would have nothing to do with a criminal, Muslim or Hindu; Muslim League's main support in 1946 were the *Goondas* of Calcutta.

These were still in the future, but the policy hatched by Hamilton during 1893 to 1903 and executed by Curzon from 1899 to 1905 was a potent factor in bringing about these results. When Curzon came, the relation between the Hindus and Muslims was bad, he was determined to make it worse. His solution was the Partition of Bengal.

The Bengali Muslims had never asked for the Partition, nor were they aware that the Partition would bring them any particular benefit, which indeed it did not. But after the Partition, the Muslims were led to believe that it was to their great advantage to have such a province. Those benefits were not apparent while Bengal remained divided, nor have they come to fruition after the formation of Pakistan and the migration of the Hindus. President Ayub indeed feels rather strongly about the ineptitude of the Muslims to run a democratic form of Government. But Lord Curzon evidently had higher opinion of the East Bengal Muslims and felt equally strongly that they should have province, which after the formation of East Pakistan someone called a "rural slum."

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References

1. The same idea also pervades another verse of the *Vishnu-purana* (II, iii, 24).

गायन्ति देवाः किल गीतकानि
धन्यास्तु ते भारतभूमिभागे ।
स्वर्गापवर्गास्पदमार्गभूते
भवन्ति भूयः पुरुषाः सुरत्वात् ॥

"Thus do the Gods sing: Blessed be the inhabitants of Bharata land who (due to their) god-like qualities are born in the country which is the abode of Gods and a path to heaven and salvation."

The *Srimad-Bhagavata* (V, xix, 20) states:

अहो अमीषां किमकारि शोभनम्
प्रसन्न एषां स्विदुत स्वयं हरिः ।
यैर्जन्म लब्धं नृषु भारताजिरें
मुकुन्दसेवौपयिकं स्पृहा हि नः ॥

"Lo! how glorious were their deeds which won the favour of God Hari Himself. By His favour they obtained birth among the people of Bharat, birth which is our aspiration as an opportunity for the worship of Mukunda."

1a. Quoted by R. C. Majumdar: *Glimpses of Bengal in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 76.

2. Surendranath Banerjee: *A Nation in Making*, p. 67.

3. Tagore's father had some poems of Hafiz translated into Bengali. Tagore must have read it, but I have failed to trace any mention of Hafiz in Tagore's work. Other Tagores of the poet's generation translated important works into Bengali; his brother having translated Tilak's Marathi *Gitarahasya*. Vivekananda's father also was a great admirer of Hafiz but he had not read the *Gita*. Vivekananda on the other hand was a good Sanskrit scholar, but knew no Persian.

4. A lecture on Nagree vs. Urdu was delivered by Baboo Boodhee Bullubh Punt at the Nynee Tal Institution on August 28, 1869. Boodhee Bullubh's lecture was virulently anti-Urdu. The President, Mr. Gunga Dutt Punt in course of his speech said that "as Urdoo only took its rise on the conquest of the country by the Mahommedans and as it was for the convenience of the said conquerors that it was introduced, now that the Mahomedans, have in their turn been conquered by a race talking neither Urdoo nor Hindi, the national language of the country should be reverted to, viz., Hindi..." He also said that most of the litigant public being agriculturists, who knew no Urdu, Hindi should be the court language.

India Office Library, Tract Vol, 640. pp. 1-5.

5. At this time Bihar was administratively a part of Bengal and the introduction of Hindi was mainly due to the Bengali officers to whom Sanskritized Hindi presented no difficulty. As Sanskrit was printed in Nagri script, they preferred Nagri to the unknown Arabic script of Urdu.

6. "The Queen is most interested in anything which concerns India.... She has spoken to me very frequently about infant marriages: lady doctors, proposal

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not to allow the slaughter of cows." Cross to Reay, (Governor of Bombay) September 29, 1887, Cross Correspondence, I. p. 294, MSS. I.O.L.

7. Ram Gopal, *Indian Muslims*, p. 72. In the Punjab cow-slaughter was banned during the Sikh regime, but was allowed by the British. This led to the Kuka rebellion of 1872. *Punjab District Gazetteer* Vol, 15A; 1904, Ludhiana District and Maler Kotala State, Chapter I, B. History, p. 29, p. 84.

8. *History of Bengal*, Vol. II, edited by Sir Jadunath Sarkar, p. 414, p. 453, f.n.2.

9. Folk literature in Bengal even when composed by the Muslims was pure Bengali.

10. The term *Bhadralok* defies translation; it connotes educated middle class.

11. The Anglo-indians were opposed to this. See letter of Cross to Lansdowne, June 6, 1889. Cross Correspondence, I.O.L. MSS.

12. Theodore Morrison: *The History of the Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College, Aligarh, from Its Foundations to the Year*, 1903, p. 63, quoted by Ram Gopal, p. 58.

For significance of Aligarh. See Khaliquzzaman, *Pathway to Pakistan*, p. 14 ff, Khaliquzzaman writes that in 1907, "the English staff of the (Aligarh) College were acting rather as agents of the Government than as professors of the College". Ibid, p. 11.

13. For the origin of the Congress see R. C. Majumdar, *Glimpses of Bengal in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 91-99. For Dufferin's subsequent attitude see Appendix, IV.

14. Ram Gopal op. cit. p. 86; Parulekar: The Future of Islam in India, *Asia*, Vol. XXVIII, November 1928, p. 874.

15. R. C. Majumdar, op. cit. p. 86.

16. R. Palme Dutt, *India Today*, p. 389.

17. It was at this meeting that Sir Syed paid his tribute to the Bengalis. See Chapter IV, note 10.

18. *Times* editorial, quoted by Ram Gopal, op. cit. pp. 63-64. For the *Times* editorial on the 1st Congress See *Source Material for A History of the Freedom Movement in India. Collected from Bombay Government Records.* Vol. II. pp. 18-21. The *Times* stated: "No Mohamedan took any part in the proceedings."

19. Report of the Central Mohammedan Association. 1885-88, pp. 21-22; quoted by Ram Gopal, op. cit. pp. 76-77.

20. See Badruddin Tayabji's correspondence with Amir Ali and Sir Syed: *Source Material*, II. pp. 64-75. In a letter to Sir Syed, Badruddin stated: "...it is in our power by firm and resolute action, to divert the course the Congress shall take and my strong conviction is that the Mussalmans can by united action confine the Congress to such topics only as they may deem desirable or safe for discussion... My policy, therefore, would be to act from *within* rather than from without...." From B. Tyabji to Syed Ahmad, February 18, 1888; ibid p. 73.

21. Ram Gopal, op. cit. p. 80.

22. Graham: *Life and Works of Sir Syed Ahmad*, p. 273, quoted by Ram Gopal op. cit. p. 67.

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23. *Aligarh Institute Gazette*, August 28, 1888, Ram Gopal op. cit. p. 68.
24. For this and Beck's activities in general see Ram Gopal, pp. 70-75.
25. Ram Gopal, op. cit. p. 66.
26. On November 5, 1888, Hume in a long letter to Tyabji wrote: "..I do not believe that he (Sir Syed) is the wilful and shameless liar and a turn-coat that his speeches and writings would make him appear. I believe that his popularity with European officials and his K.C.S.I. and favour recently shown him by the Viceroy, and the adulation of that title and his immediate entourage have completely turned his head and this is the view taken by some at any rate of his own personal following...." *Source Material* II, p. 87.
27. See Appendix: Hindu Muslim Relation: Letter from Cross to Reay of October 4, 1888.
28. Hansard, March 28, 1892, p. 98.
29. ibid, Compare Churchill's speech in the House of Commons on March 6, 1947: "....In handing over the government of India to these so-called political classes, we are handing over to men of straw of whom in a few years no trace will remain."
30. The English education was introduced in Bengal not by the British Government but in spite of them. The popular idea that the British introduced English education to turn out clerks is wrong. See R. C. Majumdar, op. cit. the chapter on English education.
31. *Cambridge History of India*, (Indian Edition) V, p. 559. This was published in 1932, that is while the Round Table Conference were going on. Lovett was the Reader of History at Oxford; what influence these "authorities" exercised on British politicians and the Indian Civil Servants may be a proper field of investigation.
32. For these and the following quotations from letters see Appendix IV.
33. For references see Appendix IV.

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CHAPTER VI

THE HOUSE DIVIDED

"The principle of recognizing races and creeds," Gokhale had once said, "stands in no need of encouragement from Government, as the division of interests caused by it has already been the bane of this country."[1] Fitzpatrick Governor of the Punjab (1892-97), also expressed doubts as to "whether in a province where the antagonism of different races and sects is so intense, it would be expedient to form any scheme expressly based on the idea of choosing class representatives."[2]

In disregard of such warnings and to foster greater disunity the Partition of Bengal was effected which consolidated the Muslim opinion towards exclusiveness. The rising Muslim middle class now began to see the advantages of communalism; they would be appointed to jobs for which they were unqualified or under-qualified, in preference to qualified Hindus, and the prospect of rioting was an inducement to the criminal elements among the Muslims, who could always be sure of the support of their educated co-religionists and the tacit approval of the Anglo-indians.[3] Those Muslims who denounced these criminal activities were inveighed against as Hindu stooges.

The next step towards the fulfilment of Anglo-indian desire was to present Morley, the new Liberal Secretary of State, with a clear proof of Muslim hostility towards the Congress, and to tie his hands in any constitutional advance that he could propose.

On May 28, 1906 Minto wrote to Morley: "....I have been thinking a good deal lately of a possible counterpoise to Congress aims." Minto had the Princes in mind, but the Anglo-indians had one better and ready to hand, the Muslims, and the cool Himalayan atmosphere of Simla and Naini Tal became busy and Haji Muhammad Ismail wrote to Mohsin-ul-mulk[4] from Naini Tal that the Legislative Council would be expanded, therefore the Muslims should formulate their demands and approach the Government for their fulfilment. In order that Mohsin-ul-mulk should have no doubt as to what these demands should be or that he might not press for the wrong type of demands, Principal Archbold of Aligarh College wrote to Mohsin-ul-mulk apprising him as to what was actually demanded. It seems, however, that even so Mohsin-ul-mulk could not be relied upon to

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draft the petition which is said to have been Archbold's effort. Mohsin was used to collect four thousand signatures to the appeal and thirty-five Muslims to present it to the Viceroy; none of these tasks proved difficult, for most Indians in 1906 would have unhesitatingly put their signatures to a respectful and loyal address to the Viceroy and any number could be led to meet His Excellency. There would have been far more signatories if Archbold, like his predecessor, had led his students to the Jama mosque on a Friday on a signature campaign. But this time it would not do to take such a prominent part, so Archbold had made it a condition that he would remain in the background and Mohsin-ul-mulk was too aristocratic, and, which was almost the same thing, too lethargic, to collect more signatures than would suffice. Possibly time was too short, for the move began in the summer and the address was presented to the Viceroy on October 1, 1906. The Aga Khan, who was on his way to Europe, had to be recalled from Aden to head the deputation.

The petition was a long and verbose document, whose main contention was that Hindus and Muslims being different communities and the Hindus having a natural and praiseworthy desire to elect only Hindus, the Muslims should have adequate representation as also their due share of Government jobs for which purpose competitive examination should be abolished; there should also be Muslim judges in every High Court, presumably to safeguard Muslim interest from the unsympathetic Hindu judges. Due emphasis was also placed on Muslim consciousness of the position which they occupied in India about a hundred years ago.

Minto's equally long reply related to the past *gloires* of the Indian Muslims, "descendants of a conquering and ruling race" (Minto), past services rendered to them by Warren Hastings and Minto's ancestor,[5] the laurels won by Aligarh and Sir Syed's greatness and ended by assuring them that though he could not visualize the methods by which it would be done, he was "as firmly convinced" as the Muslims themselves, "that any electoral representation in India would be doomed to mischievous failure which aimed at granting a personal enfranchisement regardless of the beliefs and traditions of the communities composing the population of this continent."

The *Times*, which on September 5 had published the news of the forthcoming Muslim deputation, now came out with an effusive

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anonymous article under the heading "*The Mahomedan Memorial*" which declared:

> "Today the leaders of the Mahomedan community are to wait upon the Viceroy and lay before him (an appeal) on behalf of their people. The manner in which they are presenting their case, no less than the nature of their proposals, is in sharp contrast with the demonstration by which certain Hindu politicians in Calcutta have attempted to influence the course of Indian affairs."

The article then compared the violent agitation of the Hindus under Surendranath with the dignified method adopted by the Muslims who began by requesting Minto to allow them to submit a petition; after asserting that Municipal elections in the U.P. and the Punjab are carried on along communal lines the *Times*, added:

> "If Englishmen honestly desire to introduce popular representation into India, the principle for which the Mahomedan Memorialists contend must be accepted; if it is neglected the strife between rival communities will be kept burning and the era of absolute Government indefinitely prolonged....for another reason the Mahomedan memorial is a remarkable document; it is almost the only piece of original political thought which has emanated from modern India. All the proposals which have been put forward from time to time by the Congress are unimaginative reproductions of the ideas which form the stock-in-trade of English politicians."

The last sentence reveals its Anglo-indian origin, for, they had a wholesome horror of introducing any English political idea into their Eden garden of brass hats.

Next day, the *Times* came out with an editorial praising the Muslims for their forbearance and political sagacity and added:

> "He (Minto) gave an explicit pledge to their community in Eastern Bengal that they could rely as firmly as ever on British justice and fair play; and in his remark that the future of the province 'is now I hope assured', we may read the determination of the Government not to go back on the policy of partition. But still more important were the closing words of his speech, which contained a pledge just as explicit, to the whole Mahomedan community of India, that their political rights and interests would be safeguarded in any administrative reorganization and throughout the general policy of the British Raj."

The *Manchester Guardian*, which had received the news through the Press Association Foreign Service, published a summary of Minto's reply on October 2. Apparently the *Times* had received advance copies of the Memorial as well as Minto's reply.

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One of the officials, who had been managing these delicate operations, unable to contain himself any further passed the historical information to Lady Minto:

> "I must send Your Excellency a line to say that a very big thing has happened to-day. A work of statesmanship that will affect India and Indian history for many a long year. It is nothing less than the pulling back of sixty-two millions of people from joining the rank of the traditional opposition." Her own comment was: "This has been a very eventful day; as someone said to me: "an epoch in Indian history."[6]

Morley was at first against communal electorate but ultimately gave in for reasons which are not yet clear. It has been held that one of the reasons may have been, as Lady Minto asserted in 1932, that separate electorates were proposed by Gokhale. For this she does not quote any authority but the following summary of one of his speeches partially corroborates her:

> "Mr. Gokhale stated his own position in the matter quite frankly. He had all along been in favour of special separate electorates for important minorities, but he wanted such electorates to provide not the whole of the representation to which the communities are entitled, but only so much of it as was necessary to redress the deficiencies and inequalities of general elections; and he wanted the same treatment to be extended to other important minorities than Mahomedans where necessary. Mr. Gokhale held strongly that in the best interest of their public life and for the future of their land they must first have elections on a territorial basis in which all communities without distinction of race or creed should participate; and then special separate supplementary elections should be held to secure the fair and adequate representation of such important minorities as had received less than their full share in the general elections."[7]

This was quite different from Minto's scheme of dividing Hindus and the Muslims into two compartments, and Gokhale later criticized not the Morley-Minto Act, but the rules framed under that Act by the Government of India introducing communal representation. Gokhale's views were also in agreement with that of the Congress resolution of 1888, and which the Congress maintained all along. Minto's views were obnoxious even to Morley who wrote to him in December 1909: "I won't follow you again into our Mohammadan dispute. Only I respectfully remind you again that it was your early speech about their extra claims that started the (Muslim) hare[8]."

It remains to add that on August 16, 1906, the *Times* came out with the information that Nawab Mohsin-ul-mulk, the Honorary Sec-

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retary of the Mahomedan Anglo-Oriental College, and who, since the death of Sir Syed Ahmad eight years ago, had become the foremost leader of the communal Muslim opinion, had declared in an article called "The Khalifa and the Khalifate", that the Indian Muslims had primary loyalty to the King-Emperor, though they have some love for Turkey as co-religionists. In case of a war between Great Britain and Turkey, the Indian Muslims will fight against Turkey, but will be sad about it.

The Indian Muslims would have fought against Turkey without Mohsin-ul-mulk's intervention and in any case enough Hindu soldiers could be raised in India for the purpose. Even in 1914, the Muslims formed about 24 per cent of the Indian Army, and possibly about 20 per cent in 1906. But a deliberate propaganda was being done in England to prove that the Muslims were the fighting race of India (including of course the Bengali Muslims who never came anywhere near the army, not even as clerks) and that their loyalty was essential for any action in the Middle East; a corollary of this theory which steadily developed was that Indian Muslims, having had religious ties outside India, must be satisfied to maintain cordial relations with the Middle Eastern States.

The next step towards the segregation of the Muslims was the formation of a political party, for Sir Syed's and Amir Ali's organizations were moribund and not quite suitable vehicles for the more militant type of communal politics which was expected of the Muslims. So at the invitation of Nawab Salimullah a "Muslim All-India Confederacy" gathered at Dacca on December 30, 1906 under the Presidentship of Nawab Waqar-ul-mulk. The first resolution authorised the formation of a permanent body to be called the All-India Muslim League. (It may be recalled that Curzon had helped Salimullah pay his debts.)

Three months later, Nawab Waqar-ul-mulk stated the principal objects of the League at a students' meeting in Aligarh.

> "God forbid, if the British rule disappears from India, Hindus will lord over it, and we will be in constant danger of our life, property and honour. The only way for the Muslims to escape this danger is to help in the continuance of the British rule. If the Muslims are heartily with the British, then that rule is bound to endure. Let the Muslims consider themselves as a British army ready to shed their blood and sacrifice their lives for the British Crown."[9]

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The *Times* in an editorial on January 2, 1907 effusively welcomed the League after castigating the Congress.[10] In February, however, some students of Aligarh staged a strike protesting against the behaviour of the Anglo-indian staff of the College, who, they felt, were acting more as agents of the Government than as professors of the College. Mohsin-ul-mulk, did not think it politic to antagonize the Anglo-indian professors, but hesitated to support the Principal, Archbold, strongly enough, and was forced to resign.[10a]

The office of the League was established at Aligarh, almost as an adjunct to the College, and though it was shifted to Lucknow in 1910, Aligarh remained the training camp for League politicians.

It is interesting to note that the Hindu Mahasabha was established the same year and the Maharaja of Darbhanga led a Hindu deputation to Lord Minto on March 11, 1908, requesting for imparting religious education to the Hindus in educational institutions. Minto expressed his sympathy, but got rid of the deputation by pointing out the non-sectarian nature of the Government. Nothing more is heard of this deputation; the Hindu Mahasabha still exists, but, never having enjoyed official favour, failed to thrive.

In 1907, the Congress split into the Extremist and the Moderate sections at Surat. The best account of the scuffle is given by Nevinson, the *Manchester Guardian* correspondent, who was present at the session. The *Times* does not seem to have any correspondent at Surat, but on December, 30, 1907, came out with an editorial which began by asserting that the Congress fate had been predicted before when the Moderate leaders began to speak like Extremists. After giving a résumé of the main incidents leading to Surat Congress *Times* stated: "In the free fight that ensued on the second day many heads were broken, many chairs were smashed, and eventually the less belligerent representatives of 'United India' found themselves flying for safety through rents in the canvas walls of the vast structure in which the gathering was held. Out of the strife there emerges for once the ominous figure of Mr. Bal Gangadhar Tilak who has long been—usually in the background—organizer and leader of the Extremist section....He seems to have no political principles, but to aim at destruction pure and simple." Then the *Times* analysed the Congress and showed that it was a Brahmin-lawyer organization, and by no sense an all-India body. The *Times* advised the moderates that they

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must sever all connections with the Extremists. ".....they (Indians) must show that self-government does not mean for them, as it would today, the substitution of Brahmin for the Englishman...and the subjection of all India to the control of Bengali lawyers and clerks..."

I have quoted from the *Times* editorials rather extensively because they appear to echo the sentiments of the Anglo-indians and a section of the British ruling class. It was dictated by the dual policy pursued by the British Tories towards India, and acquiesced in by the Liberal Imperialists; that was to introduce formal responsible government in India, without jeopardizing in any way British authority. Thus Morley, declared on taking office: "In Indian Government there is no grace worth having in what is praised as a concession and no particular virtue in satisfying an aspiration, unless your measures, at the same time fortify the basis of authority on which peace and order and all the elements of the public good in India depend...[11]"

Morley was here formulating the policy which has guided all the Conservatives from Curzon to Churchill. It was a pity that Morley was a Liberal intellectual, so that his pronouncements shocked the Indians more profoundly than would have been the case had he been a Tory. It is indeed curious that Morley should have taken this attitude, and stubbornly refused to 'unsettle the settled fact,' the Partition of Bengal.

Asquith seems to have had a better understanding of the situation than Morley. Speaking on the Indian Councils Bill of 1909, he said :

> "But the fact remains that there are in India things which are inevitable but which were not foreseen; such for instance, as the spread of education, the great inter-communion between the East and the West, and the infiltration among the educated classes of the Indian people of ideas which fifty or sixty years ago were perfectly alien to them and which nobody imagined would exist. These have brought about a different state of things. Owing to a number of causes of this kind you cannot rest where you are. It is most desirable in the circumstances to give to the people of India the feeling that these legislative councils are not mere automatons, the wires of which are pulled by the official hirearchy. It is of very great importance from that point of view that the non-official element should be in the ascendant, subject to proper safeguards."[12]

This is an able summary of what the Morley-Minto bill set out to accomplish. The Moderates like Pherozeshah, Surendranath and others, including Motilal Nehru, were jubilant[13]. A further

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cause of gratification was the appointment of Sir S. P. (later Lord) Sinha as the first Indian member of the Governor-General's Council. The Moderates, however, pressed for further constitutional reforms.

II

In the League session held at Nagpur in 1910, the President, Syed Nabibullah, struck a new note in League politics by attacking the Anglo-indians, who he complained, created dissension in the country. He also took up the Congress cry that the defence expenditure was too heavy. This resulted in a Hindu-Muslim unity conference at Allahabad in January 1911. In the following December, King George V annulled the Partition of Bengal at the Delhi Durbar.[14] Nationalist reaction was expressed in a gushing praise of the British. Ambika Charan Majumdar declared : "Every heart is beating in unison with reverence and devotion to the British throne, overflowing with revived confidence in and gratitude towards British statesmanship. Some of us never faltered, no not even in the darkest days of our trial and tribulations—in our hope, in our conviction, and in our faith in the ultimate triumph and vindication of British justice."[15] This feeling may have been genuine and shared by many of his countrymen.

The Muslim Leaguers, however, formed a very different opinion about the British. In the League session of March 1912, the President, Nawab Salimullah asserted that the Partition was not the result of Hindu-Muslim difference, but that the difference existed because the Muslims had so far refused to join the Hindus in anti-British campaigns. He definitely desired for a *rapproachement* with the Hindus.

Actually, Hindus were more jubilant and the Muslims more despondent than was warranted. Though the Muslims refused to take him at his word, the Aga Khan was right in holding that the annulment would prove advantageous to the Muslims. For, several Bengali speaking districts were attached to Bihar so that the reconstituted Bengal became a Muslim majority province.

In the light of later evidence, it would appear that the League's efforts to come to an arrangement with the Congress was the beginning of their double approach which henceforth characterized their policy. They had obtained without any effort from the Government more than what they should have expected, now the Government gave way to an apparent Hindu demand, hence the attempt to ally

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themselves with the Congress to harass the Government as much as possible and extract from both the maximum possible concession for the Muslims. This attitude continued till 1937, when the Congress decided to form the Provincial ministries, that is co-operate with the Government. Jinnah of course was astute enough to put the blame on the Congress, but as we shall see, his charges were, as usual with him, baseless.

The Congress was easily led by the Muslim League in this hectic period of honeymoon. For this there were several reasons. The first and the fundamental reason was that though the Congress was a non-communal organization its leadership, for obvious reasons, was Hindu, and there was an undercurrent of assumption among them, that it was a Hindu organization. Thus, the Congress, while never recognizing the Hindu Mahasabha, which was the counterpart of the Muslim League, was always negotiating with the League as if it (the Congress) were authorized to come to terms on behalf of the Hindus. The Congress later rejected Jinnah's claim that the Muslim League was the only representative organization of the Muslims, but by then it was too late and it underlined the obvious interpretation, that, whichever party or parties may have represented the Muslims, the Congress was not one of them.

Secondly, the Congress could not ignore the League's offer of friendship. From its inception it had tried to become a national organization reflecting the opinion of all Indians irrespective of religion or race. The emergence of the League was in a way subversive of Congress ideal and claim. Therefore, when the League extended its hand of friendship the Congress clasped it with alacrity. It did not occur to anybody at that time, that the League would one day refer to the Congress as a Hindu organization, and Congress reaction to League offer would lend colour to the accusation. If the Congress had spurned the League then (as it did the Hindu Mahasabha always) its claim to be a secular organization would have rested on a firmer

The Congress attempts to reform the Hindu society also lent colour to the later Muslim accusation that it was a Hindu organization. Surendranath had definitely eschewed social reform when he started the Indian Association and the Congress too followed his lead in the matter, though it passed a few pious resolutions from time to

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time. Formerly a separate social conference held its session alongside the Congress every year, but ultimately it was amalgamated with the Congress and as Gandhiji said, "in 1920 the Congress took a large step and brought the question of removal of untouchability as a plank on the political programme."[16] The untouchables, or in Gandhiji's more romantic term, Harijans, were a problem of the Hindu society; whatever may have been its political implication, Muslims could not have and actually never had any interest in this peculiar Hindu problem, just as Gandhiji never attempted to smoothen the Shia-Sunni relation. Though Gandhiji joined and virtually led the Khilafat movement, he tried to reduce it, as far as possible, to a political level in which Hindus could co-operate with the Muslims.

Lastly, the Congress politics after 1915 demanded a broad based appeal to the masses, and if the Muslim League wanted to join it, it was most welcome. The Morley-Minto reform fulfilled the ambition of most Moderates who ruled the Congress from 1908 to 1915 and this made an accommodation with the League, which was also controlled by Moderates, easier. But the forces liberated by the Partition of Bengal was neither assuaged by the Reform nor satisfied with the annulment of the Partition. The idea of *Swadeshi* (home-made) and *Swaraj* (self-rule) had caught the imagination of the people, and the Moderates failed to curb their enthusiasm.

III

Tilak came out of jail on June 17, 1914 feared by the Moderates and the Anglo-indians. He, however, had a much clearer grasp of the situation than either and felt that the educated youth would only respond to an "extremist" programme. Mrs. Besant's Home Rule movement was now slowly taking shape; she met Tilak and they agreed on the political issues as well as on the harmful results of forming a new party which might scare away the Moderates. It was therefore decided that Mrs. Besant should first win over the Congress to her ideas and that Tilak would then join the movement, but if the Congress rejected Mrs. Besant's scheme, she and Tilak would form a new party. But when the Congress rejected the Home-Rule scheme, Tilak started his 'Indian Home-Rule League' and Mrs. Besant the 'All-India Home-Rule League'. Jinnah, then a prominent member of the Congress, joined Mrs. Besant's League, though his relations

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with Tilak were cordial. Jinnah had joined the Muslim League in 1913.

In 1915, both Pherozeshah and Gokhale died and next year Tilak returned to the Congress to attend its Lucknow Session. In many ways the Lucknow Session (1916) was momentous; its President, Ambika Charan Majumdar was a Moderate, but its dominating figure was Tilak; he was the leader of the Extremists, but willing to compromise; the concord with the League was complete as a result of the conference between the representatives of the Congress and the Muslim League in accordance with the directives of the Bombay Congress of 1915. Their draft was considered by the A.I.C.C. and the League Council in October 1916. The practice of holding the League session alongside Congress had been started in 1915 at Bombay at Jinnah's instance and was repeated at Lucknow.

Thus there was complete identity of views between the Moderates, Extremists and the League. This was partly due to the widespread belief that further constitutional advance was impending and in any case would be granted after the war. All but three of the Indian members of the Imperial Legislative Council submitted a memorandum to the Viceroy indicating the lines of constitutional reforms they would prefer, while the Congress and the League formulated their scheme which declared in its preamble that "the time has come when His Majesty the King-Emperor should be pleased to issue a Proclamation announcing that it is the aim and intention of British policy to confer self-Government on India at an early date[17]."

This air of expectancy was caused by the war which was wholeheartedly supported by all sections of opinion. Even Tilak after spending six years in prison supported the war efforts unreservedly, though the Anglo-indians had no use for him. The proved valour of Indian troops raised high hopes in India that a grateful Britain would grant the Indians the equality they had been asking for so long.

Actually this question came up a few years earlier when Hardinge in his 'Delhi Despatch' of August 25, 1911 had recommended the following :

> "The maintenance of British rule in India depends on the ultimate supremacy of the Governor-General in Council, and the Indian Councils Act of 1909 itself bears testimony to the impossibility of allowing matters of vital concern to be decided by a majority of non-official votes in the Imperial Legislative Council. Nevertheless it is certain that in the course of time,

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the just demands of Indians for a larger share in the government of the country will have to be satisfied, and the question will be how this devolution of power can be conceded without impairing the supreme authority of the Governor-General in Council. The only possible solution of difficulty would appear to be gradually to give the provinces a large measure of self-government until at last India would consist of a number of administrations, autonomous in all provincial affairs, with the Government of India above them all, and possessing power to interfere in case of misgovernment but ordinarily restricting their functions to matters of Imperial concern."[18]

Not only Indian politicians but Montagu, the Under-Secretary of State, viewed this as a declaration in the direction of self-government and as defining the lines of British policy in India. But when this interpretation was challenged in Parliament by Curzon, Lord Crewe, the Secretary of State, disavowed it stating that though some Indians expected Dominion Status, "I say quite frankly that I see no future for India on those lines. I do not believe that experiment—for it would be an experiment quite new....of attempting to confer a real measure of self-government with practical freedom from Parliamentary control, upon a race which is not our own.. .is one which could be tried.....It is certainly my duty to repudiate altogether that reading of the despatch." Curzon welcoming this statement, added: "That repudiation we acknowledge; we shall remember it, and I have no doubt we shall often have good occasion to use it in the future[19]".

Hardinge, in his farewell address to the Imperial Legislature (March 1916), said :

"During the past few months I have seen mention made in speeches made at meetings in the country, and in the press of self-government, colonial self-government, and home-rule for India. I have often wondered whether these speakers and writers fully realise the conditions prevailing in Dominions, such as Canada or Australia, which render self-government possible....I do not for a moment wish to discountenance self-government for India as a national ideal; it is a perfectly natural aspiration and has the warm sympathy of all moderate men. But in the present position of India, it is not idealism that is needed by practical politics, and practical solution to questions arising out of all the social and political conditions of this country. We should look facts squarely in the face and do our utmost to grapple with realities. To lightly raise extravagant hopes and to encourage unrealisable demands can only tend to delay and not accelerate political progress[20]".

However, the new Viceroy, Chelmsford, on his arrival in India sent further proposals indicating the various lines on which progress could be expected. But Hardinge's challenge to the Indians infused

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an element of urgency among the Indians, who produced the Congress-League scheme as a basis for discussion.[21]

Possibly the new situation, the value of Indian soldiers, the support to the war by the Indians, the proof of their political maturity and Hindu-Muslim unity had some effect. Austin Chamberlain refused to consider Chelmsford's proposals and at the time of his resignation over the Mesopotamian scandal was drafting a declaration on Indian policy. Montagu, Chamberlain's successor, produced a draft resembling his predecessor's views, and this was redrafted by Curzon in its final form as follows :

> "The policy of His Majesty's Government with which the Government of India are in complete accord is that of the increasing association, with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire".

Montagu had made himself very popular in India by his generally sympathetic attitude towards Indian aspiration and his speech on "prestige" at Cambridge.[22] So his declaration (Indians did not know that either Austen Chamberlain or Curzon had anything to do with it) and his intention to proceed to India was hailed with joy, and the question of passive resistance which the Congress and the League were contemplating for some time was given up. The 'Montford' report published in July 1918, however, had a mixed reception, mainly because it had not taken into account the Congress-League scheme. Still Montagu was more or less certain of enough support within the Congress to make him hopeful for the future.

Trouble, however, came from an unexpected quarter. In 1917, Government had appointed a Committee with Sir Sidney Rowlatt as President and Kumaraswami Sastri and Provash Chandra Mitter as members, "to investigate and report on the nature and extent of the criminal conspiracies connected with the revolutionary movement, to examine and consider the difficulties that have arisen in dealing with such conspiracies and to advise Government to deal effectively with them." The Committee had enquired and submitted a Report, (January, 19, 1919) suggesting legislation which was subsequently introduced in the Imperial Legislative Council and led to a widespread discontent all over the country. At the time of the Special Congress only the Report had been published and the Congress "condemned the recommendations of the Rowlatt Committee which," it declared, "if

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given effect to, would interfere with the fundamental rights of the Indian people and impede the healthy growth of public opinion."[23]

Protest against the Rowlatt Bill was unequivocal and universal. Condemning the Bill in the Imperial Legislature Jinnah said: "....it is my duty to tell you that, if these measures are passed, you will create in this country from one end to the other a discontent and agitation the like of which you have not witnessed and it will have, believe me, a most disastrous effect upon the good relations that have existed between the Government and the people."

In the third week of March, the Rowlatt Act became law, and on March 28, Jinnah wrote to the Viceroy, accusing the Government of India having "ruthlessly trampled upon the principle for which Great Britain avowedly fought the war." He considered that the passing of the Act clearly demonstrated that the Imperial Legislative Council was a 'legislature but in name, a machine propelled by a foreign Executive." As a "protest," he tendered his resignation and ended his letter with the hope that "this Black Act would be annulled."[24] Jinnah's hope was belied but his apprehensions proved to be correct, though the Act, the centre of all controversy was never enforced. As the subsequent events showed, the Government already had enough powers to put down disturbances as all the Indian leaders had averred.

Passive resistance had been tried by Gandhiji in South Africa successfully, and after his South African tour Gokhale told the Congress: "What is the passive resistance struggle? It is essentially defensive in its nature and it fights with moral and spiritual weapons. A passive resistor resists tyranny by undergoing sufferings in his own person. He pits soul force against brute in man, he pits sufferings against oppression; he pits conscience against might; he pits faith against injustice, right against wrong."[25] This classic definition of passive resistance or *Satyagraha* had struck the right chord in Indian heart. A joint meeting of the A.I.C.C. and the Council of the League on July 28, 1917 resolved to request the Provincial Congress Committees and the Council of the League to consider the advisability of adopting a programme of *Satyagraha*, and to send their opinion to the General Secretaries within six weeks. The Madras Provincial Congress Committee adopted a resolution in favour of *Satyagraha* on August 14, 1917, and had begun to take energetic measures for its execution. On August 20, Montagu made his famous declaration as a result of which the arrangements for launching the *Satyagraha* were dropped and

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the Madras Provincial Congress Committee revoked its resolution of August 14, by a formal resolution passed on September 28, 1917.[26] In July 1918, the Montagu-Chelmsford Report was published; three months later the first world war was over. Though the Congress criticized the Montagu-Chelmsford report, it did not again consider the question of *Satyagraha*; but for the Rowlatt Act, the *Satyagraha* might never have entered Indian politics.

The Rowlatt Act prompted even a cold lawyer like Jinnah to resign his seat in the legislature after abusing the Government; in Gandhiji it induced an emotional crisis which could be assuaged only through some positive action, namely, *Satyagraha*. In this he was voicing the aspiration of the mass of India whose thirst for action he unconsciously canalized, as was proved by the spontaneous support he received.

On February 24, 1919, Gandhiji started the *Satyagraha* campaign and on March 18, a meeting of the signatories to the following pledge was held at Bombay: "Being conscientiously of opinion that the Bills known as the Indian Criminal Law Amendment....are unjust, subversive of the principles of liberty and justice and destructive of the elementary rights of an individual on which the safety of India as a whole and the State itself is based, we solemnly affirm that in the event of these Bills becoming law and until they were withdrawn, we shall refuse civilly to obey these laws and such other laws as the Committee, hereafter to be appointed may think fit, and we further affirm that in the struggle we will faithfully follow truth and refrain from violence to life, person or property."[27]

Gandhiji declared March 30 (later changed to April 6) as a day of *hartal* (general closing of shops and suspension of all business activities) prayer and public meetings all over the country. Both Hindus and Muslims responded to his call on April 6 with tremendous enthusiasm. As Rajendra Prasad says, "Gandhiji's message strangely enough reached the four corners of the country even though the Congress organization had not become so strong and widespread[28]." The *hartal* was an unqualified success. The police opened fire at many places to disperse the meetings; at Delhi, Swami Shraddhananda bared his breast and challenged the police to shoot him.[29] With a cry of admiration the Muslims carried him triumphantly to the Jama mosque to address the Muslim congregation.

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On April 8, Gandhiji left Bombay for Delhi but was arrested at Pulwal and escorted back to Bombay. This was followed by more disturbances and Gandhiji immediately suspended the movement and formally terminated it on April 18. There possibly the movement would have rested, for the Congres was not committed to it, it being conducted by Gandhiji's *Satyagraha* Committee. But something now happened which changed the entire atmosphere: the Jallianwallabagh massacre.

Before passing on to the Punjab tragedy it is necessary to emphasize that this was the turning point in Indo-British relation; it completely changed the character of the Congress, and ushered a decade of struggle. Furture historians may discuss whether the non-cooperation movement or the salt-*Satyagraha* were necessary at all, in view of the progressive constitutional changes which were being introduced from 1892. The answer is, that the struggle was precipitated by the Anglo-indians, who, so infuriated the mass of the people that the Congress in order to retain its leadership had to take account of popular sentiment and lead it. In a sense it was fortunate that the Congress took the lead under Gandhiji's non-violence programme—otherwise extreme revolutionary movements would have broken out in India. Bureaucrats are usually not politicians, and hardly ever statesmen. The danger point is reached when self-indulgence and unrestricted power leads them to believe that they are both and are more than a match for C. R. Das, Motilal Nehru, Gandhiji or even of all of them put together. In 1857, the Indians showed complete lack of political sense, in 1919, the Anglo-indians behaved almost like the degenerate Mughuls and the Marathas.

References

1. Menon, p. 9.
2. ibid.
3. For details see Ram Gopal, p. 94.
4. Nawab Mohsin-ul-mulk had become the leader of the Aligarh group after Sir Syed's death, and was the Secretary of the Aligarh College.
5. "In 1811 my ancestor, Lord Minto, advocated improvements in the Madrasah and the establishment of Muhammedan College through India." Minto apparently had forgotten that in his ancestor's time "India" meant east of the Sutlej: to the west of that river lay the territory of Maharaja Ranjit Singh with

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whom the first Lord Minto entered into very cordial relations. Incidentally Ranjit was governing "the conquering and ruling race" with a very firm hand, but these were disagreeable facts of history which Minto and his advisers always ignored.

Complete text of Minto's reply to the Muslim deputation was published in the *Times* on October 1, 1906; the same day it published an article under the heading, "The Mahomedan Memorial."

6. Countess Minto: *India, Minto and Morley*, pp. 47-8.

7. ibid, p. 20, f.n. *Speeches of Gopal Krisnna Gokhale* (Natesan & Co.) p. 1138.

8. Quoted in *CHI*, VI, p. 618.

9. Ram Gopal, op, cit, p. 101. It was this type of sentimental nonsense which endeared the Muslims to the Anglo-indians.

10. "The Session of the Indian National Congress which came to an end on Saturday is not likely to add to the reputation or to the influence of that body. The threatened split between the Extremists—the professed enemies of the British rule—and the Moderates have been averted, but averted by the adoption on the part of the Moderates of no small part of the Extremist policy....The speech with which Mr.Naoroji opened the proceedings is as *mischievous as they could* desire, and it is probably better calculated than anything they could have said themselves to promote the objects they have in view. The President claims nothing less for those whom be ambiguously styles, "the people of India", than 'self-Government' like that of the United Kingdom or the Colonies.' *No clearer proof of the levity* and folly of the Congress could be given.... There is one part of the President's address which has already received a significant reply. He appealed particularly to the Mahomedans for a thorough political union, and he rather unluckily laid down that by such a union alone could self-government be secured. A Mahomedan educational conference has been sitting at Dacca attended by 3000 delegates, and its members have determined to form an "All India Muslim League'....The *League is indeed, we suppose an inevitable outcome of the Congress movement, but, despite the eminently pacific language of its founders, there seems room for doubt whether its establishment will make for peace.* At all events its formation exposes the hollowness of the pretensions of the Congress to speak for the 'people of India' and it may perhaps remind the more cautious members of that body that agitation is a game which provokes counter agitation, and that in India the counter agitation may be conducted by the *most warlike races of the Peninsula....*" (Times editorial, January, 2 1907. Italics mine). The last sentence is significant. The British public was being constantly exposed to the propaganda barrage that the Mahomedans of India were the best fighters. As already pointed out, the Bengali Muslims were never recruited in the Indian Army, and one of their main grievances now is that they are hardly represented in the Pakistan Army. Regarding the Punjabi Muslims, it is enough to recall that they had been under Sikh rule till rescued by the British. But in spite of all these facts, which was common knowledge in those days, this mischievous propaganda was maintained in England.

10a. Khaliquzzaman, op. cit, p. 11.

11. Menon p. 8.

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12. Ram Gopal, pp. 106-107.

13. "The following telegrams have been despatched from India to Lord Morley: From Bombay—Bombay Presidency Association respectfully desires to express acknowledgement of the noble and generous statesmanship inspiring your Lordship's reform despatch: Pherozeshah.
'From Allahabad United Provinces Association, India, heartily thank you for reform announced and trust they will be carried out and further developed. Motilal Nehru (President)". *Times*, December 29, 1908, p.3.

14. It was felt by the British Government that George V must announce some "boon" to satisfy Indian aspiration. Hardinge suggested the reversal of Curzon's "unintentional but grievous mistake" in partitioning Bengal, and the transference of the capital to Delhi. The British Cabinet accepted the suggestions with some reluctance. H. Nicholson: *King George V*, p. 169.

15. Sitaramayya, I, p. 62.

16. From Gandhiji's speech before the Federal Structure Committee at the Second Round Table Conference, Sitaramayya, I, p. 20.

17 Congress-League Scheme, Sitaramayya I, Appendix II; p. 623; for the memorandum to the Viceroy by nineteen additional members of the Imperial Legislative Council, Appendix I, pp. 619-22; among the signatories to this memorandum were Malaviya, Sapru and Jinnah.

18. Menon, p. 12-13.

19. Menon, p. 13; Hansard, June 24 and 29, 1912.

20. Sethi and Mahajan: *Constitutional History of India*, p. 75.

21. See above note 17.

22. "And as for prestige, Oh! India, how much happier would have been your history if that word had been left out of the English vocabulary..." Montagu's speech at Guildhall, February 28, 1912, Sitaramayya I, p. 134. 'Face' of the Far-East, 'izzat' of the Indians was the 'prestige' of the Anglo-indians.

23. Sitaramayya, I. p. 157. According to the recommendations of the Rowlatt Committee two bills were prepared as an extension of the wartime Defence of India Act which was to expire within six months; the second bill was intended to change the Criminal Code. Due to public opposition the second bill was dropped but the first was passed into law and was the cause of popular agitation.

24. Bolitho: *Jinnah*, p. 80.

25. Sitaramayya, I. p. 48.

The idea of passive resistance was first propounded by Sri Aurobindo, who, in response to Gokhale delineated its scope as follows: .."We have told the people that there *is* a peaceful means of achieving independence in whatever form we aspired to it. We have said that by self-help by passive resistance, we can achieve it.... Passive resistance means two things. It means that in certain matters we shall not co-operate with the government of this country until it gives us what we consider our rights. Secondly, if we are persecuted, if the plough of repression is passed over us, we shall meet it not only by violence, but by suffering, by passive resistance, by lawful means. We have not said to our young men, 'when you are repressed, retaliate', we have said 'suffer'....

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We are showing the people of this country, in passive resistance, the only way in which they can satisfy their legitimate aspiration without breaking the law and without resorting to violence." R. K. Diwakar: *Mahayogi Sri Aurobindo*, pp. 79-80, for Aurobindo's article on Passive Resistance, K. P. Karunakaran: *Modern Indian Political Tradition*, pp. 172-189.

It is interesting to note, however, that people of Gujarat took recourse to Satyagraha to protest against the levy of new taxes, such as income tax and salt tax, as also to protest against the introduction of new weights and measures, details of which are given in Appendix. These happened within about a decade of Gandhiji's birth and there is a possibility of his having heard stories about these incidents in his childhood.

26. ibid, pp. 131-35.

27. ibid, p. 161.

28. Rajendra Prasad: *Autobiography*, p. 107.

29. It is not usually known that Swami Shraddhananda (born 1857) had a long political career having joined the Congress in 1888. Two incidents in his early life determined his attitude towards the British. While he was young he got the post of an Asstt. Tehsildar; one day he was called upon to look after a battalion of British soldiers passing through his area, and found them looting the provision shops. He protested to the Colonel but was asked to mind his business, upon which he came away and next day went to the District Officer to complain against the Colonel, whom he found sitting there. The District Officer (an Anglo-indian) took him to task severely for his temerity and asked him to resign which Shraddhananda did immediately.

For details see M. R. Jambunathan: *Swami Shraddhananda.*

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CHAPTER VII

JALLIANWALLA BAGH

In 1919, the Punjab was seething with discontent, mainly because of the high handed manner in which her Governor, Sir Michael O'Dwyer, had recruited men for the army and raised war loans. In February 1919, O'Dwyer requested the Government of India to take action under a regulation of 1804 to establish martial law in the Punjab, and the Government of India took necessary action.

The Rowlatt Bill *hartal* of April 6 was observed all over the Punjab, but without any greater danger to the British Raj than was caused elsewhere. On the morning of April 10, however, the District Magistrate of Amritsar called Dr. Kitchlew (who got the Stalin Peace Prize few years ago) and Dr. Satyapal to his house and spirited them away to an unknown destination. This infuriated the people who wanted to meet the District Magistrate and ask for their whereabouts, but elaborate arrangements were made to prevent them from doing so. The mob then threw brickbats and the police opened fire resulting in several casualties and at least two deaths. In revenge the mob set fire to a Bank and some other public buildings and murdered five Englishmen. On April 12 trouble broke out at Kasur and on the 14th at Gujranwalla.

Martial law was declared in different parts of the Punjab between April 13 and 20. In Amritsar it was enforced on April 13,[1] which happened to be the Hindu New Year's Day. That afternoon a public meeting was arranged in a place called the Jallianwalla Bagh in defiance of the martial law. It is a big rectangular park surrounded with high walls with a narrow alleyway leading to the road. A picket posted there should have prevented the crowd from going inside, but the intention apparently being to teach the Punjabis a lesson rather than prevent the meeting, a crowd estimated at 20,000 was allowed to collect inside the Bagh. Then Brigadier-General Dyer entered with 150 soldiers and, according to his testimony, ordered the people to disperse. The order could not be obeyed as Dyer was blocking the only egress. Then Dyer gave order to open fire. He had to stop after firing 1600 rounds as, he ruefully admitted later, his ammunition had run out, and to this merciful lack of planning thousands of Indians

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owed their lives. According to Government version, Dyer had killed 379 and wounded about 1200. As for tending the wounded Dyer told the Committee of Enquiry: "It was not my job". The entry in the war diary of the 16th Division under the date of April 14 ran as follows: "At a conference at Government House, General Dyer's Report on the action at Amritsar was considered and action taken was approved by the Lt. Governor."[2]

Then began the fancy punishments in Amritsar and other places of the Punjab; for their ingenuity in devising new forms of torture, officers like Col. Johnson, Bosworth-Smith and O'Brien stand pre-eminent.

The Punjab was completely sealed off from the rest of India and no news of these happenings were available till June, for advantage was taken of the breakout of the third Afghan war to prolong the martial law in the Punjab. In protest Sir Sankaran Nair, Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council resigned.

In September, the Viceroy appointed a Committee of Enquiry under the chairmanship of Lord Hunter, (formerly Solicitor-General in Scotland and then Senator of the College of Justice in Scotland) with three Indian and three British members. The working of this Committee will be apparent from the following quotation from the autobiography of Sir Chimanlal Setalvad, one of the members of the Committee :

> "As regards the condemnation of the Jallianwalla firing, the crawling order and other oppressive measures under the Martial Law administration the Europeans and Indian members were agreed except that the Indian members took a much graver view than the one taken by the European Members which was somewhat halting and apologetic. The discussions which were on occasions heated led to some unpleasantness, particularly because of the intolerant attitude adopted by Lord Hunter towards any difference of opinion. During one of the discussions I had with Lord Hunter, he lost his temper and said: 'You people (meaning myself and my Indian colleagues) want to drive the British out of the country.' This naturally annoyed me very much and I said: 'It is perfectly legitimate for Indians to wish to be free of foreign rule and Indian independence can be accomplished by mutual understanding, and goodwill. The driving out process will only become necessary if the British are represented in this country by people as short-sighted and intolerant as yourself.' After this, though under the same roof, we, the Indian members ceased to talk to Lord Hunter."

The Indian members submitted a minority report, and as a consequence Sir Chimanlal lost his chance of becoming the Law

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Member of the Governor-General's Executive Council offered him sometime previously[3].

The half-hearted apologetic attitude and an attempt to explain away Dyer's atrocious blunder seems to persist in some British quarters even now, and as late as September 1961, letters have appeared in the *Sunday Times* of London defending the 'Amritsar shootings'. L. Mosley, a British Journalist—presumably on the basis of these letters—states: "The Congress leaders with foolhardy recklessness and criminal stupidity considering how well they must have known the workings of General Dyer's 'whiff of grapeshot mind' still called out their followers despite martial law....It was of course a tragic dilemma in which the British found themselves, and as I have said, the guilt of Congress for it is great[4]".

What Mosley forgets is that the disturbance started precisely because the leaders, Satyapal and Kitchlew, had been kidnapped by the District Magistrate, and Gandhiji, who avowed his responsibility for the excess, was not even allowed to enter Delhi, or the Punjab. It is the Government of the Punjab which should be charged with foolhardy recklessness and criminal stupidity; and as for knowing Dyer's psychology, I doubt whether any Indian knew anything about a British Brigadier.

Was the Punjab tragedy the result of a few British officers suddenly losing their head? It does not appear to be so. There was a solid core of Anglo-indian opinion against Montagu's reforms, and a very high official wrote :

> "Past papers are full of impressive opinion, recorded by generations of the wisest Indian administration, as to the impossibility of setting up parliamentary institution in India. I need not repeat them. They dwell upon the infinite divisions of the country; the distrust between creed and races; the smallness of the intellectual class; their lack of experience in affairs and the narrowness of their interests; the inertia of the natural leaders of what is still an aristocratic society; their timidness in coming forward to contest the position with the politicians; the indifference of the great mass of the people to politics, and their preference for and disposition to rely upon an impartial non-political Government. These are the official views that have hitherto held the filed unchallenged and those who held them disbelieved profoundly in the possibility of forming anything but a tiny electorate; they believed that, even if formed, the electorate will be at the mercy of a small coterie of politicians who will use their power to exalt themselves and they turned instinctively, to plans for constructing an elaborate balance of power between all classes of interests in the country, which necessarily means that the Government will still remain the arbiter of the situation[5]."

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Even more revealing is the following letter to Setalvad from Lord Southborough on March 6, 1919 :

> "The Government of India sent home some vile despatches on our report, the franchise particularly. They were simply wantonly mischievous and designed to break up the concordat we arrived at in Committee. Nothing too strong can be said about them. They lack even the one quality which you might expect to find, knowledge of the subject. *Divide et impera* is the only policy—to delay the 'Bill' a dominating "hope".[6]

The structure on which this policy was based was crumbling. The Hindus and Muslims were united, and now no longer the Bengali Babus, but the sturdy and warlike people of the Punjab were participating in anti-Government activities. The Ghadr movement was an eye opener. It was first necessary to isolate the Punjab from the Babus and restore there the conditions obtaining under Lawrence, the ideal of the Anglo-indians. It was difficult for the Anglo-indians to realize as to why the Punjab which raised troops to suppress the Mutiny, should not repeat the performance if necessary. The obstacles were the English educated leaders, whom Lawrence no doubt would have made short work of and eliminate completely from the scene, then terrorize the people to instil in them a sense of the awful results that may follow their misguided conduct; after that quarantine the Punjab, impose strong administration and the Punjab will be all right. Then there would be no further difficulty in recruiting soldiers in the Punjab and with the "little Gurkhas" from Nepal (happily beyond the reach of the Babus) the Army would be ready for anything the Babus might do. Only some such reconstruction of thought process can explain the energetic support which Dyer and the other officers—both civil and military—received from their superiors who were eager to condone all the deliberate and appalling brutalities.

In 1921, the Duke of Connaught while inaugurating the new reform said, "An old friend of India, I appeal to you all—British and Indians—to bury along with the dead past the mistakes and misunderstandings of the past, to forgive where you have to forgive and to join hands and to work together to realize the hopes that arise from today."

This speech, in which the Duke had said that he had brought "swarajya", failed to evoke any enthusiasm in India. Anglo-indian women had raised £20,000/- for Dyer's benefit after his dismissal and

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in England he was accorded the reception usually reserved for a hero, and presented with a sword; Churchill indeed had condemned Dyer's action as "frightful' and had added that "frightfulness is not a remedy known to the British Pharmocoepia," but normal British behaviour was not a characteristic of the Anglo-indians of the twentieth century. Another dismissed officer was given a very remunerative job in a British commercial firm.

Thus Montagu's efforts to reconcile the Indian upper class to the Government was shattered; as a matter of fact it had from the beginning but little chance of success. As a step towards satisfying Indian aspiration Montagu had raised Sir S. P. Sinha to peerage and had him appointed as the Under-Secretary of State for India. The typical Anglo-indian reaction to this was conveyed in a letter to Setalvad by J. N. Roy, a Secretary to the Bengal Government: "In our Secretariat," Roy wrote, "there is great gnashing of teeth and tearing of hair. One says what title will Sinha take, another replies Baron Sinha of Dharumtolla (Dharamtolla is a quarter in Calcutta where the poor Eurasian live). Funny how these English people lack imagination and fail to see what a good effect this appointment will create in India[7]."

As a matter of fact, the Anglo-indians were in no mood to compromise having bared their fangs at Jallianwallabagh. As stated above, Setalvad lost the Law Membership of the Viceroy's Council for his plain speaking. On August 20, Lord Sinha, still the Under-Secretary of State for India wrote to him: "I need not say I did my best that you should be transferred to Simla and so did Montagu. But I am afraid your friend Lowndes was too strong for us." (Lowndes was the retiring Law Member who had offered the post to Setalvad and later withdrew it). About this time B. N. Basu wrote to Sir Dinshaw Wacha: "I was having a talk with Mr. Montagu about our friend Setalvad. He entirely agrees with me about the interpretation that will be put on his being overlooked by the Government of India[8]."

Thus, while the well-meaning Secretary of State was forced by political conventions to remain a spectator, the Anglo-indians were fast exhausting the goodwill of the Liberal minority in India whom they did their best to discredit, though in November 1918, Surendranath had dissociated himself from the Congress and formed the Liberal Party, pledged to work the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms.

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For the rest of India, Jallianwalla Bagh ended an era. What it meant for the Indians is best expressed in Gandhiji's written statement at the time of his prosecution in 1922:

"I owe it perhaps to the Indian public and to the public in England, to placate which this prosecution is mainly taken up, that I should explain why from a staunch loyalist and co-operator I have become an uncompromising disaffectionist and no-co-operator. To the Court too, I should say why I plead guilty to the charge of promoting disaffection towards the Government established by law in India.

"My public life began in 1893 in South Africa in troubled weather. My first contact with British authority in that country was not of a happy character. I discovered that, as a man and an Indian I had no rights. On the contrary, I discovered that, I had no right as a man because I was an Indian.

"But I was not baffled. I thought that this treatment of Indians was an excrescence upon a system that was intrinsically and mainly good. I gave the Government my voluntary and hearty co-operation, criticizing it fully where I felt it was faulty, but never wishing its destruction.

"Consequently when the existence of the Empire was threatened in 1890 by the Boer challenge, I offered my services to it, raised a volunteer ambulance corps, and served at several actions that took place for the relief of Lady Smith. Similarly, in 1906, at the time of the Zulu revolt, I raised a stretcher-bearer party and served till the end of the 'rebellion'. On both these occasions I received medals and was even mentioned in despatches. For my work in South Africa, I was given by Lord Hardinge a Kaisar-i-Hind Gold Medal. When the war broke out in 1914 between England and Germany, I raised a volunteer ambulance corps in London consisting of the then resident Indians in London, chiefly students. Its work was acknowledged by the authorities to be valuable. Lastly in India when a special appeal was made at the War Conference in Delhi in 1917 by Lord Chelmsford for recruits,[9] I struggled at the cost of my health to raise a corps in Kheda, and the response was being made even when the hostilities ceased and orders were received that no more recruits were wanted. In all these efforts at service, I was actuated by the belief that it was possible by such services to gain a status of full equality in the Empire for my countrymen.

"The first shock came in the shape of the Rowlatt Act, a law designed to rob the people of all real freedom. I felt called upon to lead an intensive agitation against it. Then followed the Punjab horrors beginning with the massacre at Jallianwalla Bagh and culminating in crawling orders, public floggings and other indescribable humiliations. I discovered too that the plighted word of the Prime Minister to the Muslims of India regarding the integrity of Turkey and the holy places of Islam was not likely to be fulfilled.

"But in spite of the foreboding and the grave warnings of friends, at the Amritsar Congress in 1919, I fought for co-operation and working the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms, hoping that the Prime Minister would redeem his promise to the Indian Muslims, that Punjab would be healed, and that the Reforms, inadequate and unsatisfactory though they were, marked a new era of hope in the life of India.

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"But all that hope was shattered. The Khilafat promise was not to be redeemed. The Punjab crime was whitewashed and the semi-starved masses of Indians are slowly sinking to lifelessness. Little do they know that their miserable comfort represents the brokerage they get for the work they do for the foreign exploiter, that the profits and the brokerage are sucked from the masses. Little do they realise that the Government established by law in British India is carried on for this exploitation of the masses. No sophistry, no jugglery, in figures can explain away the evidence of the skeletons in many villages present to the naked eye. I have no doubt whatsoever that both England and the town-dwellers of India will have to answer, if there is God above, for this crime against humanity which is perhaps unequalled in history. The law itself in this country has been used to serve the foreign exploiter. My unbiased examination of the Punjab Martial Law cases has led me to believe that at least ninety-five per cent of the convictions were wholly bad. My experience of political cases in India leads me to the conclusion that, in nine out of every ten, the condemned men were totally innocent. Their crime consisted in love of their country. In ninety-nine cases out of hundred, justice has been denied to Indians as against Europeans in the Courts of India. This is not an exaggerated picture. It is the experience of almost every Indian who has had anything to do with such cases. In my opinion the administration of the law is thus prostituted consciously or unconsciously for the benefits of the exploiter.

"The greatest misfortune is that Englishmen and their Indian associates in the administration of the country do not know that they are engaged in the crime I have attempted to describe. I am satisfied that many English and Indian officials honestly believe that they are administering one of the best systems devised in the world, and that India is making steady though slow progress. They do not know that a subtle but effective system of terrorism and an organised display of force on the one hand, and the deprivation of all powers of retaliation or self-defence on the other, have emasculated the people and induced in them the habit that has added to the ignorance and the self-deception of the administrators. Section 124-A, under which I am happily charged, is perhaps the prince among the political sections of the Indian Penal Code designed to suppress the liberty of the citizens.[10] Affection cannot be manufactured or regulated by law. If one has no affection for a person or thing, one should be free to give the fullest expression to his disaffection, so long as he does not contemplate, promote or incite violence. But the section under which Mr. Banker and I are charged is one under which mere promotion of disaffection is a crime. I have studied some of the cases tried under it, and I know that some of the most loved of India's patriots have been convicted under it. I consider it a privilege, therefore, to be charged under it. I have endeavoured to give in their briefest outline the reasons for my disaffection. I have no personal ill-will against any single administrator, much less can I have any disaffection towards the King's person. But I hold it to be a virtue to be disaffected towards a Government which in its totality, has done more harm to India than any previous system. India is less manly under the British rule, than she ever was before. Holding such a belief, I consider it to be a sin to have affection for the system. And it has been a precious privilege for me to be able to write what I have, in the various articles tendered in evidence against me.

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"In fact I believe that I have rendered a service to India and England by showing in non-co-operation the way out of the unnatural state in which both are living. In my humble opinion non-co-operation with evil is as much a duty as is co-operation with good. But in the past, non-co-operation has been deliberately expressed in violence to tax the evil-doer. I am endeavouring to show to my countrymen that violent non-co-operation only multiplies evil, and that as evil can only be sustained by violence, withdrawal of support of evil required complete abstention from violence. Non-violence implies voluntary submission to the penalty for non-co-operation with evil. I am here, therefore, to invite and submit cheerfully to the highest penalty that can be inflicted upon me for what, in law, is a deliberate crime and that appears to me to be the highest duty of a citizen. The only course open to you, the Judge and the Assessors, is either to resign your posts and thus dissociate yourself from evil if you feel that the law you are called upon to administer is an evil and that in reality I am innocent, or to inflict on me the severest penalty if you believe that the system and the law you are assisting to administer are good for the people of this country and that my activity is therefore injurious to the public weal."[11]

Thus Gandhiji articulated the rebellious spirit of his countrymen. Some of them differed from him on the non-violent methods which he advocated but accepted heartily his principle, that non-co-operation with the Government should be the nationalist approach. A handful of Liberals opposed non-co-operation and were swept out of Indian politics.

References

1. The local officials had handed over the administration of Amritsar city to the military on April 10 in anticipation of approval by higher authorities; the martial law was declared later. There was some dispute as to whether martial law was in force on April 13; it may be taken, however, that the people knew that they were under military administration. The voluntary abdication of the Anglo-indian civilians at the first crisis is an eloquent testimony to their much vaunted claim of being the natural leaders of the Punjab. This dangerous illusion persisted till the great tragedy of 1947. Actually the Anglo-indian civilians were obeyed due to the presence of British soldiers.
2. Chimanlal H. Setalvad: *Recollections and Reflections* p. 307, Setalvad was a member of the Government Enquiry Committee.
3. ibid, pp. 311, 320.
4. L. Mosley: *The Last days of the British Raj*, p. 75.
5. Menon, p. 17; Menon does not name the official.
6. Setalvad, op. cit. 298.
7. ibid, 297.
8. ibid, 321.

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9. Gandhiji supported the resolution in favour of maximum Indian contribution both of manpower and of munitions in the all-parties conference convened by Viceroy, Chelmsford, for this purpose. Here is an Anglo-indian's interesting account of that strange conference which within two years escaped from everyone's memory:"Early on Monday, the Viceroy accompanied by his staff, went to re-open the proceedings. He made a short speech and we all thought that many more speeches would follow when in the middle of the assembly a lean wiry figure, very simply dressed in white, was seen to rise and a still quiet voice said, first in Hindi and then in English 'This proposal has my full and unqualified support'. The speaker was Mr. Gandhi. There was a murmur of assent and a general feeling that, Mr. Gandhi having said so much in so few words, there was no occasion for other members of the conference to say anything. Lord Chelmsford who was apparently taken up by surprise, rose and, by the common consent of many who knew him well, made the best and best-received speech of the whole of his term as Viceroy." B.J. Gould: *The Jewel in the Lotus* p. 56; (Chatto and Windus, London, 1957). This was an historic occasion, being the last time that Gandhiji unreservedly agreed with a British proposal.

10. Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code was as follows: "Whoever by words, either spoken or written or by signs or by visible representation or otherwise, brings or attempts to bring into hatred or contempt or excites or attempts to excite disaffection towards Her Majesty's Government established by law should be punished with transportation for life or any shorter term to which fine may be added or with imprisonment which may extend to three years to which fine may be added or with fine."

11. For Gandhiji's written statement, see Sitaramayya, pp. 238-41. Gandhiji received a sentence of six years' imprisonment (March 1922) but was released on February 5, 1924 after an appendectomy performed on January, 12 1924.

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CHAPTER VIII

ATTEMPTS AT HARMONY

I

Among the effects of the Rowlatt Act and Jallianwallabagh were, the introduction of *satyagraha* as a reality in Indian politics, a temporary emotional integration of the Hindus and Muslims, and the emergence of Gandhiji as the supreme leader.

Gandhiji was possibly the greatest mass leader the world has ever seen. He imposed his will on the Congress, that is bulk of the Hindus, from 1919 to 1946, and the history of this period is inextricably woven around his activities. He wrested the initiative first from his colleagues and ultimately from the Government.

One of the reasons which helped Gandhiji was that the country was ready for a great leader.[1] This was the effect of devoted work by a long band of patriots which resulted in popular awakening. They were helped in their task by the repressive measures adopted by the bureaucracy to suppress all nationalist demands; the Partition of Bengal had given a fillip to the revolutionaries, who, introduced the cult of violence on a large scale.[2] Their aim was explained by Barin Ghosh, Sri Aurobindo's brother: "We did not mean or expect to liberate our country by killing a few Englishmen. We wanted to show people how to dare and die."[3]

The political murders and robberies received wide publicity and roused the people who also became eager to do something. The revolutionary activity had started in 1905 and gathered momentum after 1920. Revolutionaries did not have any mass following, primarily because their work had to be done secretly, and secondly, for want of sufficient arms. If in the 1920's the Indians had come across the arms and munition dumps left by the Americans in 1946, the history of India might have been somewhat different. However, the revolutionaries always joined Gandhiji's movements under his leadership.

The idea was widespread, and one might say universal, among the rising generation, that the day of petitioning was over and that the day of action had come. All that they looked for in a leader was to give them a programme and lead them. Armed revolution on a

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mass scale was not a practical possibility, so Gandhiji's *satyagraha* was the only alternative.

The questions that will be asked for a long time to come are, whether the no-co-operation movement of 1920 and the salt *satyagraha* of 1930 were really necessary and whether Gandhiji's methods and tactics were correct. Today we are too near the events, through which many of us have passed to answer the questions with any degree of assurance. It is apparent, however, that Gandhiji awakened the Indian mass from lethargy to a new sense of values based on human dignity and impressed on a group of politicians in England, that India could no longer be kept under bondage.

II

Gandhiji started the non-cooperation movement in 1921 with the slogan; "Swaraj within a year," but the movement was in effect an offshoot of the Khilafat movement, and he has been severely criticized for having linked the two, and for his general policy towards the Muslims, which was influenced by the Khilafat leaders. To judge him on this issue one has to keep in mind the Congress policy on the Hindu-Muslim problem.

In 1889, the Congress had passed resolutions assuring the Muslims of adequate representation in any election.[4] Since then the gaining of Muslim support had been a regular policy of the Congress. Jinnah was practically Gokhale's follower, and we have noted above Gokhale's views on communal electorate. Of Tilak it is said that as soon as he came out of prison in 1914, he felt that "the Nationalist movement had to be revived, and if possible should join forces with the new Muslim political leaders in a united force.[5]" The Lucknow Pact of 1916 which fulfilled Tilak's wish was the handiwork of many persons but Gandhiji was not among them. He was present in the Lucknow Session but so was Tilak, Motilal, Surendranath and Sir Rash Behari Ghosh. Actually Tilak dominated the Lucknow Congress, and Gandhiji was elected to the subjects committee at his intervention.

The Lucknow Pact recognized that the Muslim League was the only representative organization of Indian Muslims, and that Muslim interest could be served only through Muslim representatives elected by Muslim electorates.[6] The conclusion that, though the Congress included Muslims among its members it was in the main a Hindu or-

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ganization, was so obvious that it could not have escaped the notice of Tilak, Surendranath, Sir Rashbehari Ghosh or Motilal. Presumably they acquiesced, for they belonged to a generation which had seen the beginning of Indian nationalism as a Hindu revivalist movement, and could appreciate the feeling of the Muslims who demanded separate electorate as the price of their support.

The Lucknow session also accepted the Congress-League scheme for self-government. The Congress leaders at that time apparently felt this to be the limit of their demand, so they did not take into consideration that in future the Congress might advance more exacting demands to the British. In that case would a fresh pact with the Muslims be necessary? It seems that such an understanding is inherent in the Congress-League Scheme unless the Congress could show that it had Muslim support independent of the Muslim League.

Whether Gandhiji pondered over these theoretical considerations may be doubted, but it is evident that he had inherited his predecessors' notion of the political reality in India in which the support of a Muslim organization was held to be necessary for any political activity. Gandhiji's responsibility was that he failed to see the incongruity of this appraisal and was content to follow it to its logical conclusion.

III

Gandhiji's programme of protest against the Rowlatt Act was ratified by the nation, with unexpected enthusiasm and unprecedented show of Hindu-Muslim unity. To a man of Gandhiji's temperament the conclusion was obvious: he could lead the Hindus and Muslims in a struggle against the British provided he could devise a programme acceptable to both. That would explain why he began so cautiously in the Amritsar session of 1919, when C. R. Das advocated the rejection of the constitutional reforms, but Gandhiji's views prevailed. Speaking on the Jallianwallabagh massacre he said: "I agree that there was grave provocation given by the Government in arresting Dr. Kitchlew and Dr. Satyapal and in arresting me, who was bent on a mission of peace at the invitation of Dr. Satyapal and Swamiji,—these troubles would not have arisen. But the Government went mad at the time; we went mad also at the time. I say, do not return madness with madness, but return madness with sanity and the whole situation will be yours."

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Gandhiji changed his position completely in the special Calcutta session of the Congress held in September 1920 when he moved his non-co-operation resolution which was passed against the opposition of C. R. Das. One of the reasons of Gandhiji's great popularity now was that, he had declared some time previously that he would advocate the acceptance of Hindustani as the *lingua franca* and urge a linguistic redistribution of Provinces.[8] The linguistic redistribution of Provinces had been mooted in the Congress by Mahesh Narayan of Bihar in 1894 and was in principle accepted by the A.I.C.C. in 1917 with Tilak's blessings.[9] But the adoption of Hindustani as the *lingua franca* seems to have been Gandhiji's contribution to the language problem. At that time these two resolutions seemed innocuous, and in the prevailing atmosphere of Anglophobia none dared to question the wisdom of adopting Hindustani as the *lingua franca.* There is no doubt that these gained Gandhiji large following all over India and may have been a potent cause of his victory at Calcutta. However at the Nagpur session held in December 1920, C. R. Das accepted the non-co-operation resolution.[10]

The defect of Gandhiji's non-co-operation resolution was that it was based on the Khilafat question; the Punjab massacre was included in the resolution as the secondary cause of the movement; but, in the previous year Gandhiji had asked for forgetting the episode, so it was evident that the Khilafat was the one and only reason for the Congress launching a non-co-operation movement, the first of its kind in India.

The Khilafat question was based on the supposed assurance given by Llyod George during the war to the Indian Muslims that Turkey will not be deprived by Great Britain of the lands in "Asia Minor and Thrace which are predominantly Turkish in race." The unique contention of the Indian Muslims was that this assurance meant that Mesopotamia, Syria, Palestine, and Arabia with all the holy places situated therein, must always remain under the suzerainty of the Turkish Khalifa.

The Khilafat movement began with the observation of the Khilafat day all over India on October 27, 1919 and on November 23, the Khilafat conference met at Delhi. From the beginning, the organizers of the Khilafat movement were aiming at Hindu support and their letter of invitation sent round to the Hindus slyly mentioned that the question of cow slaughter would be considered. This collected

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a large number of Hindus at a joint conference held on October 17, 1919. Gandhiji was also present, and it was the shrewdest possible political manouvre on the part of the Muslims to elect him as the President. Gandhiji was emotionally overwhelmed that on such a purely religious issue the Muslims should have trusted him with their leadership; if he could only lead them properly the emotional integration of the two communities was certain. After this the Muslim divines, particularly Muhammad Ali and Shaukat Ali, gained such ascendancy over him as no person before or afterwards exercised.

Unfortunately, the issue which Gandhiji accepted as his own and elevated to an all-India issue was hopelessly apocryphal. Even if one accepts for the sake of argument, that, in these days of internationalism, it was not morally wrong to champion the cause of fallen Turkey, the question would still remain as to what right Turkey had on Arab lands or the holy cities which hated Turkish rule almost as bitterly as the Indians hated the British rule; and these Arabs were Muslims, if anything, better Muslims than the Turks. There is no doubt that the British were quite justified in releasing the people, many of whom had fought alongside the British against the Turks, from the Turkish yoke. But these questions do not seem to have been considered by Gandhiji at all. He was content that the question had upset the Indian Muslims, therefore he should come to the aid of his Muslim brethren.[11]

To the Indian Muslims generally, Khilafat was a vague ideal and they were as much the dupes of the Khilafat leaders as were Gandhiji and the Hindus. The Khilafat movement was doomed from the beginning, even so it could be justified if permanent Hindu-Muslim accord had been the result. As Renan has said: "To have had common glories in the past, to possess a common will in the present, to have achieved great things together, to be determined upon further achievement these are the essential conditions for being a people." To make the Hindus and Muslims one people, not united by the Lucknow pact, but by an organic tie, some common struggle was possibly necessary. But not only the cause selected was weak, the Muslims who now came forward as the champions of united action proved to be false. Gandhiji had committed a grievous error in choosing his friends, particularly Muhammad Ali.

It was most unfortunate that Tilak died just at this critical time

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(July 31, 1920). Unfortunately, his stand on both Khilafat and non-co-operation was equivocal. In his manifesto of the Congress Democratic Party, he had stated: "....This party supports the claim of the Muslims for the solution of the Khilafat question according to Muslim dogmas and beliefs and the tenets of the Koran."[12] Regarding non-co-operation Gandhiji has recorded Tilak's opinion thus: "About non-co-operation Tilak significantly repeated what he said to me before: 'I like the programme well enough, but I have my doubts as to the country being with us in the self-denying ordinance which non-co-operation presents to the people. I will do nothing to hinder the progress of the movement, I wish you every success, and if you gain the popular ear you will find in me an enthusiastic supporter.'"[13] Now that we know the subsequent history, it appears that Tilak's programme[14] was better with more fruitful consequence for the future.

Mrs. Besant for various reasons had now become unpopular and the All-India Home Rule League elected Gandhiji as its President with the active support of Jinnah. From the beginning Gandhiji tried to enforce his will on some of the members of the Home Rule League who held views different from his own, but the breaking point was reached when he tried to change the name of the Home Rule League to Swarajya Sabha, and substitute in the aims of the society the words, 'peaceful and legitimate means' for 'constitutional means.' On October 2, 1920 a meeting of the Home Rule League was held at the Gokuldas Market Hall, Bombay; Gandhiji presided and those present included the two Nehrus, and Rajagopalachari. Jinnah and Jayakar brought an amendment to Gandhiji's original resolution, but it was defeated and so was another amendment brought by K. M. Munshi and Harshidhbhai Divatia (later Chief Justice of Saurashtra). Jinnah then proposed a third amendment that "Swaraj means responsible government within the empire." This too was defeated, and the original resolution passed by a simple majority. Jinnah immediately pointed out that according to their rules the constitution could not be changed except by a three-fourths majority. But Gandhiji as President overruled Jinnah's objection upon which he left the meeting followed by Jayakar, Munshi, Divatia and a few others. Three days later nineteen members followed Jinnah and resigned.

This created a breach between Jinnah and Gandhiji which was never healed.. In 1924, C. R. Das and Motilal Nehru came to Bombay and arrived at an understanding with Jinnah but when he heard that

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this settlement to be effective had to be ratified by Gandhiji, he refused to be a party to it.

The full effect of Jinnah's mistrust was not apparent for many years to come. Its immediate effect was to bring the Muslim Ulemas and the Khilafatists to the forefront of Muslim politics. For a brief period Muhammad Ali became a national hero due to Gandhiji's persistent effort on his behalf. But Gandhiji went to even greater length to please the Ulemas, as Sitaramayya records with his usual complacence :

> "One notable feature of the Ahmedabad Session was the prominent part played by the Muslim Divines in advising the Congress on the political matters that came up before it. Regarding the conditions of individual and Mass Civil Disobedience, there was considerable discussion over the question of non-violence,—whether it should be in thought, words and deed. It will be remembered that the Calcutta resolution included 'word and deed' only. The Muslims objected to the addition of the word 'thought' in the volunteers' pledge as opposed to the *Shariat* and therefore *intent* was substituted for the word 'thought'. In all these matters the Ulemah played a notable part in interpreting political ideas in the light of *Al Quoran*, the *Shariat* and the *Hadis*. We shall see later on that their aid was invoked on matters of council-entry as well, and conduct of affairs thereafter."[15]

In view of Gandhiji's treatment of Jinnah, there can hardly be any doubt that he would have refused to accept any amendment to the volunteers' pledge had it been brought by Jinnah on political and rational grounds. But Gandhiji, being a religious man, could sympathize with the religious susceptibilities of others, hence the ascendancy of the Ulemas in the Congress. The Ulemas too proved congenial companions for they were extremely anti-British, but for reasons which drove the Wahabis into rebellion. What was forgotten was that the Wahabis were also violently anti-Hindu, for, their motivation was not national but a fanatic devotion to their creed. This aspect of the Ulemas, unfortunately, Gandhiji never realized in his life.

The result of Gandhiji's acceptance of the Ulemas and Khilafatists as the leaders of Muslim opinion, was that he lost contact with the slowly emerging group of English educated Muslim middle class, whose differences with the Hindus were not scriptural but concerned Government jobs. This class was formed by Sir Syed and was represented by Jinnah, none of whom ever came under the control of the Ulemas. Actually, the Muslim Ulemas, had formed a distinct and dominating pressure group since the early days of the Sultanate, and

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Akbar was the only Muslim monarch who was able to break their dominance. These Ulemas had never reconciled themselves to the British rule or English education and now for tactical reasons some of them accepted Gandhiji's leadership.

The Ulemas usually taught the Muslims that they belonged primarily to the Muslim brotherhood of which the Khalifa was the head; so that even in a crisis between the Khalifa and Indian nationalism their duty would have been to help the Khalifa. From the standpoint of Indian nationalism, this was a reactionary attitude and, as we know now, a fallacious reading of the historical situation. Both these points would have been evident even in 1920, if it were calmly deliberated upon. Instead of that, temporary advantage was taken of the emotional fervour. For this not only Gandhiji but all the leaders must share responsibility.

The feeling of the Hindus were so anti-British that they accepted the Khilafat movement even more earnestly than the Muslims, and thousands went to the gaol cheerfully. In the meantime the Prince of Wales (now Duke of Windsor) visited India and was greeted by the empty streets of Bombay. This seems to have upset, the Viceroy, Reading, and Setalvad states that he broke down at what happened in Bombay.[16] In order to prevent the repetition of Bombay scene, Reading sent feelers to C. R. Das through Pandit Malaviya. His proposal was that the Congress should call off the boycott of the celebrations in connection with the Prince of Wales's arrival in Calcutta; in exchange all the prisoners under the Criminal Law Amendment Act would be released and a Round Table Conference held to consider the Reform Scheme. C. R. Das, who was in Alipore jail, agreed, but Gandhiji in Ahmedabad rejected the terms because it would have left Muhammad Ali and few others in gaol, as they had been convicted under another provision of law. As time was short (Malaviya had started negotiations with the Viceroy on 21st December and the Prince arrived in Calcutta on the 25th) nothing more could be done, and the negotiations fizzled out. C. R. Das and many others have since then strongly criticized Gandhiji for his failure to grasp an opportunity. Even a staunch follower of Gandhiji like Rajendra Prasad writes: "Deshbandhu Das was, however, not convinced and when he was released he said at a public meeting in Calcutta, that Gandhiji had blundered. It is for future historians to see those events with detachment and give verdict on them. I can only say that our experience of negotia-

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tions with the British Government was always rather bitter. We often got lost in verbiage.... He (Gandhiji) had no faith in the sincerity of purpose of the British Government."[17]

However, Gandhiji was not the only person who had lost faith in the British Government. Netaji was probably the most anti-British leader thrown up by the national movement, but even he could not agree with Gandhiji's decision and wrote: "....The Deshabandhu was beside himself with anger and disgust. The chance of a life-time, he said, had been lost. The feeling among the political prisoners as also among the Congress rank and file, was that the Mahatma had committed a serious blunder....[18]"

Within two months Gandhiji had to suspend the non-co-operation movement (February 12, 1922) on account of the Chauri Chaura incident (February 5, 1922). It seems, therefore, that it would have been just as well had he opened negotiations with Reading in the previous December, when he would be negotiating from a position of strength with the ability to confer some positive favour to the Viceroy if not to the Government as a whole. Now the movement was petering out and Gandhiji was arrested on March 13, and sentenced to six years' imprisonment. As C. F. Andrews remarked on Gandhiji's arrest : "From a worldly point of view, it was a diplomatic stroke, but it had no chivalry in it." If instead of arresting Gandhiji, Reading had renewed his offer, possibly the happening of the next decade could have been avoided.

In 1923, Kemal Ataturk declared Turkey a Republic and after Sultan Abdul Hamid fled, his nephew was appointed the Caliph, a purely religious office. On this the Indian Muslims pleaded for the better treatment of the Caliph, and Kemal seized upon this as an excuse for abolishing the Caliphate on the ground that its existence would lead to foreign interference in Turkish affairs. This news reached India on March 20, 1924 and gradually the Khilafat movement died out. As Nehru says: "The Khilafat movement had its centre elsewhere, and when the core itself was eliminated by Ataturk, the superstructure collapsed, leaving the Muslim masses bewildered and disinclined to any political action."[18a]

The chief justification for the Congress joining the Khilafat movement was that thereby Hindu-Muslim unity would be achieved. However, even while the non-co-operation movement in support of Khilafat was at its height, a violent anti-Hindu riot broke out in Malabar.

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It is usually known as the Moplah rebellion because the Muslim Moplahs first turned against the British, but later the Hindus became the object of their fury, and indescribable horror followed.

IV

Gandhiji was released on February 5, 1924 and presided over the Belgaum Congress held in the following December. In the meantime serious differences had arisen between two groups of Congressmen, one favouring joining the new legislatures the others opposing it. The former under C.R. Das and Motilal Nehru formed the Swarajist Party and joined the legislatures to oppose the working of the new constitution from within. The importance of Swarajist Party was that it gave the Congressmen some training in Parliamentary form of Government, without which it would have been impossible for the Congress to form Provincial Ministries in 1937, or assume power a decade later.

After the death of C. R. Das, dissensions broke out amongst the members of the Swarajist Party[19]. Motilal defined the Party's policy as "co-operation, non-co-operation, construction, destruction as occasion and national interests demanded[20]." But the Swarajists did not have that party discipline which could allow them to maintain this flexible policy and in 1926 Lala Lajpat Rai resigned from the Swarajist Party, which now was known as the Congress Party in the Assembly, after a bitter, sometimes personal, quarrel with Motilal for having walked out of the Assembly[21].

Disintegration set in the Swarajist Party, which Birkenhead had once described as the "most highly organized party in India." Sir Basil Blackett, a member of the Governor-General's Executive Council had once gone out of the way to point out how the Swarajists had been helping the Government: "What is Panditji (Motilal) doing in passing the Steel Protection Bill, in passing last year's budget, in separating the Railway Finance? What else is Mr. Patel doing in presiding over this house[22]."

These praises were meant to induce the Swarajists to collaborate with the Government more intimately and accept ministry in the Provinces. That, however, was not possible. The country was against co-operation with the Government under any terms. Though the Congress during this period was not following any particular programme, the revolutionaries had not slackened their activities and their oc-

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casional outburst inflamed the people's imagination and induced in them a revolutionary mood. They could tolerate their representatives going to the Assembly to "wreck it from within," but would never have forgiven them if they accepted office. The fate of Sir Surendranath, who after having served a term as a Minister, was defeated in the elections by the late Dr. B. C. Roy, then an unknown young man, was a stern reminder.

It was a critical time for the Congress. The programme, adopted by those who did not favour joining the legislature, was more or less social work and hardly calculated to bring about any change in the political structure of the country. Those who had entered the legislatures, gradually began to realize the futility of permanent opposition, which after all could not alter the course of events. "The history of the Congress" writes Sitaramayya, "has by this time (1926) become a monotonous tale of pious resolutions at the annual sessions and perpetual strifes in the Councils."[23] Describing the events of 1927 he writes : "The fact was that the members of the Working Committee were tired. Statutory enquiry, Royal Commission, Deputation to England, were all in the air and they were hard realities which could not be ignored."[24] It is significant that Gandhiji after presiding over the Belgaum Congress in 1924, kept himself somewhat aloof from it for the next four years.

With the end of non-co-operation movement began the lean years of the Congress. Swaraj had not come within a year as Gandhiji had promised nor did the opposition within the legislature produce any visible effect on the administration. Conditions were settling down to an uneasy normal, when Birkenhead, the Secretary of State, appointed the Simon Commission. Immediately the political situation changed.

The Simon Commission, like the Rowalatt Act, was opposed by all sections of Indian opinion as it did not contain any Indian. Birkenhead aggravated the tension by his most injudicious remark in reply to the Maharajah of Burdwan's friendly warning. "You dare not reject anything," Birkenhead told the Maharajah, "that we offer you and if you dare do it, we shall see." "Quite so," commented Mrs. Besant, "all the world will see and the world will remember that Lord Birkenhead was one of those who entered into a treasonable conspiracy, drilling an army and filling a treasury to fight His Majesty's troops in Northern Ireland. And now that a Commission is appointed

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in which India's immediate destiny is to be fixed, and from which Indians are boycotted, he loses his temper over a suggestion that Indians may copy his own policy of boycott. Surely imitation would be the sincerest flattery[25]."

V

But before commenting on the effect of the Simon Commission it is necessary to describe the tragic situation which was developing in India as a result of the Hindu-Muslim riots. We have already referred to the Moplah rebellion. In spite of the great injuries which the Moplahs inflicted on the Hindus, the Congress was inclined to pass it over as a regrettable incident without much significance. But soon after, Hindu-Muslim riots began to break out with sickening regularity all over North India. The usual causes of these riots were some trivial incidents connected with the Muharram, playing music before mosque during some Hindu festival, or cow-slaughter in a public place.

During 1921-22 there were minor riots, and the next year passed peacefully, but in 1924 a terrible riot broke out at Kohat in which most of the Hindus had to flee from the city after their property had been looted and many killed. Thereafter Hindu-Muslim riots became a regular feature of Indian life. No enquiry was made to establish the root causes of these riots, and the Government was always chary of admitting that these riots were mostly due to Muslim truculence. The nationalist politicians, that is Hindus, saw in these riots the application of the British policy of Divide and Rule, but hardly anyone saw the glaring truth of the Muslims' passionate desire to be divided. The Anglo-indians could hardly have exploited the situation but for the Muslims' perpetual attitude of hostility towards the Hindus, fanned by their leaders who were always keen to emphasize their communal interests. Indeed at Kohat began the civil war which culminated in 1946 : the riots of the intervening two decades being incidents of that civil war. Violence and bitterness increased as the prospect of self-government drew nearer.

Gandhiji went on a twenty-one-day fast in 1924 which resulted in a Unity Conference. But the Conference accomplished just nothing.

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The reasons are obvious. Before his fast Gandhiji had issued a statement in which among other things he referred to Muhammad Ali in whose house he fasted and said : "...And who is Muhammad Ali ? Only two days before the fast we had a discussion about a private matter in which I told him that what was mine was his and what was his was mine..." The same Muhammad Ali was saying about him a year later : "However pure Mr. Gandhi's character may be, he must appear to me from the point of view of religion inferior to any Mussalman, even though he be without character[26]". Neither Gandhiji nor any Hindu nationalist leader took into account such statements, but, in view of what happened later, there is no doubt that Muhammad Ali was voicing the sentiments of a large number of his co-religionists.

As a reaction to Muslim communal attitude some Hindus began to organize themselves outside the Congress. The Hindu Mahasabha was established in 1906, but lay dormant till revived in 1923, when it held its first important session at Banaras under the Presidentship of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya. Lala Lajpat Rai also joined the Mahasabha. One of the aims of the Hindu Mahasabha was to convert people of other faiths which was opposed by the Muslims; the Muslim sentiment was also outraged when the anti-untouchability programme was started. It is not difficult to understand their point of view: the position of the Muslim leaders depended (it still does) on their community being a huge minority, so that it gave them the advantage of a majority in certain provinces along with certain delectable minority rights everywhere; this was totally unlike the position of the Parsis or the Indian Christians who were real minorities. The Muslim interest was to increase their number by conversion while any increase in the number of Hindus was looked with apprehension. But it was impossible to give in to the Muslim demand and prevent the Hindu social workers from doing what the Muslims had been doing since they arrived in India. However, a Muslim fanatic murdered Swami Shraddhananda because of his proselytizing activities. The Hindus all over India was shocked, but the Muslims did not show any sign of being unduly perturbed, which was more shocking.

The Muslim League began to revive. In 1922 it was almost dead; in 1923 the attendance at the annual session was so poor that the open session had to be abandoned. But after the passing away of the Khilafat movement, it definitely returned to its former position in

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1924, and Jinnah, who had been hibernating during the non-co-operation movement and the Khilafat, returned to the League, though as a self-proclaimed nationalist. In the League session of that year Jinnah remarked: "They were talking of communal unity, but where was the unity?" He was right, as the historian of the Congress ruefully admits: "It is now clear that in the year 1927 Hindu-Muslim unity was in the air, while Hindu-Muslim riots were on the terra-firma[27]". This unhappy condition did not change till the end of the British Raj.

What was the responsibility of the Congress and Gandhiji for this steadily deteriorating communal situation? Though they condemned the riots, as any civilized person would, they did not take it as seriously as one would wish, and allotted the Hindu-Muslim question a subordinate place in the political programme, with the expectation that the Hindu-Muslim problem would be solved once India attained independence. There may have been some basis for this wishful thinking but the Congress leaders failed to reckon with the vindictive adroitness of Jinnah, or of the growing Muslim separatist movement which was being nurtured on lies and prompted by fraud, so that they could gain their goal by violence. Most of the Congress leaders persistently refused to face these ugly facts. Gandhiji did not shirk his responsibility, but his methods failed to evoke any response from the Muslims, and exasperated the Hindus who felt that he was appeasing the Muslims. For similar reasons C.R. Das's Bengal Pact, which was unduly generous to the Muslims, also failed to unite the two communities.

From 1905 to 1911, the Muslims supported the British against the Hindus, as that appeared to them to be most politic under the circumstances. After the Bengal Partition was annulled the League joined hands with the Congress and extracted the Lucknow Pact which consolidated their gains up-to-date and received the seal of approval from the Congress. Then the Khilafat movement came, and the Muslims went to any length to gain Congress support, but with the collapse of the Khilafat they again entered into their communal shell and reverted to their system of double approach which enabled them to solicit help from the Congress or the British Government as it suited them. This policy paid the League so well that even after the formation of Pakistan, this has remained the basis of their foreign policy, and they have managed to extract all sorts of help from the U.S.A. by promising them vague assistance and threatening to join the Chinese if such help were not forthcoming. The Americans have timidly followed the British,

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because it does not really matter to them if in the process the Indians suffer a little. In this type of diplomacy the Indian leaders have failed to cope with Pakistan, just as in the pre-independence days they were beaten by the Muslim League and Jinnah.

It was always asserted by the Nationalist leaders, and by the Hindus in general, that these riots were the manifestation of the policy of 'divide and rule' followed by the British rulers in order to keep India under their subjection. It was also frequently asserted that the Muslims were instigated by the Anglo-indians. The last accusation was never proved but there are certain indications which show that the Anglo-indians were deliberately creating differences.

In 1915, Jinnah decided to hold the annual session of the Muslim League at Bombay alongside the Congress to facilitate Hindu-Muslim rapprochement, under the presidentship of Mazharul Haq, a staunch nationalist totally opposed to separate electorate. The Police Commissioner of Bombay, Edwardes, organized some Muslims to oppose this move and when Jinnah saw him, he admitted that :

(a) he (Edwardes) was opposed to the session of the League taking place at Bombay,

(b) so he had advised Sardar Sulaiman Kasim Mitha and others who had gone to him not to allow the League to come to Bombay,

(c) for he understood that the object in holding the League session at Bombay at the same time the Congress met in Bombay was to bring about a coalition between Hindus and Muslims,

(d) and as a friend of the Muslims he thought that it was suicidal for them and highly prejudicial to their vital interests so that as a friend of the Muslims he would not advise such a course.

In spite of this astounding communication, Jinnah held the meeting at Bombay, but it was broken by some hired *thugs* while the Police looked on. The Bombay Presidency Association brought this to the notice of the Governor, who obtained from Edwardes the usual official rigmarole alleging that the League being organized in Bombay by the Khojas, the Sunnis took exception, hence certain action had to be taken. On this the Government came out with a *piece justificatif* in course of which it was stated that in any case it was "perfectly

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legitimate for Mr. Edwardes to express his private opinion on a matter in private conversation[28]."

How many Anglo-indians shared Edwardes's view and expressed themselves with such forthright candour in private conversation is not known. But their number could not have been negligible. On July 10, 1926, Olivier, the Secretary of State for India, declared in a letter to the *Times*:

> "No one with any close acquaintance of Indian affairs will be prepared to deny that on the whole there is a predominant bias in British officials in India in favour of the Muslim community, partly on the ground of closer sympathy, but more largely as a make-weight against Hindu nationalism.[29]"

Mosley, a British author, says the same thing in greater detail:

> "Now it is certainly true that there were many British officials in India, some very high officials, who did not wish to see the end of the British raj and were prepared to use every stratagem possible to preserve British hegemony, and their own jobs, as long as possible. One British Governor of an important Indian province successfully wrecked a conference at Simla at which the Hindus and Muslims had come together, first by advising Jinnah on tactics and then using his influence on the Viceroy to make sure that the tactics worked. It is also true, that, emotionally the majority of British civil servants in India were pro-Muslim[30]..."

Mosley's book, published in 1961, refers to the Anglo-indian attitude just before the independence, but I have quoted it here to show the continuity of the pro-Muslim attitude of the administration which was exploited to the full by the League. Possibly the Anglo-indians were helped by the Conservatives in England who were "known to be "sensitive.... to Muslim feeling in India[31]." All in all, a feeling was produced that the Muslims were loyal and deserving of Government support; all the Hindus were Congressmen at heart, so they could be allowed to stew in their own juice (that is to be allowed to suffer in the riots) which would show them what their fate would be once the strong arms of the British were removed.

The Hindus on the contrary came to look upon the riots as deliberately provoked by the Anglo-indians (for which there has never been produced any reliable evidence). Therefore, they came to the conclusion that the remedy was to remove the root-cause, that is the Anglo-indians.

The effect of these riots on the Muslims was disastrous. The worst anti-social elements took part in these riots; the Hindu leaders

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always condemned the Hindus, but the League hardly ever, and even when they did so, their statements were usually equivocal. Gradually a bond of sympathy grew between these Muslim criminals and League politicians, who came to look upon the riots as a demonstration of their distinct nationalities. The effect of this alliance was that real political power inevitably passed into the hands of the criminal section, leaving the Muslim middle class high and dry. This has been the main reason for the instability of the political situation in Pakistan. The Muslim intelligentsia has to thank their avaricious tendencies for their present plight; they not only absolved the criminals but lauded them as heroes, to prove their point that Hindus and Muslims were different nations, which was necessary to them to grab some government jobs. It would be hard to find a parallel to this petty-minded motivation.

In this atmosphere the Committee, appointed by the Congress in its Madras Session in 1927 under the Chairmanship of Motilal, presented a draft constitution of India, known as the Nehru report. But the discussion at the All Parties Conferences which subsequently met was inconclusive and the report was not adopted. "Enthusiasm for the Nehru Report", writes V. P. Menon "was in any case killed by the rallying tactics of the Simon Commission to whom the Muslims, Sikhs, and Depressed Classes now in a bargaining spirit, felt it in their interests to turn."[32]

The Secretary of State for India, Lord Birkenhead, had sent out to the Viceroy a prescription of *divide et empera* :

> "We have always relied on the non-boycotting Muslims, on the depressed community, on the business interests and on many others, to break down the attitude of boycott. You and Simon must be the judges whether or not it is expedient in these directions to try to make a breach in the wall of antagonism, even in the course of the present visit."

In another letter to the Viceroy he wrote:

> "I should advise Simon to see at all stages important people who are not boycotting the Commission, particularly Muslims and the depressed classes. I should widely advertise all his interviews with representative Muslims. The whole policy is now obvious. It is to terrify the immense Hindu population by the apprehension that the Commission having been got of by the Muslims, may present a report altogether destructive of the Hindu position, thereby securing solid Muslim support and leaving Jinnah high and dry.[33]"

The Muslim League had been split into two groups, one under

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Jinnah boycotting the Simon Commission, while the loyalists combined under Shafi. Jinnah put certain proposals before the All-Parties Conference which in effect demanded that one-third of the elected representatives in both houses of Central Legislature should be Muslims and that "residuary powers' should be vested in the Provinces—thus ensuring that the Muslim-majority Provinces should be autonomous, and not menaced by a Hindu-majority centre, in fact Pakistan in principle.

Motilal, Gandhiji and the Congress have been criticized for not having accepted Jinnah's demand, which at a later date appeared to be quite moderate. What is forgotten is that Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, who spoke next to Jinnah in the All-Parties Conference urged that they be accepted "and be finished with it," and referred to Jinnah as "a spoilt child, a naughty child.[34]" If this was the impression Jinnah had created on Sir Tej Bahadur, the most moderate of politicians, one wonders how much had he exasperated the others. It is difficult in such an atmosphere for any person to have his proposals accepted particularly when people were having doubts as to whether this was the final list of demands, for Jinnah, who was a party to the Lucknow Pact, had repudiated it. Secondly, Jinnah at this time was not the undisputed leader of the Muslim League which was split into two with two Presidents. Under the circumstances no one could be sure that the acceptance of Jinnah's terms would lead to perpetual amity with the Muslims.

This was proved when a few months later the All-Parties Muslim Conference met to present a unified Muslim demand. For this Jinnah had prepared his famous "fourteen points" (actually fifteen) which cleverly combined all the demands of the various Muslim factions.

Thus by 1929, Indian politics had arrived at a dead end. The Nehru report was rejected by the Muslims, and by the extremist section of the Congress also, for having defined Dominion Status as its objective. In December 1929, at the Lahore Session under Nehru's Presidentship the Congress declared its goal to be complete independence and passed the independence resolution.

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References

1. Sri Aurobindo prophesied in 1909: "....all great movements wait for the God-sent leader, the willing channel of His force, and only when he comes, move forward triumphantly to their fulfilment....Therefore the nationalist party, the custodians of the future, must wait the man who is to come...." R.R. Diwakar: *Mahayogi Sri Aurobindo*, p. 82. It may be disputed whether Gandhi-ji was the God-sent leader envisaged by Sri Aurobindo but there is no doubt about Gandhiji's complete control over the nationalist movement to launch struggle on the lines suggested by Sri Aurodindo even earlier, (see above Chapter VI, note 25).
2. Violence in politics was introduced in India by Damodar Hari Chapekar, who murdered Ayerst and Rand, the Special Plague Officer of Poona in 1898. For this the three Chapekar brothers and Madhava Vinayak Ranade were hanged. Chapekar wanted to avenge atrocities like the pollution of sacred places and the breaking of idols in the name of plague control by British soldiers. For details and Chapekar's diary see *Source Material for a History the Freedom Movement in India* pp. 335-384, Hamilton, the Secretary of State, paid an unwilling tribute to Chapekar in a letter to Curzon on October 11, 1899: "Sandhurst has sent me....the autobiography of Damodar P. A. Chapekar, who not only assassinated Rand, but also formed the Murder Club which subsequently committed other outrages. It is painful reading. The man was a fanatic and a desperado, but he was prepared to take his life in his own hands...." Hamilton papers, I.O.L. MSS.
3. R. C. Majumdar: *Three Phases of India's Struggle for Freedom*, p. 42. Barin was Sri Aurobindo's youngest brother; he along with many others were sentenced to transportation in the celebrated Manicktolla Conspiracy case, in which Aurobindo was also an accused but was acquitted; C.R. Das was the defence counsel.
4. Ram Gopal, op. cit. p. 79. For the reaction of the Muslims to the Congress in its early days see the letters of Tyabji: *Source Materials*, II, pp. 67, 73, 81.
5. T. L. Shay: *The Legacy of the Lokamanya*, p. 130.
6. "..The formula arrived at Lucknow that December was accepted by Mr. Montagu *en bloc* and incorporated in the Montagu-Chelmsford Scheme"; Sitaramayya I, p. 47.
7. ibid, p. 181.
8. Gandhiji's programme at this time was Swadeshi, Hindu-Muslim unity based on the Khilafat movement, Hindustani as the *lingua franca* and a linguistic redistribution of the provinces'; ibid, pp. 192-93.
9. Gandhiji at one time was doubtful about the immediate need for linguistic provinces, but Tilak insisted; ibid, p. 147.
10. The non-co-operation resolution moved by Gandhiji was passed by 1886 to 884 votes in the special Calcutta Session of 1920 (September 4-9). The Nagpur Congress of December 1920 re-affirmed the decision of Calcutta. C. R. Das came to Nagpur to oppose Gandhiji but ultimately he moved the non-co-operation resolution and Lala Lajpat Rai seconded it. From this date Gandhiji's ascendancy over the Congress was established. For details see Sitarammayya, I, pp. 202-206.

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11. For Gandhiji's views see *Young India* of June 2, 1920; Ram Gopal, p. 139.
12. Sitaramayya, I. p. 194.
13. ibid, p. 196.
14. ibid, pp. 193-94.
15. ibid, p. 229.
16. "..Sir George Llyod told me how, a little while ago, Lord Reading was sitting in the chair that I was occupying, with his head in both hands and how he broke down at what happened.." Setalvad, op. cit. p. 316.
17. Rajendra Prasad : *Autobiography* p. 157.
18. *Netaji's Life and Writings*, Part two, *The Indian Struggle* (1920-1934, Calcutta 1948), p. 101.
18a. Nehru: *Discovery of India*, 1st ed. p. 416.
19. For details see Sitaramayya, I, pp. 292 ff.
20. ibid, p. 293.
21. Sitaramayya (I, p. 303) suggests that Lajpat Rai was influenced by Col. Wedgwood.
22. ibid, p. 287.
23. ibid, p. 307.
24. ibid, p. 313.
25. ibid, p. 316.
26. Ram Gopal, p. 166. In a subsequent lecture Muhammad Ali said: "Yes, according to my religion and creed, I do hold an adulterous and a fallen Mussalman to be better than Mr. Gandhi"; ibid. Jinnah never came down to this level.
27. Sitaramayya I, p. 317.
28. *Source Materials for a History of the Freedom Movement in India* (collected from Bombay Government Records), II, pp. 864-88.
29. Ram Gopal, p. 46.
30. Leonard Mosley: *The Last Days of the British Raj*, p. 15.
31. Harold Nicolson: *King George* V, p. 370. This pro-Indian-Muslim feeling induced the Conservatives to adopt a pro-Turkish policy. Later on it was responsible for the anti-Jewish policy of several British statesmen.
32. Menon, p. 36.
33. Birkenhead, *The Last Phase*, II, p. 254; Ram Gopal, p. 189.
34. Bolitho: *Jinnah*, p. 94.

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CHAPTER IX

THE ROAD TO LONDON

On February 3, 1928, the Simon Commission landed in Bombay and was faced with black flags and the slogan 'go back Simon', which followed them all over India. It has been argued that Indian opposition to the Simon Commission was unreasonable, for the British Parliament was within its rights to send a group of its members to study the situation in order to enable the Parliament to come to a decision. But that is taking a too narrow legalistic view of a political issue.

Simon gauged the political tension, and on February 6 wrote to the Viceroy that the Commission should take the form of a Joint Conference between the seven members of the Commission and seven members to be chosen by the Central Legislative Assembly on equal terms, and all materials should be available to all the members.[1] But this proposal was turned down by the Indian members of the Central Legislative Assembly led by Motilal and Lajpat Rai. This seems to have been a mistake, and the only justification could be that all shades of opinion, including the Moderates, were criticizing the composition of the Commission[2]. But to expect the British Parliament to recall the Commission—which included members from all the parties—and appoint another with Indians as members, was expecting the impossible. Under the circumstances, Simon's offer was generous and statesmanlike and should have been accepted.

It was at this time that Sardar Patel under Gandhiji opened the no-tax campaign at Bardoli, where the meek Gujarati peasants goaded beyond endurance by the Anglo-indians resolved to follow their leaders with a mute heroism which proved the efficacy of Gandhiji's non-violent struggle. The Governor first declared that all the resources of the Empire would be used to crush the no-tax campaign, and imported the horrible Pathan police ; but ultimately the Government had to compromise with the Sardar on favourable terms[3]. This caught popular imagination and fired enthusiasm for Gandhiji's methods which it was believed would lead India to independence if applied on all-India scale. So the Simon Commission was brushed aside as of no significance.

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THE ROAD TO LONDON

II

On June 5, 1929, Ramsay MacDonald formed his Second Labour Government. Eleven months before he had said : "I hope that within a period of months rather than years there may be a new Dominion added to the Commonwealth of our nations; a Dominion of another race, a Dominion that will find self-respect as an equal within this Dominion. I refer to India[4]." It were better if MacDonald had not raised such high hopes; possibly he was serious when he said it, but his precarious position in the Parliament prevented him from fulfilling his promise[5]. The appointment of Wedgwood Benn, for long a friend of the Congress, as Secretary of State for India[6], also raised high hopes, which could not be fulfilled, and the Indians came to believe of the British statesmen that whatever they might say out of office, once inside they followed the same pattern. But actually there was some difference. Towards the end of June 1929, Irwin, the Viceroy was called to England for consultation with the Government. While Irwin was in England, Simon wrote to MacDonald (October 16, 1929) suggesting that, after the publication of his Commission's report, "a conference should be arranged between the representatives of 'His Majesty's Government, and the representatives of British India and the Indian States' for the purpose of seeking the greatest possible measure of agreement for the final proposals which it would later be the duty of His Majesty's Government to submit to Parliament", and MacDonald accepted this suggestion[7].

Irwin on his return to India announced on October 31, 1929: "In view of the doubts which have been expressed both in Great Britain and India regarding the interpretation to be placed on the intentions of the British Government in enacting the Statute of 1919, I am authorized on behalf of His Majesty's Government to state clearly that in their judgement it is implicit in the declaration of 1917 that the natural issue of India's constitutional progress as there contemplated is the attainment of Dominion Status[8]." Irwin also announced that a conference of the Indian and the British leaders would be held after the publication of the Simon Commission's report to determine the nature of India's next constitutional progress.

This offer of a joint meeting was accepted by the Congress leaders including Gandhiji and Nehru at a meeting held at Delhi on November 2, 1929[9]. On December 23, Gandhiji, Motilal, Sir Tej Bahadur,

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Vithalbhai Patel and Jinnah met Irwin with a view to receive an assurance that the proposed conference would draft a scheme for Dominion Status. (Incidentally, the Viceroy shifted to the Viceregal House, now the Rashtrapati Bhavan, on this day). But Irwin could give no such assurance on the ground that the final decision lay with the Parliament. This convinced Gandhiji and the other Congress leaders that it would be useless to participate in the Round Table Conference[10].

It was against this background that the independence resolution was passed at Lahore and the first Independence Day celebrated on January 26, 1930.

Irwin's speech before the Central Legislative Assembly on January 25, seemed to vindicate the Congress stand. In this speech he denied that he had ever

> "sought to delude Indian opinion into the belief that a definition of the purpose, however plainly stated, would of itself, by the enunciation of a phrase, have provided a solution for the problems which have to be solved before that purpose is fully realised.....No sensible traveller would feel that a clear definition of his destination was the same thing as the completion of his journey but it is an assurance of direction."[11]

III

Thus Irwin undid the good effect that his declaration of October 31 had produced, and for this a section of the British politicians and the Press seem to be partly responsible.

Irwin's declaration of October 31 had been vehemently opposed by a section in England, particularly by the Rothermere Press, whom Baldwin on a later occasion was to castigate as desirous of enjoying "power without responsibility—the prerogative of the harlot throughout the ages". For the present, Baldwin who had personally concurred in Irwin's announcement stoutly stood by him, and he described him as " a man whose, ideas and views in political life approximate most closely to my own" and added: "If ever the day comes when the Party which I lead ceases to attract to itself men of the calibre of Edward Wood (Irwin) then I have finished with my party". In his peroration, Baldwin declared :

> "Nobody knows what Dominion Status will be when India has responsible Government, whether that date be near or distant, but surely no one dreams of a self-governing India with an inferior status. No Indian would dream of an India with an inferior status, nor can we wish that India

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should be content with an inferior status because that would mean that we had failed in our work in India....Our work must be done in faith, but let us build for the future with the same faith that we work for the present, so that when perhaps in long generations to come, there are men who will be putting the coping stone upon this building, they may, happily, not be unforgetful of those of us who build in faith among the foundations."[12]

But Birkenhead, one of the greatest lawyers of England, who had appointed the Simon Commission, went to the extent of declaring Irwin's announcement "as irrelevance—in the old classic phrase as impertinence. . . ."

"What man in this House", he asked in the Lords, "can say that he can see in a generation, in two generations, in a hundred years, any prospect that the people of India will be in a position to assume control of the Army, the Navy, the Civil Service and to have a Governor-General who will be responsible to the Indian Government, and not to any authorities in this country."[13]

However, from his position Baldwin never wavered and he was ably assisted by Samuel Hoare when the Conservatives were returned to power. The greatest opposition came from Churchill, one of whose brilliant Indian speeches Baldwin once dismissed as the speech which George III would have delivered on America if he had possessed the eloquence of Burke. But Churchill ably assisted by Sir George Llyod, former Governor of Bombay, put up a stiff opposition to the Bill and to Baldwin and Hoare personally.[14]

In India, Churchill's speeches received great publicity and attention, and his picturesque oratory, caught the popular imagination, or one might say, indignation. That Churchill was in a minority even in the Conservative Party[15], whose leader had identified himself with Irwin, was overlooked, and Churchill came to personify the spirit of England in Indian affairs. Unfortunately, he had the knack of translating into beautiful English all the crudities of the Anglo-indian conception of the Empire and of the Indians; for example his famous description of Gandhiji as the "half-naked fakir'. What purpose these diatribes served him is not clear; possibly he was carrying on the tradition of Curzon during whose Viceroyalty he had served here but he was irreperably damaging the British prestige in India. It is indeed peculiar that Baldwin, Hoare and Halifax, men much less gifted than Churchill, had a far better grasp of the Indian problem, which they honestly tried to solve.

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The Indians were also enraged at the Labour Party, and felt that Ramsay MacDonald and Benn had betrayed them. The difficulty of the Labour Party, which did not have a clear majority, was that they were committed to the Simon Commission Report, since it was signed by the Labour members as well. The Labour Party was also put in a difficult position because they had no control over the Congress, and though sympathetic to its aims and generally committed to fulfil its aspirations, were bound to oppose its *satyagraha* movement and the violence committed by the revolutionary parties. Lord Olivier, a Labour Secretary of State, had signed the Bengal ordinance under which thousands had been arrested. The Congressmen who criticized the Labour Party forgot that Wedgwood at the Nagpur Congress of 1920 had warned the Congress against the launching of the non-co-operation movement.

> "You will make it difficult", Wedgwood had said, "for your friends in England to take up your cause. You will be hampered in your work. The lawyers sign a pledge that they would be loyal to the Crown and cannot therefore work for non-co-operation. You are going into the wilderness. You must pursue a constructive programme".

In this strain did he go on for a quarter of an hour with transparent sincerity and unmistakable friendliness. Hardly had he resumed his seat when up rose a voice in reply, and, in five minutes, answered his objections :

> "We have no friends outside India; let there be no mistake about that. Our salvation lies in our own hands. We must make or mar our future. We have realised that, and taken to this programme. The Police are not a new element in Indian politics. If we have opened a small school, every rupee we have collected we have gathered only under the shadow of the red turban during the past fifteen years. Yes, the lawyers have to sign an undertaking to be loyal, so it is that they are asked to tear up their 'sanads'. We are going into the wilderness, we know, because the way to the 'land flowing with milk and honey', the land of Canaan, from the land of our bondage, lies only through a wilderness. And we trust to the leadership of a Moses or an Aaron to lead us from untruth, from darkness to light from death to life."[16]

IV

These sentiments expressed in 1920 had gathered momentum during the intervening years and Gandhiji's success at Bardoli was

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taken as a proof of India's ability to wrest her freedom, and the Lahore resolution for complete independence was passed. It is doubtful whether even Gandhiji could have resisted it, for the younger generation led by Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose was clamouring for action since the Calcutta Congress of the previous year (1928). The attitude of the Congress members can be judged by their treatment of the resolution congratulating Irwin on his recent escape from a bomb, which despite Gandhiji's plea for unanimity, passed by the narrow margin of 935 to 897 votes. As Edward Thompson remarked: "Let us be sure that Lord Irwin's sense of humour will value the knowledge that 897 of the Congress gentlemen think it a pity he was not blown to bits, while 935 think otherwise."[17]

Actually, Gandhiji's resolution was a compromise between Netaji's group and the Right Wing; a milder resolution would have been defeated, not that Gandhiji wanted to compromise on the basic issue.

V

The Anglo-indian reaction to the gathering political storm was recorded by David Petrie, head of the Home Department Intelligence Bureau who wrote in a secret report on the political situation on June 19, 1929:

"By the end of 1928, Jawahir (sic) Lal Nehru had established his Independence League, and the ideal of independence could command such a following that amongst the younger and more ardent spirits it completely swept away the more prudent counsels of the advocates of Dominion Status".[18] And, "I regard the situation now confronting the Government of India as the gravest I have known in the course of some twenty years' contact with the revolutionary movements in this country....(the dangers are due to) the increase in the number of its members and adherents (and) the encouragement and support the revolutionaries have found...in the utterance of Indian nationalist leaders....The chief ingredient in that excitement is racial hate....The feeling against the Government among the educated who belong to such movements as the Congress, the Swarajist Party or the Independence Party, is most intense....The only safe guiding principle I can see is that violence must *at all costs* be repressed....must be dealt with exemplary severity".[19]

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Here was the typical Anglo-indian whom the Irish tragedy had failed to rouse from his complacent faith in force as the final arbiter. It is a sad commentary on the common sense of the Anglo-indians that the British left India in 1947 when they had the strongest army at their disposal. Like marionettes the Anglo-indians looked at things but failed to grasp their significance. It was not a question of law and order at all; a subject nation had come to a level of political consciousness when they could no longer be kept under subjection. Gandhiji, with all his halting methods, represented that spirit of the people, and unerringly voiced their minimum demand.

VI

The Congress refused to join the first Round Table Conference and Gandhiji began his famous *Dandi March* or *Salt Satyagraha* on March 12, 1930, when at the age of sixty-six he, with seventy-eight companions, set out for the sea at Dandi, "staff in hand, marching along at the head of his followers, with firm step and a peaceful but undaunted look. It was a moving sight."[20]

On March 26, while Gandhiji was marching towards Dandi the Special Branch in Bombay wired a secret assessment to the Home Department in Simla :

> "The hope that was entertained in many quarters that the movement will be discredited must be abandoned. On the contrary day by day individuals and bodies of men hitherto regarded as sane and reasonable are joining the movement....because among the educated Hindus....the belief that the British connection is morally indefensible and economically intolerable is gaining ground. (The)....movement has therefore developed beyond (the) point at which even the arrest of Gandhi will break it down...."[21]

Yet on May 5 Gandhiji was arrested at Dandi. Mass *satyagraha* followed during which at least 60,000 persons were imprisoned. A large number of *satyagrahis* were assaulted by the Police.

While this was going on, a band of revolutionaries in East Bengal (now Pakistan) raided the Government armoury at Chittagong on April 18 and after a sharp encounter with the guards, in which eight were killed, decamped with a quantity of arms and munitions. After offering stout resistance they were all arrested, tried and sentenced, but their desperate courage produced a thrill from one end of India to the other.

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Peshawar, at the other end of India, enjoyed Congress rule from April 23 to 28 and two platoons of Garhwali soldiers refused to fire on an unarmed mob.

"Frantic cables between Simla and Peshawar reveal the state of alarm. On 24 April the Home Department of the Government of India sent the following instructions: 'Please put strict censorship on all news from Peshawar and in particular do not allow any news to be transmitted about the Garhwali regiment....' Two days later the divide-and-rule tactics were invoked. 'It is of the utmost importance to maintain the attitude of opposition on part of Mahomedans to the Civil Disobedience movement'. However, the Frontier Government informed Simla that 'support of great majority of inhabitants of Peshawar city and of considerable numbers in villages has been secured by Congress'. In effect it meant that the Muslims had joined the campaign, for over 90 per cent of the people in the Frontier Province are devout Muslims. No better evidence of the divide-and-rule policy in 1930 is to be found than the reply of the Central Government : 'At present vital need is to find some means of winning back Muslim intelligentsia of this province from Congress to Central Muslim Party.' "[22]

The Viceroy, however, was thinking differently and early in June he informed the Secretary of State :

" 'All thinking Indians deeply resent racial inferiority with which they consider we regard them, and they passionately want substantial advance which will give them power to manage their own affairs....I think every European and Indian would tell you that he was surprised at the dimensions the movement had assumed. I certainly am myself—and we should delude ourselves if we sought to underrate it'. As for the breakdown by groups, Lord Irwin divided the support as follows : Communist and Revolutionary—5 per cent ; Gandhi and sincere Congress adherents—30 per cent ; General nationalist sympathisers 50 per cent ; and commercial and economic discontent 15 per cent. '(The) broad appreciation therefore is that the movement is serious and has permeated many strata of Hindu society. It has caught their imagination and swept them off their feet and obviously has dangerous potentialities. Among these must be reckoned (the) question whether (the) Police and (the) Indian Army will stand indefinitely the strain of intrigue, abuse and persuasion to which they are necessarily subjected.' After proposing certain measures to alleviate the situation, he added that 'measures of repression....are not likely to provide (an) ultimate remedy for what undoubtedly under much froth and unreality is a national movement. If you circulate this telegram to Cabinet', concluded the Viceroy, 'I hope you will impress upon them the necessity of utter secrecy. The damage of any disclosure cannot be exaggerated.' "[23]

In July 1930, Sapru and Jayakar, attempted to mediate but failed. They, however, again took up the negotiations after Gandhiji's release in January 1931, and ultimately on February 17, Gandhiji met Irwin

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for a "heart-to-heart" talk. This provoked Churchill to describing the situation as "the nauseating and humiliating spectacle of this one-time Inner Temple laywer, now a seditious fakir, striding half-naked up the steps of the Viceroy's palace, there to negotiate and to parley on equal terms with the representative of the King Emperor." This showed an abnormal capacity for thinking at the crudest Anglo-indian level, but it had serious repurcussion all over India.

Even the King Emperor was annoyed and his Assistant Private Secretary, Sir Clive Wigram, wrote to Lord Irwin on March 27, 1931:

> "The King deprecates as much as you do the attitude which the Conservatives egged on by the retired die-hards from India are adopting.....The King is full of admiration for the patience and forbearance you have shown in dealing with Mr. Gandhi. Indeed, His Majesty feels that you deserve the very greatest credit for bringing about this temporary truce with Gandhi and the Congress, which in the King's opinion, no one but you could have achieved."[24]

The Gandhi-Irwin pourparlers lasted for about twenty days at the end of which came the famous Gandhi-Irwin pact, signed on March 5, 1931. The Government agreed to release all Civil Disobedience prisoners, and Gandhiji agreed to discontinue the *satyagraha* and join the next Round Table Conference. However, it was a defeat; for, Gandhiji had failed to secure a single of his eleven demands which formed the basis of his *satyagraha*. But the victor, Irwin, was full of praise for Gandhiji[25].

It is interesting that King George should have thought the Gandhi-Irwin Pact as "temporary truce". It is possible that he was in possession of informations which have not yet been divulged, unless one assumes that his great experience of British politics had endowed him with rare foresight.

In India there was a sense of relief; "except for Jawaharlal Nehru, every member of the Working Committee now welcomed the Gandhi-Irwin Pact".[26] The Karachi Congress (March 1931) ratified the Gandhi-Irwin Pact and authorized Gandhiji to represent the Congress at the Second Round Table Conference.

Shortly after the Karachi Congress, Irwin's term of office expired and he left India on April 18. This was unfortunate, for Irwin had convinced the Indians of his sincerity and honesty and as V.P. Menon writes: "No Viceroy had ever made such genuinenly sincere attempts to find a solution of the Indian impasse".[27] In contrast

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Willingdon, who replaced him, was the most *pukka* Anglo-indian among the Viceroys. This may have been partly due to his own outlook but his experience in Bombay and Madras may have also counted. In Bombay, Willingdon played the game of befriending the topmost crust of the society and getting popular applause by bringing them into contact with the Anglo-indians; and it was he, who, as the Governor of Bombay had come to the rescue of Edwardes, the Police Commissioner who had advised the Muslims not to join the too nationalist Jinnah's Muslim League as noted above, and in a Town Hall meeting where he presided, Willingdon prevented Tilak from speaking in support of war. This led Jinnah to lead an opposition against the move to record appreciation of Willingdon's administration in a public meeting. He packed the hall with his supporters, who gathered there since early morning and shouted down Sir Jamshetji Jeejeebhoy who presided.[28] This could not have produced a happy impression on Willingdon, and during his Viceroyalty, Jinnah found it prudent to stay in England.

With the arrival of Willingdon, disregard of the Gandhi-Irwin Pact by the officials became common. Willingdon treated Gandhiji with his usual sauve urbanity, but it was evident that the spirit of the pact was already dead and the officials were bent on interring the cadaver. The situation became so critical that Gandhiji was forced to state :"....the great Civilians here do not want me to attend the Conference, or if they do, they do so under circumstances which a national organization like the Congress cannot tolerate". He also wrote to Willingdon about it and on receiving an assurance from the latter went to Simla for a conference. Another pact was the result and from Simla a special train took Gandhiji to Bombay to catch the boat on August 29, 1931.

VII

With Gandhiji's departure for London, a chapter in Indo-British relation came to a close. It is, however, necessary to remember that revolutionary movement was at its peak during the twenties and the thirties and were sought to be suppressed with unnecessary harshness and sometimes with brutality, just as the revolutionaries wanted. The Labour Party, whether in or out of office, could do but little to protect innocent people from the excesses committed by the Police,

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for it was not possible to interfere at that low level of Government from England or even from New Delhi. The broad aspects of this problem was clearly pointed out by Jinnah in 1916 :

> "To put it briefly, we have a powerful and efficient bureaucracy of British officers, responsible only to the British Parliament, governing with methods known as benevolent despotism, a people that have grown fully conscious of their freedom. This is the Indian problem in a nut-shell. The task of the British statesmanship is to find a prompt, peaceful and enduring solution of this problem."[29]

But the Parliament and the British political parties were exclusively concerned with the constitutional problem, and if they thought of the British bureaucrats at all, it was in terms of providing them with statutory safeguards.[30]

All these created a barrier of suspicion between the Congress and the British statesmen which was not a little responsible for the failure of the Cripps Mission of 1942. That failure, and the suspicion was a loss for the Congress and the country as a whole. Therefore, if it can ever be proved that Gandhiji's 'movements' were not really necessary for gaining any political objective, he must share his part of responsibility.

But Gandhiji's movements, apart from political aspects, served other ends as well: the Congress became broad-based and a mass organization. This has been derided, probably with some justification, but the value of mass contact became apparent when Gandhiji had to face opposition from the Communists. There is little doubt that the Communists would have had a far greater following in India but for Gandhiji.

Some of Gandhiji's campaigns were of local interest and there he was entirely successful, for example at Champaran and Bardoli. But at Champaran he was pitted against the indigo-planters, and at Bardoli against the local brass-hats. These were quite different from the fight he undertook against the British Government with whom he had to compromise again and again without gaining his objective. In the result the Congress became in the British eyes the party in permanent rebellion, while the League appeared as their friend. That this attitude did not obscure the views of Cripps, Attlee and Pethick-Lawrence is a proof of their statesmanship, but Gandhiji did little to sustain their faith in the Congress. As a matter of fact, he was

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completely indifferent to what the Britishers thought about him or his movement, which was in sharp contrast to the earlier Congress leaders who toured England to convince the British statesmen, probably with some success, of the claims of the Indian nationalists.

It is conceivable that if Gandhiji had not started the non-co-operation movement in 1921, Birkenhead may not have felt the need to appoint the Simon Commission in 1928, a year before it was due. In that case the Statutory Commission would have been appointed by Wedgwood Benn, for long a friend of the Congress, and who was very likely to have accommodated the Congress view, so that the tension after the Simon Commission leading to the 1931 *satyagraha* campaign might not have been necessary. This would have strengthened the Congress position enormously in British politics and have added far greater weight to its view, even on communal questions. This hypothesis is based on the assumption that condition in India continued to remain normal. But it was far from being so after Jallianwallabagh. It was thereafter impossible to control the people and no one could be a political leader without sharing their dominant mood. The tension was kept alive by the Anglo-indian policy of following Dyer as far as practicable. Typical of the incidents of this time was what happened at Rae Bareli in the U.P. in January 1921 :

> "Thousands of peasants marched on the town to protest against the detention of their leaders by the police. They gathered on the opposite bank of the river flowing by the town but barred from further advance by armed police and troops. Nehru hurried to the scene with the intention of avoiding violence—he was then a complete convert to the Mahatma's doctrine of non-violence—but he was prevented from crossing the bridge by the local magistrate. The authorities demanded that the demonstrators disperse, to which they were agreeable on condition that Nehru were allowed to appear before them. Their request being refused, the peasants stood fast. Police firing followed, and many died or were wounded. Jawaharlal remained behind to supervise relief for the injured and later collected funds in Allahabad for the affected families."[31]

Under these circumstances in which such incidents were regularly repeated all over the country it was indeed a difficult task for a political leader to wait quietly for a Labour victory in England.

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References

1. Sitaramayya, I, p. 322.
2. For condemnation of the Simon Commission by the Liberals see, Setalvad: *Recollections and Reflections*, pp. 340-48.
3. The Anglo-indians always took credit for protecting the Indian peasants from the tyranny of their clever countrymen, particularly lawyers ; Bardoli unmasked this hypocrisy; there the peasants were protected against illegal exactions by Sardar Patel, a city lawyer : the other lawyers who came out on behalf of the peasants were Bhulabhai Desai and K. M. Munshi.
4. July 2, 1928 at the British Commonwealth Labour Conference in London; Bolitho : *Jinnah*, pp. 96-97.
5. In the 1929 elections, in which women cast their votes for the first time in England, Labour was returned with 287 seats, the Conservatives with 261, and the Liberals with 59.
6. It is interesting to note that Sidney Webb was the Secretary of State for Dominions.
7. Menon, p. 38 ; the reference to the Simon Commission excluded Native States.
8. Baldwin had personally concurred in Irwin's announcement on the understanding that the Simon Commission also gave its consent. "This it had refused, as it did not wish to create the impression that it was in any way modifying or amplifying its Report." L. Amery : *My Political Life*, III, p. 96. This left Baldwin alone to defend Irwin later.
   Irwin's declaration, however, was made at a very inoportunate moment. Jatin Das had died in a Punjab gaol after a hunger strike of sixty-four days on September 13, 1929.
9. Sitaramayya, I, p. 350.
10. For details see S. Gopal, *The Viceroyalty of Lord Irwin* pp. 52 ff.
11. Sitaramayya, I, pp. 364-65.
12. L. S. Amery: *My Political Life*, III, p. 97.
13. Menon, p. 41.
14. Churchill's antipathy towards Indians particularly towards the Hindus was probably sincere, but his attempt during this period to oust Baldwin from the Conservative leadership seems to have added venom to his barbs. In 1934 (April 16) he went to the extent of accusing Sir Samuel Hoare and Lord Derby of having deliberately tampered with the evidence submitted to the Joint Select Committee by the Manchester Chamber of Commerce. The matter had to be referred to the Committee of Privileges who exonerated Hoare and Derby.
15. By the end of June 1933, Churchill managed to call a special meeting of the Central Council of the Conservative Party, which was deeply impressed by the ex-Governor of Bombay George Llyod's "sardonic eloquence and first-hand knowledge of India." But all Churchill's endeavours were in vain ; Baldwin managed to have his policy endorsed by 838 to 316 votes. Churchill renewed the attack in October at the annual meeting of the Conservative Party and was again defeated by 737 to 344 votes. Still undaunted he brought the preposterous charge against Hoare mentioned above. Amery, op. cit. p. 101.

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Churchill, seems to have believed that British occupation of India was vital to England's economy. On January 29, 1935 he said: "India has quite a lot to do with the wage earners of Britain. The Lancashire cotton operatives have found that out all right. One hundred thousand of them are on the dole already and if we lose India, if we had the same treatment from a Home Rule India as we have had to our sorrow from a Home Rule Ireland, it would be more like two million bread-winners in the country who would be tramping the streets and queing up at the Labour exchanges". (Sitaramayya II, pp. 255 ; 425).

One wonders whether Churchill was penitently making amends for his role in solving the Irish problem, but it should be added that the fallacy that British prosperity depended on her empire was widely believed both in England and in India. Actually the British wage earners really became prosperous after the "liquidation of the empire" but I am not attempting to establish a co-relation between the two.

16. Sitaramayya, I, p. 208.
17. Edward Thompson : *Reconstruction of India*, p. 169.
18. M. Brecher : *Nehru, A Political Biography*, p. 131.
19. ibid, p. 136.
20. Jawaharlal Nehru : *Towards Freedom*, p. 159.
21. Brecher, op. cit. p. 153.
22. ibid 156.
23. ibid, 153-4.
24. ibid, p. 507.
25. See Irwin's letter of March 13, 1931 to King George V. : H. Nicolson : *King George V*, pp. 507-08.
26. Rajendra Prasad: *Autobiography*, p. 331.
27. Menon, p. 46.
28. *Source Materials for a History of the Freedom Movement In India* (Collected from Bombay Government Record), II, pp. 713-24.

    In appreciation of Jinnah's courageous leadership on this occasion, his admirer's, mostly Hindus, raised Rs. 30,000/- and erected the Jinnah People's Memorial Hall in the compound of the Congress House at Bombay.
29. Ram Gopal, p. 130.
30. B. J. Gould, a veteran Anglo-indian, writes that in 1921 while in England on leave, he was asked by the India Office to help a recruitment drive among the British students for a career in the I.C.S. "When I enquired" Gould writes: "whether I could tell the young men that they had a life career before them the reply was that this could not be promised. So I asked to be excused. A few days later I was taken to an after-dinner meeting at an Oxford College on the same subject. No less an orator than Lord Birkenhead urged the attractions of Indian service on an audience which contained many dons. His exhortations fell flat. They put the same question and received the same answer. "B. J. Gould : *The Jewel In the Lotus* p. 79.

    This a very interesting information, with various implications. The appre-

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hension of the British students who joined the I.C.S. in the twenties proved correct, but in all the constitutional changes (that is till 1947) their position was amply protected.

31. Brecher; op. cit. pp. 69-70.

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CHAPTER X

ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE

The object of the Round Table Conference was discussion of the Indian problems by British and Indian leaders of all shades of opinion on the basis of which a Bill was to be drafted by the British Government for India's further constitutional progress and placed before the Parliament for necessary action. The calling of such a conference was an admission by the British Government that more power should be transferred to Indian hands than envisaged in the Montagu-Chelmsford Reform. If the Indians could have taken a united stand, they would have forced the hands of the British, but the various interests represented at the Round Table Conference practically assured that unanimity of Indian opinion would be an impossibility.

The major difference among the Indians centred round the Hindu-Muslim problem, which became more acute as the prospect of gaining political power loomed nearer. Two other factors entered Indian politics for the first time, the Schedule Castes and the Princes.

The Muslims had always maintained that the Schedule Castes were as a group different from the caste Hindus and in their petition presented to Lord Minto in 1906 they had stated: "The Mahomedans of India number....between one-fifth and one-fourth of the total population of His Majesty's Indian Dominions, *and if a reduction be made for the uncivilized portions of the community enumerated under the head of animist and other minor religions, as well as for those classes who are ordinarily classified as Hindu but properly speaking are not Hindus at all, the portion of Mahomedans to the Hindu majority becomes much larger*".[1] This interpretation was accepted by Minto in principle but acted upon seriously as a political gambit now for the first time.

The Princes also made their appearance for the first time in a joint conference with the nationalist leaders. It had been practically decided that future central government of India would be federal, in which the Princes would be useful as a counterpoise against the nationalist elements, in the improbable event of the Hindus and Muslims combining against the Government.

Thus the Indian delegations to the Round Table Conference

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really represented the following effective groups: Caste Hindus, Schedule Castes, Muslims and Princes.

The Congress having boycotted the first Round Table Conference, (1930) the Hindu interest (or nationalist interest) there was represented by the Liberals. Of them Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Hon'ble Srinivas Sastri, Sir Chimanlal Setalvad, M. R. Jayakar, B. S. Moonje and B. R. Ambedkar formed a group to negotiate a communal settlement with Aga Khan and Jinnah. After several days' negotiations, the Aga Khan agreed to support the Liberals on the basis of (1) joint electorate with reserved seats for the Muslims, and (2) separate provinces with legislatures for Sind and N.W.F.P. Sapru, Sastri and Setalvad were for accepting these demands immediately, but Moonje and Jayakar were opposed to Sind being made a separate province. While negotiations were still proceeding, Aga Khan one night withdrew his offer stating that the matter was out of his hands and that he was unable to bind the Muslim representatives to any agreement.

Setalvad places the blame for this breakdown partly on Jayakar and Moonje and the rest on the reactionary Muslim elements.[2] There is however another explanation which seems to be correct. During the second Round Table Conference Jinnah was asked at a dinner party by one Rhodes as to why he did not agree to a solution and compel the Government to yield. Jinnah, who had been through his third bottle of champagne, replied that it was impossible to have an agreed solution until he knew what the Muslims were going to get from the British Government.[3]

It is most likely that the Aga Khan found out from his Anglo-indian and Tory friends that the price of Muslim intransigence would be much higher than what the Hindus could pay the Muslims.

Even so, possibly Gandhiji would have been able to retrieve the position but by the time he arrived in England the Labour Government had been replaced by the National Government with MacDonald as the titular Prime Minister, and Samuel Hoare as the Secretary of State for India replacing Wedgwood Benn. Baldwin, who was the real power in the National Government, had all along supported Irwin in his negotiations with Gandhiji but Gandhiji does not seem to have taken any advantage of Irwin's presence in England. Instead, he attempted an agreement with Aga Khan, and on October 8, he announced "with deep regret and deeper humiliation,that the negotiation had fallen through". On November 13, MacDonald announced

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that he had the previous night received a deputation representing the Muslims, the Depressed Classes, a section of the Indian Christians, the Eurasians and the British Community which presented an agreed fromula which Aga Khan formally presented at the meeting. Gandhiji was isolated, and the initiative passed from the Congress to the British Government, who henceforth posed as the protector of the minority rights.

In his final address to the Second Round Table Conference MacDonald said :

> "If you cannot present us with a settlement acceptable to all parties as the foundations upon which to build, in that event His Majesty's Government would be compelled to apply a provisional scheme, for, they are determined that even this disability shall not be permitted to be a bar to progress. This would mean that His Majesty's Government would have to settle for you, not only your problems of representation but also to decide as wisely and justly as possible what checks and balances the constitution is to contain to protect the minorities from an unrestricted and tyrannical use of the democratic principle expressing itself solely through majority power."

With this declaration the Congress ideal of a united India was smashed.

II

Gandhiji landed in Bombay on December 28, 1931, and found repression in full force in Bengal, the United Provinces and the North-Western Frontier Province, where, as Lord Ismay was to characterize later, the "bastard situation" of Muslims joining the Congress had upset the Anglo-indian apple-cart. Gandhiji wrote to Willingdon protesting against the breaches of the pact but could obtain no remedy. So the Congress began to prepare for another civil disobedience campaign, but the Government had greater forethought. On January 4, 1932, Gandhiji and the Congress leaders were arrested and Congress declared an unlawful association. The period of temporary truce was over, and in view of the planned manner in which the Government moved, it was evident that they had prepared for it and was waiting for Gandhiji to return from England.

This is also evident from the notorious Benthall circular, issued by Sir Edward Benthall, the partner of a big British industrial combine in India, and later a member of the Viceroy's Executive Council. He issued a confidential circular to the British business community

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in India which leaked to thc press. In this circular Benthal had written:

"We went to London determined to achieve some settlement if we could, but our determination in that regard was tempered with an equal determination that there should be no giving way on any essential part of the policy agreed to by the (European) Associated Chambers of Commerce in regard to financial and commercial safeguards, and by the European Association on general policy. It was obvious to us, and we had it in mind throughout the Conference, that the united forces of the Congress, of the Hindu Sabha and the (Indian) Federal Chambers of Commerce would be directed towards whittling down the safeguards already proposed.

"If you look at the result of this last session you will see that Gandhi and the (Indian) Federated Chambers are unable to point to a single concession wrung from the British Government as the result of their visit to St. James' palace. He landed in India with empty hands.

"There was another incident, too, which did him no good. He undertook to settle the communal problem and failed before all the world.

"The Muslims were a solid and enthusiastic team: Ali Imam, the Nationalist Muslim, caused no division. They played their cards with great skill throughout; they promised us support and they gave it in full measure. In return they asked us that we should not forget their economic plight in Bengal and we should 'without pampering them' do what we can to find places for them in European firms so that they may have a chance to improve their material position and the general standing of their community.

"On the whole, there was one policy of the British nation and the British community in India, and that was to make up our mind on a national policy and to stick to it. *But after the general elections the right wing of the Government made up its mind to break up the Conference and to fight the Congress.* The Muslims who do not want responsibility at the Centre were delighted. Government undoubtedly changed their policy and tried to get away with Provincial Autonomy, with a promise of the central reforms. We had made up our minds that the fight with the Congress was inevitable; we felt and said that the sooner it came the better, but we made our minds that for a crushing success we should have all possible friends on our side. The Muslims were all right; the Minorities Pact and Government's general attitude ensured that. So were the Princes and the Minorities.

"The important thing to us seemed to be to carry the Hindu in the street as represented by such people as Sapru, Jayakar, Patro and others. If we could not get them to fight the Congress, we could at least ensure that they would not back the Congress and that, by one simple method of leaving no doubt in their minds that there was to be no going back on the Federal Scheme which broadly was also the accepted policy of the European community, and we acted accordingly. We pressed upon the Government that the one substantial earnest of good faith which would satisfy these people, was to bring in the Provincial and Central Constitutions in one place. Provincial Autonomy could not be forced upon India ; the Muslims alone could not work it. Congress Provinces facing a bitter Centre present grave political difficulties; each province would be a Calcutta Corporation on its own. So

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we joined with strange companions ; Government saw the arguments and the Conference instead of breaking up in disorder with 100 per cent of Hindu political India against us, ended in promise of co-operation by 99 per cent of the Conference, including even such people as Malaviya while Gandhi himself was indisposed to join the Standing Committee.

"The Muslims have become firm allies of the Europeans. They are very satisfied with their own position and are prepared to work with us.

"It must not, however, be supposed that when we agree that Reforms are necessary we advocate democratic reform in every province. All that we mean is such change in the system of Government as will improve its efficiency."[4]

Thus the failure of the Second Round Table Conference was designed by the Anglo-indians and regarded by them as a victory; in reality they walked into the Muslim League parlour.

III

On August 17, 1932, MacDonald announced the decision of the British Government,which came to be known as the Communal Award. This scheme provided communal electorate not only for the Muslims, but for the Depressed Classes, Hindus, Sikhs, Indian Christians and Europeans based on an inequitable proportion. But neither in the Punjab nor in Bengal, the two big Muslim majority Provinces, were the Muslims given a majority of seats. In the Punjab, against their population of 55 per cent the Muslims were given 49 per cent of the seats to provide weightage to the Sikhs; in Bengal against a population of 54.8 percent, the Muslims were given 47.5 per cent of the seats, and the Hindu 32 per cent against their population of 44.8 per cent so that the Anglo-indian mercantile community (known under the deceptive label of 'European') of which Benthall was a leading a light, could be provided with 10 per cent of the seats with 0.01 per cent of the population. This assured that the Muslims in Bengal could subjugate the Hindus so long they combined with the Anglo-indians. This happy state of affair could not be reproduced in the Punjab which had no Anglo-indian population other than the officials and army officers.

Of MacDonald's last Prime Ministership, Amery writes :

"For three years MacDonald had been little more than the label which gave the name national to a coalition in which he had a bare dozen personal supporters, and exercised no real authority. His health had been con-

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sistently bad, and he had, to quote Snowden, become 'constitutionally unable to make an intelligible statement on any question'. I always thought it typical of the contrast between French and English Parliamentary ways that when MacDonald had delivered a more than usually incoherent and meaningless speech, which would have meant the immediate downfall of a French Cabinet, members would just console themselves over their tea with 'poor old Ramsay, more helpless than ever', but with no idea that any number of such sorry displays could affect their votes or lead to a change of government till those in the inner circle decided that the change had become overdue."[5]

I quote this passage as an explanation of MacDonald's agreeing to associate himself with so monstrous a scheme. It may be doubtful too as to whether the easy going Baldwin realized the consequences of the Award. Actually Baldwin had personally concurred in Irwin's announcement of October 1929: "that the natural issue of India's constitutional progress is the attainment of Dominion Status", though the majority of the Conservatives felt that the declaration was premature. Baldwin's support was based partly as he said on his faith in Irwin as "a man whose ideal and views in political life approximate most closely to my own", and of whom he added: "If ever the day comes when the Party which I lead ceases to attract to itself men of the calibre of Edward Wood (Irwin) then I have finished with my party". He finished this speech with a peroration which Lord Balfour said would give him "an unchallenged position among the orators of the English speaking race."[6]

Sir Samuel Hoare, the Secretary of State, was undoubtedly responsible, but he had no experience of Indian affairs, and it is possible that at the beginning of his career he was too much under the influence of the India Office.

Gandhiji undertook a fast unto death as a result of which the clauses regarding the Depressed Classes were removed, the caste Hindus giving the Scheduled Castes more privileges than they had under the Award. But as for the others, the mischief was done. In 1906, the Aga Khan presented his demands on behalf of the Muslims and Minto accepted; quarter of a century later Aga Khan again presented a demand and the Communal Award was the result. Later, it was divulged in the Indian Legislative Assembly, that the Aga Khan expected a territory to be bestowed on him, where he could become a ruling Prince, by the Government of India in consideration of services rendered.[7]

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It is usual to distribute the ultimate responsibility for the Award among Gandhiji, the Congress and the caste Hindu leaders like Moonje, Jayakar and Malaviya, on the ground that, had they yielded to the Muslim demands the British would not have had the initiative to propound the Award. This may be true; but there is a difference between appeasement and settlement. The Muslim leaders did not desire a settlement; they wanted to exploit the political situation to the greatest advantage for their community and their final demand was never in sight. If they could wring certain advantages from the Hindus, they could always approach the British for a little more, and having extracted that return to the Hindus with an attitude of lofty disdain for the cheese-paring "Hindu leaders" whom they felt no compunction in abusing opently. It seems to us therefore, that Gandhiji and the Hindu leaders did adopt the right course by refusing to accept the exaggerated claims of the Aga Khan and Jinnah. If an iniquitous term had to be accepted it were preferably a British imposition, so that it would be open for the injured Hindus to agitate against it, and obtain redress when the time came. That time came in 1947, but many things happened by that time.

References

1. Italics mine. The Muslim deputation's assertion was preposterous ; the term "Hindu" cannot be defined.
2. Setalvad op. cit., pp. 357-61.
3. From Mahadev Desai to Nehru, Jawaharlal Nehru : *A Bunch of Old Letters*, p. 102.
4. Sitaramayya, I, pp. 519-20.
5. L. S. Amery : *My Political Life*, III, pp. 113-14.
   MacDonald formed the National Government on August 24, 1931.
6. For Baldwin's peroration see above pp. 110-11
7. Sitaramayya, I, p. 520 f.n.

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CHAPTER XI

SCRAMBLE FOR POWER

From 1931 to 1934 the Congress was in the wilderness[1] and the only activity it could think of was to revive the Swarajya Party and contest the elections. Curiously enough, the Aga Khan disappeared from the political scene and Jinnah stepped into his shoes.

Jinnah settled in England in 1930, and, according to his biographer, was induced to return to India in 1934 at the earnest importunities of Liaqat who was spending his honeymoon in England.[2] The biographer, however, overlooks that Jinnah's old enemy, Willingdon, was to retire next year and it was common knowledge that the proposed Government of India Act would transfer considerable power to Indian hands.

On August 2, 1935,[3] Royal Assent was given to the Bill which now came to be known as the Government of India Act of 1935 and later, in a modified form, became the Indian constitution of 1950. The elections under this Act were held in the first week of 1937, but the political parties began their campaign much earlier. Congress practically started its election organization in 1934, and early in 1936 the Muslim League formed its Central Election Board with Jinnah as its permanent President.

The Muslim League at this time was a weak organization and its hold over the Muslims was almost negligible. So Jinnah adopted the tactics of suspended acrimony so far as the Congress was concerned, and prepared a manifesto which closely followed the Congress. This was an insurance for those provinces where the Muslims were in a minority, particularly the U.P. From the British the Muslim leaders had obtained the Communal Award and the separation of Sind, so that in four provinces the Muslims were bound to form Ministries. It was their ambition, however, that in the other seven provinces they should be at least equal partners in the Government, not as the members of a cabinet with joint responsibility, but as an independent group representing not only the Muslims, but the Muslim League, which would thus be on par with the Congress as an all-India organization. This was most evident in the U.P., the spiritual home of the Muslim League, where Chaudhuri Khaliquzzaman resigned from the Congress and joined the League on the eve of the election.

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Unfortunately, the policy of the Congress during this period (1934-37) was perplexed and ambiguous. It started by rejecting the Government of India Act, and ended by forming ministries in seven provinces; between these two extreme steps lay doubt, hesitation, suspicion, aimless idealism and an attempt to syncretize divergent thoughts which inevitably led to procrastination. A group of young leaders appeared in the Congress whose feet were so firmly planted in the West that they refused to see any problem which did not exist in Europe. According to them, the religious rivalries were relics of the medieval age, so communal politics was outdated; and therefore those who indulged in such futile pursuits were extreme reactionaries; hence the first thing was to gain independence, next establish a socialist state, and communal amity would automatically follow. Thus the cart was firmly placed before the horse.[4]

These young leaders did not control the Congress, but they formed a vociferous minority and gained over Nehru as their spokesman. They had good following among the intelligentsia and the students, and their active opposition could have damaged the claim of the Congress to be a national organization. Basically this monolithic organization containing within itself all shades of opinion, was a reflection of the syncretistic Hindu mentality.

For, the Congress, in spite of its aims and objectives, had become a Hindu organization. Except amongst the Pathans, Gandhiji's salt campaigns had failed to evoke any response from the Muslims other than a few leaders who had no Muslim following. The result of the campaigns was to consolidate the Hindus against the British; the Muslims stood sullenly aloof while the Hindu-Muslim riots embittered the feelings of the common man.

It is true that during this period neither the Muslim League nor Jinnah represented the Muslims, but they voiced the common interest of the Muslims and their subconscious aspiration to be politically at least the equals of the Hindus regardless of the disparity in numbers and, as it became clear that power was soon to devolve upon the Indians, Muslim leaders of all shades of opinion were obsessed with the urgency of protecting the interest of their community vis-a-vis the numerically superior Hindus. Behind Muslim thought, the idea was persistent that they were the descendants of the pre-British rulers of India. Historically this claim was not tenable, but it was there to serve as incentive to political neurosis.

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To the nationalist leaders the fault of the League was its narrow outlook, but therein lay its real strength. All its energy and activity was focussed on one point, namely, securing political advantages for the Muslim community, at any cost and by any method. In their grim determination they dismissed all objections to their demand as trivial, and the social and economic problems as corollary to the main problem, the weakness of the community . In this they were led by a man, Jinnah, who could dismiss contemptuously all details, and stick to his main objective with a dogged steadfastness. His dictatorial temper too, which so exasperated his colleagues in the Congress, was ideal for the League.

The Congress had no answer to this mounting communal aggression; with all its apparent strength based on number of followers its vitality was impaired by internal dissension. At the highest level, the Working Committee was divided into two factions, the Socialists led by Nehru and the Conservatives led by the Sardar and Rajendra Prasad.[5] It was due to Gandhiji that the two factions worked together but even he could not accommodate Netaji.

Some of the provinces were worse. About Bengal Nehru wrote to Gandhiji :

> "Is not the Congress being rapidly reduced to a magnified edition of that shameful spectacle, the Calcutta Corporation, during the last few years? Might not the dominant part of the Bengal Congress be called today (1934) 'the society for the advancement of Mr. Nalini Ranjan Sarkar', a gentleman who rejoiced to entertain Government officials, Home Members and the like, when most of us were in prison and C.D. was supposed to be flourishing?....But the fault does not lie with Bengal alone. Almost everywhere there is similar outlook. The Congress from top to bottom is a caucus and opportunism tr iumphs."[6]

Nehru was writing under great emotional strain, but his indictment was not too overdrawn. In 1936, Rajendra Prasad found during his election tour that the Punjab Provincial Congress was divided into two irreconcilable groups, not on speaking terms with each other, so that when he fell ill, he had to submit to treatment by two physicians, supplied by the two rival groups.[7] About Bihar, Rajendra Prasad wrote:

> "Another peculiar feature of the nominations (for seats in the legislature) were considerations of caste. The Congress abhorred the idea but local circumstances compelled it to submit to it. It is a matter of shame that in

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Bihar, the P.C.C. had to take caste labels into account in certain constituencies because the success of candidates there depended on such considerations. Further, we had to give adequate representation to all prominent castes. It is disgraceful for an organisation like the Congress to do so, but success in the elections was our first objective and secondly, it should not be overlooked that the Congress is a widespread organization consisting of people of all castes. The fact, however, remains that though from the point of view of practical politics our nominations proved a great success we ought not to have thought in terms of class or caste distinctions."[8]

"I cannot but record here the fact that many Congress workers have started assessing their services in terms of rewards in the form of membership of a legislative assembly, municipality or district board or at least a place of honour and power in a Congress Committee."[9]

The picture in other provinces were similar though such candid confession is lacking.

At this time, of which Rajendra Prasad spoke, the Congress had not decided to accept office, yet the scramble for sharing the spoils had begun. To some extent it was inevitable, and, under certain circumstances, not an unworthy motive. But this internal struggle for power and position weakened the organization and tied the hands of the leaders.

The elections also revealed that the Congress was in fact a Hindu organization. Out of a total of 485 Muslim seats it contested only 58 and won 26. In the U.P. the Congress contested only 9 out of 66 Muslim seats and lost all. In Bombay it contested 2 Muslim seats out of 30 and lost both; in Bihar it contested 7 out of 42 Muslim seats and won 5; in the Central Provinces it contested 2 Muslim seats out of 14 and lost both ; in Bengal it did not contest any Muslim seat. In the Punjab the Congress was trounced by the non-communal Unionist Party which gained 99 seats in a house of 175 as against 18 Congress seats.[10]

But while the Congress captured only 26 out of the total 485 Muslim seats it gained 715 out of the 836 Hindu seats.

The Muslim League fared little better. It failed to gain a majority, even in the Muslim majority provinces. In Bengal it captured 40 out of 119 Muslim seats, and in the Punjab 2 out of 86. Of the total Muslim votes cast it gained only 4.8 per cent.

II

The result of the elections elated the Congress which formed a decisive majority in six provinces, and Nehru declared that there were

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only two parties in India, the Congress and the British, inviting the inevitable retort from Jinnah, that there was a third party the Muslims. This was the crux of the problem: on the result of the election the Muslim League apparently did not represent the Muslims, but on the same showing neither did the Congress. The natural step for the Congress should have been to forestall the League, which was bound to make an all out attempt to retrieve its position, but the Congress began with the incredible blunder of presenting the Government of Bengal to the League.

In the Bengal Legislative Assembly, out of a total of 250 seats, the Congress with 60 members formed the largest group; the other parties had the following number of seats: Independent Muslims 41: Muslim League 40; Krishak Praja Party 35; Europeans 25; Independent Scheduled Caste 23: Independent Caste Hindus 14; 12 members were not attached to any party.

Soon after the elections were over, the Governors called the leaders of the largest party in each assembly to form a ministry. The Congress now found itself in a difficult position, for, according to a resolution passed at the Faizpur Congress of 1936, it was pledged to combat the constitution both from within and outside the legislatures "so as to end it". Nehru was the most outspoken and irresponsible critic of the Act, once declaring it as the "new charter of slavery to strengthen the bonds of imperialistic domination and to intensify the exploitation of our masses". So far as I know only Churchill has matched Nehru's criticism of the Government of India Act 1935, by his remark: "....a giagantic quilt of jumbled crochet works, a monstrous monument of shame built by pigmies". Apparently Harrovians not only think alike but speak almost in the same language.

There were, however, others in the Congress who wanted to form ministries and the next few months were spent in internal bickerings between these two groups, till the Viceroy, Linlithgow, gave a vague promise on June 22, 1937, that the Governors would not "provoke conflict with their ministries", and they would "leave nothing undone to avoid and to resolve such conflicts". On this the Congress accepted office in the provinces where it constituted a majority and there this delay was not harmful.

But in Bengal, when the Congress, in obedience to the general directive, refused to attempt to form a government and the Muslim League was unable to do so, the Governor called upon Fazlul Huq,

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the leader of the Krishak Praja Party, to form the Government. Huq immediately approached Sarat Bose (Netaji's elder brother and leader of the Congress Party in the Bengal Assembly) to help him in forming a Government but in spite of Sarat Bose's repeated appeals, Maulana Azad, who was in charge of the Parliamentary affairs of Bengal, refused to allow him to do so. Taking advantage of the situation the Muslim League offered co-operation if Huq joined the League, and he agreed to do so on condition that he was elected the leader of the coalition; with great promptitude the League agreed, and Huq formed his ministry in Bengal, which included certain independent Scheduled Caste members and a few caste Hindus.

For Bengal this was the turning point in her history. The League manipulated the situation with unscrupulous skill and a decade later the only solution left to the unhappy province was to split itself into two. Even so the situation might have been retrieved if Bihar had agreed to the rendition of the Bengali speaking districts which had been attached to Bihar in 1911. For, in that case Bengal would have become a Hindu majority, that is a Congress majority, province. But the Bihari leaders refused; some of these districts were added to Bengal as a result of the Boundary Commission Report after independence.

Almost under similar circumstances, a Muslim League coalition ministry was formed in Assam, but Netaji, during his tenure of Congress Presidentship, managed to form a Congress ministry in that province. The only Muslim majority province which the Congress gained was the N.W.F.P.

In the Punjab, the non-communal Unionist Party formed the Ministry, but before the year was out, the Muslim members of the Unionist Party led by their leader, Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan, went over *en bloc* to the League.

Thus within a year Jinnah had shown that it was the Muslim League which represented the Muslims.

It has been alleged by many, particularly by Maulana Azad, that the chief cause of the Muslim disaffection was Nehru's insistence on having only Congress Muslims in the U.P. cabinet, instead of forming a Congress-League coalition but it has been shown, that contrary to Azad's allegations, it was he who was responsible for offering unacceptable terms to the League.[11]

Whoever may have been responsible, the decision seems to

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have been correct, not only constitutionally but politically as well. The League demanded that, the U.P. Cabinet should include two League members, and the Congress agreed provided they joined Congress. The League refused to do this, but Hafiz Muhammad Ibrahim, then a League member, agreed; he joined the Congress, resigned his seat and won the bye election and remained a Congress minister. Chaudhury Khaliquzzaman, the erstwhile Congress member, refused to follow Hafiz Muhammad Ibrahim.

Those who condemn Nehru forget two facts. The first is that Rajendra Prasad tried to come to terms with Jinnah in January 1935, on the agreed basis of the Communal Award. Jinnah promptly put forth a few more demands which the British had not agreed to, and on Rajendra Prasad's agreeing to those, refused to sign any pact unless Hindu leaders like Malaviya also signed it. Malaviya's views were well known, and when Rajendra Prasad approached him, he insisted that Muslim representation at the centre and in Bengal should be reduced. On this the parley broke down.

After the elections were over Jinnah made his next move. Under the directives of the Act, the Governors had to see that minorities were adequately represented in each provincial cabinet. Jinnah now insisted that in each Congress majority province, the Congress cabinet should include Muslim League members as representative Muslims. As the Muslim League had no majority in any province, Jinnah was under no obligation to the Congress, and the acceptance of his demand would be a tacit admission that Muslim League was the only representative organization of the Indian Muslims, which was belied by the election results. If the Congress had accepted Jinnah's demand in the U.P., there could be no ground for refusing to follow the example in Bombay or Madras, in which case the Congress would be accused of bolstering a communal organization. In Bombay for example, Jinnah demanded two seats in the cabinet for the Muslim League members. After consultation with the Sardar, Maulana sent word that the Congress would be prepared to take one or two Muslim Ministers provided they accepted the Congress pledge and worked harmoniously with the Congress team. Jinnah, however, insisted that they should be taken as representatives of the League, so that there could be a coalition ministry.

The Sardar and Maulana decided that the terms of the Muslim League could not be accepted, for that would subject the Congress to

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Muslim League veto on every occasion. Nuri, an independent Muslim, was then selected as a Minister, and most of the other independent Muslims in the Bombay legislature thereupon joined the League.[11a]

There was another danger in such coalition cabinets. Rightly or wrongly, the Congress had not yet come to a final settlement with the British. What appears as Nehru's fulminations today was the voice of young India in the thirties; Netaji was even more hostile to the British, and had a large enough following to challenge Gandhiji successfully two years later. None was certain that the Congress Ministers, in spite of the Governor's assurance, would be able to pull on with the Anglo-indians, and, in case of disagreement between the Minister and his Anglo-indian Secretary, had the Governor supported the latter, the whole cabinet would have resigned. With the exception of Jinnah, all the Muslim League members were known to be pro-British and pro-official. In a case of a conflict with the Governor, no one could count on the support of the Muslim League Ministers; indeed, under Jinnah's proposal, cabinet responsibility, as it is understood in England, would not have developed in India and a perpetual coalition would have been the result. Further, the Muslim League members could stop any bill by declaring that it was against the interest of the Muslims, to which the Conress would have no answer, once it accepted the Muslim League as the only representative body of Indian Muslims. That is Liaqat Ali could have played the role in U.P. which a decade later he did at Delhi.

During the course of a conversation, Balfour had once said :

> '. . . .the whole essence of British Parliamentary Government lies in the intention to make the thing work. . . .our whole political machinery presupposes a people. . . .fundamentally at one. . . .The strength of Parliamentary Government is exactly measured by the unity of political parties upon its fundamental objectives."[12]

The Muslim League had already by its separatist claims rendered Parliamentary Government difficult, but to have voluntarily accepted the League principle in the formation of a cabinet would have been disastrous. It was an act of statesmanship to have refused the insidious proposals of Jinnah and his League.

The only logical sequel to this open rupture with the League was direct approach to the Muslims. This Nehru did, and was criticised then and later for provoking the Muslim League. It is difficult to understand the point of this criticism.

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Jinnah now showed his fangs and in a series of vituperative letters made his position clear.

> "I may add that", Jinnah wrote to Nehru on April 12, 1938, "in my opinion, as I have publicly stated so often, that unless the Congress recognises the Muslim League on a footing of complete equality and is prepared as such to negotiate for a Hindu-Muslim settlement, we shall have to wait and depend upon our 'inherent strength' which will 'determine the measure of importance or distinction' it possesses."[13]

After Munich, Jinnah declared in a speech to the Muslim League in Karachi on October 8 :

> "Just as the Sudeten Germans were not defenceless, and survived the oppression and persecution for two decades, so also the Mussalmans are not defenceless and cannot give up their national entity and aspirations in this great continent."[14]

The Sudeten German comparison was apt, for in mendacious propaganda the Muslim League and Jinnah were on a par with the Nazis. Smarting under the defeat at the polls and the refusal of the Congress to admit them in the ministries, the League appointed in 1938 a committee under the presidentship of Raja Muhammad Mehdi of Pirpur to investigate into the alleged persecution of the Muslims by the Hindus and the Congress. Another Committee was appointed in 1939 under S.M. Sharif to inquire into the alleged grievances of Bihari Muslims, and the same year the Muslim League premier of Bengal published a pamphlet under the title *Muslim Sufferings under Congress Rule.*

All these reports were deliberately based on falsehood and were intended as propaganda material modelled on the Nazi lies about the plight of the Sudeten Germans.[15]

Several times the Congress initiated negotiations with Jinnah, but whether it was through Nehru or Gandhiji or Netaji, all talks proved infructuous in face of Jinnah's adamantine attitude. Slowly the Hindus reacted, first under Malaviya and then under Savarkar. The Hindu Mahasabha never attracted large following, but focussed the attention of the Hindus to the danger of Muslim chauvinism ; the *Rastriya Svayam Sevak Sangha,* or the R.S.S., a militant organization of the Hindu youth was organized.

When in September 1944 Gandhiji arranged another series of meetings with Jinnah, a group of angry young men determined to pre-

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vent him from moving out of his residence, and had to be arrested by the Police. The Police officer banteringly remarked to one of the picketers that he had the satisfaction of becoming a martyr and received the ominious reply: "No, that will be when some one assassinates Gandhiji". "Why not leave it to the leaders to settle it among themselves", said the officer and added, "for instance Savarkar (the Hindu Mahasabha leader) might come to do the job." The picketer replied: "That will be too great an honour for Gandhiji. The *Jamadar* will be quite enough for the purpose."

The *Jamadar* was his fellow picketer, Nathuram Vinayak Godse.[18]

References

1. On January 4, 1932 Gandhiji was arrested, and the second phase of the 1931 *satyagraha* movement started. He was released on May, 8, 1933 and suspended the movement for six weeks, but in effect this was the end of the movement, which was formally abandoned next July. Subsequently other Congress leaders were released from prison.
2. Bolitho's evidence for this is a statement by Mrs. Liaqat Ali. Bolitho, *Jinnah*, pp. 105-06. The story however seems to me to be too dramatic.
3. I have accepted the date given by Nicolson : *Life of George V*, p. 509. Menon states (Menon, p. 51) that the Bill received Royal Assent on August 4.
4. For example in an extremely long letter to Lord Lothian, Nehru wrote on January 17, 1936 : ".... India has never known in the whole course of her long history the religious strife that has soaked Europe in blood.... The Communalism of today is essentially political, economic, and middle class...." *A Bunch Of Old Letters*, p. 145. The first sentence betrays ignorance of the spread of Islamic rule in India, and the second an unwillingness to face realities apprehended by Lothian who had written : "Unless the experience of the rest of the world is to be entirely falsified, as power passes into the hands of the political classes in India and as education and the press increase their influence, religion, race and language will assume increasing political importance and power and will become increasingly fissiparous in effect..". (Lothian to Nehru December 31, 1935, ibid, 131 ; in reply to this letter Nehru wrote his letter of January 17 from which the above quotation is given).
5. See Nehru's letter to Gandhiji of August 13, 1934 and Gandhiji's reply of August 17, 1934; *A Bunch of Old Letters*, pp. 112-119, and from Rajendra Prasad and others June 29, 1936 ; ibid, p. 182.
6. ibid, p. 115.
7. Rajendra Prasad : *Autobiography*, pp. 403-04.
8. ibid, p. 429.
9. ibid, p. 431.
10. Cmd. 5589, 1937.

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11. Abul Kalam Azad: *India Wins Freedom*, p. 106. But the terms dictated by Azad to the Muslim League implicates him. These terms are not given in Azad's book but is quoted by Ram Gopal, p. 248. For details see Khaliquzzaman : *Pathway to Pakistan*, pp. 160-67, 186-87. Khaliquzzaman places the entire responsibility for the breakdown of these talks on Azad. The Ministry making in U.P. was of crucial importance.

11a. Related to the author by Mr. K. M. Munshi. The neogtiations were held at Poona after the Congress ministry was formed. Both Sardar Patel and Maulana Azad were then Mr. Munshi's guests at Poona and he was present practically throughout the negotiations. See below Appendix IX.

12. Dugdale : *Balfour* II, pp. 363-64.

13. Bolitho : *Jinnah*, p. 117.

14. ibid, p. 118.

15. "Jinnah wanted the British Government to appoint a Royal Commission of judges under the chairmanship of a law lord of the Privy Council to hold an enquiry into the charges. The Congress had no objection to holding such an enquiry, *but at the instance of the Viceroy the matter was dropped.* The Governors (on whom lay the special responsibility for safeguarding the legitimate interest of the minorities) were satisfied that there was no basis for the allegations. The Governor of one of the provinces in which the atrocities were alleged to have been committed, writing in February 1939, to the provincial premier stated that 'the league had made very unfair attacks on you and your co leagues. They have referred to the "atrocities" committed by the Congress Governments, but no Muslim to whom I have talked on this point could give me any definite instance of "atrocities". The Viceroy felt that, while specific instances might admit of being proved in particular provinces, it would be most difficult for Jinnah to prove any general anti-Muslim action on the part of the Congress Governments, *and a finding that there was nothing substantial in the allegations would be damaging to Jinnah himself.*" Menon p. 71; italics mine.

    It is difficult to believe that a clever lawyer like Jinnah failed to realize that his charges could not be proved, which was apparent even to the slow-witted Linlithgow. It was believed at that time, that Jinnah was making these reckless charges because he knew that his bluff would never be called ; the Congress Government were always willing to appoint a High Court judge to undertake enquiries, hence Jinnah's demand for a British law Lord who could be appointed only through the intervention of Linlithgow surrounded by Anglo-indians as eager as Jinnah to damage the Congress.

16. Pyarelal, I, p. 86 ; Godse murdered Gandhiji.

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CHAPTER XII

THE PRINCES

> "The Ruling Chiefs", the Prince of Wales (later George V) wrote to his father from India in 1906, "ought to be treated with greater tact and sympathy, more as equal than inferiors.... They should no longer be treated as school boys, but even consulted by Government on matters which concern their states individually or as a whole. Why not a Council of all the Chiefs, presided over by the Viceroy, which would bring them together and enable them to know each other's views ?"[1]

This was the first time that the idea of the Chamber of Princes was mooted and shows imaginative statesmanship on the part of the young Prince.

Soon after Minto suggested to Morley in a letter dated May 28, 1906 :

> "As to the Congress.... We must recognize them and be friends with the best of them ; yet I am afraid there is much that is absolutely disloyal in the movement and that there is danger for the future....I have been thinking a good deal lately of a possible counterpoise to the Congress aims. I think we may find a solution in the Council of Princes or in an elaboration of that idea; a privy council not only of native rulers, but of a few other big men to meet say once a year for a week or a fortnight at Delhi for instance. Subjects for discussion and procedure would have to be very carefully thought out, but we should get different ideas from those of Congress."[2]

Minto, however, got his necessary "counterpoise" and "different idea" from the Muslims, and did not follow up his suggestion, which was next taken up by the Princes themselves.

During the first world war, the Princes helped the British ungrudgingly both in man and money, and several of them distinguished themselves in the battle field. The organization of war effort needed close co-ordination with the Native States and both Hardinge and Chelmsford held periodical conferences with the leading rulers. This gratified the Princes, who expressed the hope that, what had become an annual conference should develop into a permanent council. The authors of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report strongly supported the idea and as a result the Chamber of Princes was created by a Royal Proclamation on February 8, 1921. This was, however, far from using the princes as a counterpoise, for the Chamber was concerned

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mainly with the relation of the Princes with the Government, in plainer words, a trade union of princes to protect themselves against the tyranny of the Political Department.

The reference to the Simon Commission excluded the States, so Simon suggested in October, 1929, that, after the publication of his report, it would be desirable for the Government to hold a conference with the representatives of both British India and the States. Simon was contemplating a federal constitution for India, and probably wanted the States as a 'counterpoise' in the centre against the too blatant nationalists: the Muslims would be there, but to have the Princes as a double insurance would be safer. So the rulers were represented at the Round Table Conference by thirteen Princes and three Chief Ministers.

On the first day of the plenary session of the first Round Table Conference Sir Tej Bahadur, supported by Muhammad Shafi and Jinnah declared for a federation and appealed to the Princes to join it as a stabilizing influence. To the surprise of all, the Maharajah of Bikaner, the late Sir Ganga Singh, and the Nawab of Bhopal declared themselves in favour of the proposal and Bhopal in an exuberant mood stipulated: "We can only federate with a self-governing and federal British India."[3]

The Princes were motivated by their desire to be free from the irritating meddlesomeness of the Political Department, but soon they made it clear that they did not wish to have their political relations, as embodied in their treaties, to be transferred to the proposed federal government with a majority of British Indian members in the Legislature. Nor were they willing to introduce democracy in their States. As a result, it was provided in the Government of India Act 1935, that the Princes would send their nominees to the federal legislature; the upper chamber was to consist of 156 members from British India and not more than 104 members from the States, and the lower chamber 250 representatives of British India and not more than 125 of the States. But the most important part of the constitution and the main reason of its subsequent failure was that, while for British Indian Provinces accession to the federation was automatic, for the States it was voluntary; and only when sufficient number of States had acceded to occupy half the seats allotted to them in the upper chamber and to make up half the total population of all the States, the Federal part of the constitution would come into existence. It never did.

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Today it seems incredible that in 1937 the Princes refused to join the federation, for now we know that a decade later they were wiped off by Sardar Patel. There were no doubt some patriotic Princes, like the Maharana of Udaipur or the Maharajah of Patiala who made common cause with the Indian Union but the rest wilted before the stern gaze of that 'iron man' and the blandishment of Mountbatten. To use an Americanism, how came then they resisted the mighty British Raj in its attempt to form a federation ? The answer in a nut-shell is Marquess of Linlithgow and the Political Department.

Here I must confess that, Lord Linlithgow has always reminded me of Mr. P. G. Woodhouse's Lord Emsworth of the Blandings Castle. That nobleman, it may be remembered, was extremely fond of his prize pig, so was Linlithgow fond of stud bulls. This amiable weakness for the stud bulls no doubt sprang from what he saw of the condition of Indian cattle when he came to this country in 1928 as the Chairman of the Royal Commission on Agriculture, known as the Linlithgow Commission. Possibly, this Indian experience led to his appointment as the Chairman of the Joint Select Committee of the two houses of Parliament. This body played an important role in the preparation of the Government of India Act 1935, and that Linlithgow should have been the Chairman of this very important Committee shows that like the ways of Providence that of the British Parliament also is inscrutable.

Linlithgow's "pedestrian talents"[4] as Mr. Moon puts it, was, however, fired by the ambition of putting the federal part of the scheme into operation. This was laudable and as a Viceroy he was obliged to attempt it. But the first hurdle, it may be remembered, was that sufficient number of Princes should voluntarily accede to the federation. So Linlithgow sent three knights, Sir Francis Wylie, Sir Courtenay Latimer and Sir Arthur Lothian, all members of the Political Service, to coax the Princes into joining the Federation.

The Indian Rulers, whatever may have been their moral defects, had, during the process of preserving their existence against a world power, developed a trait of cunningness common to the weak. Their enthusiasm for joining the federation had vaporized long ago, that is after it had its desired effect on the Political Department. Now it had the Political Department just where it wanted, for that Department too suddenly woke up to a realization of the importance of the Princes in the mighty fabric of the Raj.

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It has been mentioned above that the other half of the answer to the question, 'why the federal scheme failed,' was the Political Department. That cryptic answer now needs elucidation.

Llyod George once described the Government of India as the "Garden of Eden of the brass-hats". This is a complete statement only it remains to add that the tree of knowledge was planted inside the Political Department. There they sat in their mighty isolation from the vulgarities of Indian political life, drawing sustenance from the inspiring memories of Cornwallis, Wellesley, the Iron Duke, Lake, Hastings and Dalhousie, some of the greatest names in British imperial annals.

This department sucked only the cream of the civil service and the army—all white—and no Indian was allowed to cross its portals except as clerks or menials.[5] In a word it was the last stronghold of the Anglo-indians, for, by persistent application, the Indians had entered all the other citadels. This was disturbing enough, but the Government of India Act was the last word in Anglo-indian misery.

Under the Montagu-Chelmsford reform the Indian politicians could share power with the bureaucrats as junior partners. But under the Act of 1935, the provincial administration was handed over entirely to the Indian politicians, in seven provinces to those of the Congress brand. There the civil servants had to carry out the orders of the Babu ministers and if such people came to power in the centre, similar would be the fate of the mighty ones of New Delhi. The Hindus and Muslims were quarrelling but they might unite. Hence the value of the Princes as the stabilizing factor.

The danger, however, was lest the pernicious ideas of democracy should percolate from British India to the States: but against that adequate percautions had been taken in the Act itself. So Linlithgow naturally felt that at least the required number of rulers could be induced to accede to the Federation. What the Political Department thought, no one knows and there is no chance of knowing it either, as they took the precaution of burning the important papers before August, 15, 1947.

It is difficult to believe that the Princes would have had the effrontery to reject Linlithgow's persistent overtures, had they not been assured of the support of the Political Department. This would be directly thwarting the policy of the Government and the Viceroy but the Political Department had the necessary audacity.

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V. P. Menon, who was concerned with these neogitations, writes:

> 'When they found that the Secretary of State was not prepared to go to the extent of amending the Act to maintain the principle of *status quo*, the Political Department proceeded to examine how best the rulers' demands could be met within the four corners of the Act. There were further discussions and consultations which it would be tedious to follow in detail. Most of the States continued to put forward extravagant demands.... Instead of putting a brake on the never-ceasing demands of the rulers and stressing the advantages to be gained by their entering the federation, the Political Department seemed to spend its time more in emphasizing the loss the rulers would suffer if they were to federate and in instituting a search for expedients wherewith to make good or mitigate the loss. The result was a tendency to give in to the rulers all along the line. ...In the formal meetings of the rulers and States' representatives, they (the Princes) would not take a definite stand one way or the other; but subsequently they would run up to the Political Department, and plead for further concessions so that they could 'bring round the reasonable section of the rulers'. The Political Department would then get busy to convert the Viceroy to these demands and there was thus a merry-go-round of demands and concessions."[6]

But the Secretary of State, Zetland, Menon adds, refused to be led up the garden path into changing the constitution, so Linlithgow plodded along alone.

In 1947, the Political Department tried to play a much bigger game against the Viceroy and the Government, but then Mountbatten was the Viceroy and practically dismissed the head of the Political Department.

A less drastic action might have served Linlithgow's purpose. But from the beginning he had set out on a policy of bribing and cajoling the Princes and this he followed with a pathetic determination to the end. This was of course the era of appeasement and Linlithgow's excuse would have been that the Princes were at least harmless creatures, compared to the European dictators and were tied to Britain with treaty rights. Only it did not occur to him that the Government of India had broken treaty rights whenever the occasion demanded, and had persistently refused to define the vague word "paramountcy", which ultimately determined the relation between the British Crown and the States. Now by reversing the policy of the Government of India *vis a vis* the Princes, he, in effect, mortgaged the future of a united Indian federation in the hands of a couple of hundred of irresponsible autocrats.

Thus the federal part of the Government of India Act 1935 never

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came into operation. Was it after all just as well that it did not? Actually it was the part of the Act which was hedged around with checks and was the proper target of sober criticism. But there was every chance that the Congress would have worked it, so that, when the war broke out, Linlithgow could have declared war with the full support of the Congress and thus have avoided all the consequences of his ill-judged action. Could it have saved India from being divided? That is impossible to say, for the Muslim League was opposed to any coherent central authority; still the Pakistan resolution was adopted by the League in 1940, and up to that time there was reasonable chance of their making up with the Congress, particularly if there was a chance of sharing power.

Lord Lothian wrote several letters to Nehru urging him on various grounds to accept the Act of 1935. Later events proved Lothian's analysis of the situation to be correct,[7] and it is possible that his solution of the problem was really sound advice. Various reasons led Nehru to reject Lothian's advice, one of which was his misunderstanding of the constitutional position, which seems to have been shared by Gandhiji also. As Menon writes: "The Congress condemned it (the federation) for reasons mostly divorced from facts and realities but largely under the pressure of a strong left wing."[8]

It is apparent, however, that Churchill and his friends had a better appreciation of the constitution, which led them to oppose the Bill at every step. Indeed since the renewal of the Company's Charter in 1853, no Bill relating to India was so thoroughly discussed by the Parliament nor so violently opposed. They also must have realized, that the Bill, if passed, would inevitably lead to the transfer of power to Indian hands.

The Bill, however was passed and the Act came into operation in the Provinces where the power was exercised by the Indian Ministers quite capably. (The Indian critics of the Act may be reminded that in the Indian Constitution the allocation of power to the constituent States is practically copied from the India Act.) The Provinces therefore were "lost" to the Raj, in the teeth of opposition from the die-hard Tories and the Anglo-indians. It was rumoured at the time and even later, that a strong Tory group favoured the dismemberment of India into constituent provinces, each directly linked to Great Britain. The only way this could be accomplished was by preventing the federal part of the Act from coming into operation, and that could be ac-

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complished after the passage of the Bill, if the Princes refused to join the federation. It was impossible for the Princes to directly refuse to join the federation for they were committed to it, but they could demand impossible conditions. This was done, at the instigation of the Political Department and the All-India Federation never came into being.

In the result the Princes were the worst sufferers. Had they acceded to the Federation they could retain their link with the Crown and at the same time have an organic unity with the rest of India. It would of course have been necessary to introduce democratic form of Government in their States, which even the Political Department urged them to do, but once they became constitutional heads of their States in an all-India federation their survival would have been assured. Instead, as will be shown later, some of them allowed themselves to be misguided by the Political Department and Jinnah into adopting certain actions which if successful, would have jeopardized the security of independent India. However, the beginning of the anti-Indian alliance of some of the Princes and the Political Department dates from this period. It is difficult to say when the Political Department formed its alliance with the Muslim League, but by July 5, 1947 "the entire staff of the Political service, with a few exceptions, had either applied for pension or had opted for service in Pakistan."[9]

References

1. Harold Nicolson : *King George V*, pp. 88-9.

2. Countess Minto : *India, Minto and Morley*, pp. 28-9.

3. Menon: *States*, p. 28. Menon writes that Nawab of Bhopal's statement "virtually created a common Indian front."

4. P. Moon, *Divide and Quit*, p. 18. Nehru describes Linlithgow as "heavy of body and slow of mind, solid as a rock and with almost a rock's lack of awareness." *The Discovery of India*, p. 528. For a British estimate of Linlithgow see the article by O. Edwardes in the *New Statesman and the Nation* of June 13, 1943, partly quoted in Sitaramayya, II, pp. 558—60. I have heard that Sir Tej Bahadur wrote a letter to King George VI about Linlithgow.

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5. There were occasional intrusions during the last days of the Raj.
6. Menon ; *States*, pp. 39-40, 41.
7. For an appraisal of the Government of India Act 1935 see Lothian's letter to Nehru : *A Bunch of Old letters* pp. 134-35, and p. 226, where Lothian writes: "I think too that attempts to tear it (the Government of India Act 1935) down will inevitably end in the break up of the organic unity of India itself".
8. Menon, p. 57.
9. Menon : *States*, p. 100.

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CHAPTER XIII

WORLD WAR II

When the Second World War broke out, there were Congress Ministries in eight provinces; of the other three provinces, Sind had a ministry supported by the Congress, in the Punjab there was the Unionist Ministry, while the political situation in Bengal was very fluid and it may be said that alternate ministries were being formed with the aid of the Congress and the Muslim League. On the whole, the Muslim League was out and the Congress was in. The war provided the opportunity to oust the Congress and bring in the Muslim League. Actually while Great Britain was fighting a global war, the Government of India was engaged in its own war against the Congress. The misery thus inflicted was possibly mild in comparison to what happened to Europe or to the Jews in Germany and Poland, but the point is that it was really unnecessary. And since India was offered independence a year after the war, the tortuous policy adopted by Linlithgow's Government can only be explained as the "reluctant pangs of abdicating sovereignty." However, it is on the perspective of the happenings of 1946-47, the crucial year of the Indo-British relation, that the events of the war years have to be judged and reconciled.

II

On September 3, 1939, Linlithgow declared India to be a belligerent country without consulting Indian opinion. Soon after, the Central Legislature passed the Defence of India Bill, the Congress Party abstaining from attending the session, while the Government of India (Amendments) Act of 1939 was rushed through the Parliament. The amendments empowered the Central Government not only to direct the provincial executive, but also to make laws conferring executive authority, in respect of provincial subjects, on the Central Government and its officers overriding the provincial ministries. The Congress protested against this, but Linlithgow paid no heed to these protests, as the Act had been passed at his instance.

The Congress was now presented with a dilemma. It could retaliate by withdrawing from the provincial Governments and start another

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civil disobedience movement, but emotionally the Congress leaders, particularly Nehru, were eager to join the battle for democracy against Fascism; and all the resolutions passed at the various Congress committees reflected their ambivalent attitude forced on them by the Government of India. From time to time Linlithgow called conferences with Indian leaders and Princes, mingling procrastination with issuing occasional pronunciamentos encouraging Jinnah and driving the Congress to despair. Did he and his advisers really desire Congress help ?

Here, the testimony of P. Moon, then a member of the I.C.S., is more than significant. He writes :

> "In October 1939 the Congress ministries in the Provinces were ordered to resign from office and this proved to be the prelude to retirement into jail. Jinnah was thus left with a clear field and took advantage of it.
>
> "From every point of view the Congress attitude was unfortunate except perhaps that of the successful prosecution of the war. But this was the aspect which at the time most impressed itself on the British. Congress 'co-operation', it was felt, would take the form of daily and exasperating obstruction to which 'non-co-operation' or even active hostility would be preferable. A section of British opinion was, therefore, not at all keen to have members of Congress in office during the war and secretly welcomed their departure soon after its outbreak. On short-term considerations there was much to be said for this view; and, whether deliberately or not, the Viceroy ensured that events would conform to it. It is conceivable that if on the outbreak of war he had proclaimed in a few stirring words his belief that a war for freedom could only end in the freedom of India—as in fact it did—the Congress would have been swung in favour of co-operation in which case Jinnah would have had to co-operate too. But Lord Linlithgow did not adopt this course. After several weeks of discussion and cogitation he came out on October 17th with a dreary prosaic statement, renewing previous assurances that Dominion Status was the goal of British policy in India, but giving no indication when the goal was likely to be reached. It was so ill-calculated to appeal to Congress that cynics said it was purposely designed to ease them out of office. Five days later the Working Committee called on the Ministries to resign.
>
> "The British disposition now was to leave Congress to stew in their own juice. From the point of view of preventing a widening of the gulf between Congress and the League, this attitude was unwise....[1]"

It is interesting to note that a group of British officials headed by Sir Malcolm Darling urged Linlithgow at the outbreak of war to issue a proclamation emphasizing that the war would inevitably bring freedom to India at its conclusion. Their suggestions were ridiculed.[2]

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Similarly, Linlithgow rejected all overtures made by the Congress. Immediately after the war broke out, K. M. Munshi, then the Home Minister of Bombay, approached Gandhiji at the suggestion of Sir Roger Lumley, the Governor of Bombay, and obtained from Gandhiji his views which were as follows :

1. I (Gandhi) know that my views in regard to unconditional co-operation are not shared by the country. The resolution of the Working Committee reflects the Congress opinion properly.
2. Since the Congress is unable, owing to past experience, to give unconditional co-operation, it can only co-operate if it is able to convince the country that it has in substance achieved its purpose and that therefore there is a complete understanding about it between the British Government and the Congress.
3. If there is a real understanding between the British Government and the Congress, it follows that there must be corresponding action even during the war. Thus Ministries must not be mere registering agencies of the measures coming from the Centre. Hence there must be some method at the Centre of having a Congress representation sufficient to give it a majority.
4. The only constitutional way in which the Ministries can declare their position is to obtain the necessary authority of their respective legislatures by getting them to adopt this resolution, unless in the meantime they can convince their legislatures that circumstances in terms of 2 and 3 have come into existence which render such resolution unnecessary.
5. If the British Government are serious in their profession that they are fighting for democracy, they cannot marshall the moral opinion of the world in their favour except by declaring that India will be a free and democratic country at the end of the war and that in the meantime it has taken steps to implement the assurances so far as it is practicable under martial conditions.
6. If for some reason the British Government takes a different view, the Ministries will find it impossible to function.
8. The resolution may be kept back for a week if the members of the War-Sub-Committee agree. But it must be clearly understood that before the A.I.C.C. meets, the Working Committee which meets on the 4th must have definite material to enable it to give the lead to the A.I.C.C. and the country.[2a]

It is apparent that these proposals were eminently reasonable and if the Government was unable to accept them in full, at least these could have provided the basis for negotiation. However, Munshi gave these proposals to Sir Roger Lumley, who forwarded it to Linlithgow, and that was the last one heard about them. As the Viceroy did not respond, the Congress was left with no other alternative but to

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pass the resolution referred to in Gandhiji's note, along with a circular letter from the Sardar on September 17, which considerably stiffened the Congress attitude towards the Government.

Here one has to digress a little to bring out an aspect in the mental make-up of the Anglo-indians which Linlithgow faithfully represented. In a conversation with Munshi on January 12, 1940, Linlithgow, after exhausting the usual platitudes in favour of the Congress acceptance of the federation and general collaboration with the Government made, for him, the astounding statement that the minorities had no right to block the progress of India towards self-Government. Munshi immediately pointed out that Linlithgow himself was the greatest supporter of the intransigent minority leaders particularly Jinnah, whom he (Linlithgow) had been using as a counter-weight against Gandhiji. To this the guileless Viceroy replied: "I have to do so. I have not merely a public in India, I have also a public in England. That public is an important factor both from your and my point of view. And it has a feeling that Hindus as a community are against British interests."[2b]

Linlithgow must have been speaking the truth according to his lights. There were indeed Churchill and the British mercantile interest which found it difficult to excuse the Indian industrialists who were mostly non-Muslims. But the real tragedy, both to India and to England, was that the Viceroy instead of interpreting Indian aims and aspirations to the British public was content to remain as the mouth-piece of the reactionary Tory coterie.

But Linlithgow could reach yet higher regions of obtuseness. Immediately after the fall of Singapore, Churchill decided to broadcast a personal appeal to India, and sent its draft to Linlithgow.[3] Linlithgow however vetoed the scheme, which had several commendable features, including an elected Indian Council of Defence (with additional members from Native States) which would nominate members to the Governor-General's Executive Council and represent India at the meetings of the British War Cabinet. It is now impossible to say whether the scheme would have been accepted, but an appeal by Churchill in his inimitable language might have struck the right chord in the heart of India. If Linlithgow had really been earnest about securing Congress help, he would not have spurned the profferred aid of Churchill's appeal. As a result what the Indians came to know was Churchill's assertion: "I have not become the first minister of the Crown to preside over the liquidation of the British

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empire", and his exclusion of India from the benefits of the Atlantic Charter.

Actually after the resignation of the Congress from the Provincial Ministries, Linlithgow's attitude changed. He did not want them to return to office, where they might be sources of trouble ; while from the pronouncement of the Congress leaders it could be inferred that their sympathy was with the Allies, and they would not precipitate a struggle against the Government. He, therefore, employed his considerable energy to woo the Muslim League and in particular Jinnah, who had no difficulty in extracting far-reaching concessions from the ponderous Viceroy, which established Jinnah as the only leader among the Indian Muslims, the Muslim League as the only party of Indian Muslims to which all Muslims belonged, and Pakistan as their legitimate goal.

The hesitating policy followed by the Congress produced desirable effect in one important sphere, the defence forces. The Congress, out of loyalty to the anti-Fascist cause, did not prevent the recruitment to the army, and soon large number of Indians were given commissions. They were all educated, and served in the army without any crisis of conscience, for, though like most educated Hindus, they too were generally nationalist minded, the Congress never asked them to give up their career in the army and uninterrupted recruitment went on till the end of the war.

This wise policy yielded results after the war. It may be remembered that Attlee objected to the granting of Dominion Status in 1928 because India could not defend herself. By this he meant, as indeed he explains, lack of officers. In 1946, however, that objection was no longer tenable, thanks to the devotion and skill shown by the Indian officers. Their appointment was temporary, and they did not have had the benefit of regular training, yet they maintained the high efficiency of the Indian Army when the British officers were suddenly withdrawn in 1947. India's debt to these gallant men have not been properly expressed. I mention them here, because they were an unexpected by-product of the war, and it does not appear that much notice was taken of these men then or later.

Some Indian officers joined the I.N.A. but that was due to the influence of Netaji who believed in joining England's enemies in order to wage a successful war of independence in India. There was another reason for their joining the I.N.A. which is best expressed in the lan-

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guage of Field Marshal Auchinleck, the last British Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army :

> "There is no excuse for the regular officers who went over (to the I.N.A), beyond the fact that the early stages of 'Indianization' from its inception to the beginning of the late war were badly mismanaged by the British Government of India, and this prepared the ground for disloyalty when the opportunity came.
>
> "There is little doubt that 'Indianization' was at its inception looked on as a political expedient which was bound to fail militarily. There is no doubt also that many senior British officers believed and even hoped that it would fail.
>
> "The policy of segregation of Indian officers into separate units, the differential treatment in respect of pay and terms of service as compared with the British officer, and the prejudice and lack of manners of some—by no means all—British officers and their wives, all went to produce a very deep and bitter feeling of racial discrimination in the minds of the most intelligent and progressive of the Indian officers who were naturally Nationalists, keen to see India standing on her own legs and not to be ruled from Whitehall for ever."[4]

Thus even a British Field Marshal felt that the Indian officers had genuine reasons for disaffection. Credit is therefore due to those officers who under the trying conditions described by Auchinleck, performed their duty ably and well. I would therefore again emphasize the decisive importance of the Indian officers at the time of independence and the efficiency with which they protected India in Kashmir and Hyderabad.

I have stated above that Netaji believed in joining England's enemies to force her to terms. This policy was completely at variance with the policy of Gandhiji and the other leaders, that is those, who counted in the Congress organization. Netaji, however, had considerable popular support and in 1939 was re-elected as Congress President defeating Gandhiji's candidate in a keenly contested presidential election. Circumstances however proved too strong for him and he was forced to resign and ultimately in August 1939 he was suspended from office for three years for a breach of organizational discipline.

This produced a rift in the Congress, and at the beginning of the war it had to act somewhat hesitantly, always aware that a too pro-British move might not be supported by those who, so recently, had voted for Netaji. As we have seen, instead of making any

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allowance for the delicate position of the Congress leaders, the Government did its utmost to crush it out of existence.

Sometime before the war, several distinguished Englishmen, visited Gandhiji from time to time and apprised him with the situation in Europe. Among them was Lord Lothian, who it is said, convinced Gandhiji of the wickedness of Fascism and the importance of the anti-Fascist front.

On the other hand, during 1938, Netaji, who was then President of the Congress, spent some time in Bombay where he was in active contact with the German Consul. Netaji took great precaution while meeting the Consul ; for example, he would go to a friend's house for lunch, after which he would retire for rest, and all the guests would naturally depart. He would then change his dress, and put on sufficient disguise to hide his identity and go out to meet the Consul in the house of another friend, changing his taxi on his way.[4a] However, some coded message from the Consul to Germany was intercepted by the British Secret Service in 1938 and sent to the Government of India who managed to forward it to Gandhiji through Munshi.[4b] Netaji's secret activities took Gandhiji entirely by surprise and he decided that he (Netaji) should not be re-elected President of the Congress. This led to his opposing Netaji's re-election and after the latter was re-elected, to withhold co-operation which forced him to resign.

This was well known to the Government of India, and they took the fullest advantage of the difficulties of the Congress. Either the Congress could become completely subservient to the Government or they would be eliminated. So the Congress resigned.

The Congress resignation was both due to dissatisfaction with the British war aims as well as to the rebuff given to all Congress offers of co-operation. Even in May 1940, after the fall of France, Nehru wrote to Rajendra Prasad : "I think it would be wrong for us at this particular moment when Britain is in peril, to take advantage of her distress and rush at her throat", and he repeated the same sentiment in a public speech at Lucknow,[5] but no notice was taken in the Government circle; from the behaviour of the rulers of India, one would get the impression that this was still the age of Kipling and not of Hitler.

In July 1940, the A.I.C.C. passed a resolution declaring that in the war between Nazism and Democracy India's rightful place was in the democratic camp. This was repudiation of non-violence, and several members of the A.I.C.C. informed the President, Maulana

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Azad, that they did not agree with this resolution and would have no option but to resign were the British to accept the offer. But as Azad says, such an eventuality was most unlikely, for Linlithgow's response to this generous gesture was to invite Azad to discuss with him the participation of Congress in the Government on the basis of an enlarged Executive Council. Azad refused to meet the Viceroy.[6]

So in September 1940, the A.I.C.C. passed the Civil Disobedience resolution. Selected individuals were to recite publicly the following slogan: "It is wrong to help the British war effort with men or money. The only remedy to war is to resist all wars by non-violent resistance."[7] This evoked amused criticism—raillery would probably be the proper word—at Gandhiji's naiveté. But those who laughed had not reckoned with the Anglo-indian mentality. Not only the individual *satyagrahis*, but several Congress leaders, including Nehru and Azad, were imprisoned; the four years sentence passed on Nehru shocked even Churchill, who had to be assured that Nehru would receive specially considerate treatment. But neither Nehru nor his colleagues had to serve the full term, for they were released a few days before the Pearl Harbour, which led to the Cripps Mission.

III

Linlithgow's attitude towards the Congress was evasive if not quite disdainful, but for the Muslim League and particularly its leader Jinnah, he was not merely affable but sometimes even obsequious. Once during the protracted negotiations Jinnah threatened that "if the Congress ministers returned to office" without forming coalition with the League, there would be "civil war in India." Linlithgow apologetically reminded Jinnah that he was making a serious statement.[8]

It is ridiculous to find in Linlithgow's attitude towards Jinnah a parallel of Chamberlain's towards Hilter, but servility was there. Nehru and Congress leaders could be put into jail, but Jinnah could not be even reprimanded. To his credit, it should be said that, Jinnah exploited the situation to its fullest and treated Linlithgow with what he deserved, open contempt.

There was however one reason for Jinnah's arrogance and Linlithgow's abasement: the Muslim complement in the army had been increased to a dangerous proportion. The Government of India persistently refused to divulge the communal composition of the Indian

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army, but on July 8, 1943, the Secretary of State gave the following figures :[9]

1. Muslims—34 p.c.
2. Hindus and Gurkhas—50 p.c.
3. Sikhs—10 p.c.
4. Christians and the rest—6 p.c.

The peculiarity of the statement is that the Hindus and Gurkhas nave been shown together. The Gurkhas were citizens of Nepal; therefore it is impossible to find out from this statement, the percentage of Indian Hindus in the Indian army. These figures, however, do not agree with those given by Churchill to Harry Hopkins who relayed it to President Roosevelt. According to Churchill approximately 75% of the Indian troops and volunteers were Muslims.[10] On March 4, 1942 Churchill wrote to the President : "We must not on any account break with the Muslims who represent a hundred million people and the main army elements on which we must rely for the immediate fighting".[11] Thus the communal ratio of the army became a factor in Indian politics. The raising of the proportion of Muslims in the army was being done by the Anglo-indians for a long time. The army was their particular preserve, and they did not allow any Hindu to share their knowledge. The only Hindu troops which were liked by Anglo-indians were the Gurkhas, who are undoubtedly splendid fighters and good Hindus, but they belong to Nepal and could have been recalled there. It is also significant that up to the end of the Raj (August 15, 1947) no Indian officer was allowed to serve in a Gurkha battalion, though Indian officers were attached to British units.

Thus a situation had been deliberately created by the Anglo-indians on the basis of their thought process, that the Congress would learn the lesson of their life if India ever became free, begging for British troops to protect them from the Muslims.

Linlithgow in his interview with Jinnah on March 13, 1940 visualized three possiblities: (1) The Hindu-Muslim difference would be removed in course of time and everyone would live happily afterwards; (2) the British would withdraw followed by a disastrous communal conflict; (3) "Thirdly there might be some tripartite arrangement by which the presence of His Majesty's Government, in a manner as little out of tune with Indian aspirations as possible, would be needed

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in India longer even than some imagined. In such an arrangement Britain would have predominant responsibility for Defence". Jinnah readily accepted the third possibility as an excellent one and suggested that Pakistan (the actual word was not used) would be run by Muslims in collaboration with the British.[12]

As we shall see, to the end the British Government pursued Linlithgow's third alternative. They were undoubtedly motivated by the fact, that the Indian army, at the end of war, was the strongest fighting force in Asia, and could have been a real stabilizing factor in the East. But by that time Jinnah had got his Pakistan, and the Muslim League slogan had become: "We have easily got Pakistan, now we shall conquer Hindustan". For, though the Congress leaders may not have known the communal composition of the Indian army, it was no secret to the Muslim League leaders, who unhesitatingly invaded Kashmir, fully convinced that India militarily was not in a position to retaliate. Fortunately, the Anglo-indians had miscalculated; the Pathans and the Punjabi Muslims (P. M. of the Anglo-indians) were not as good fighting materials as Simla imagined them to be, but this was a part of the Anglo-indians' traditional myth.

Jinnah's greatest qualification, even as a lawyer, was the ability to exploit the weakness of his adversary and never in his life he showed himself to greater advantage than in his historic interviews with Linlithgow. It was during these parleys that he erected the facade of Pakistan with the brick and mortar readily supplied him by an obliging Viceroy.

Up to the Cripps Mission, Jinnah had many interviews with Linlithgow and he inexorably extracted one concession after another on the basis of his two nation theory till the Viceroy agreed to the following :

(1) Jinnah was given a veto on all constitutional progress, for it was agreed that no progress could take place without the consent of the Muslims, and the League being the only Muslim organization, without the League's that is Jinnah's, consent. Up to 1935 the British Parliament had determined the pace of India's constitutional progress; now the Muslim League, that is Jinnah, assumed that role.

(2) Muslims and Hindus being two nations must be treated equally irrespective of their numbers. So Jinnah demanded that if the Congress decided to join the Governor-General's Executive Council,

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the Congress and the League should have equal representation, but if the Congress did not join, the Muslims should be in a majority. In the Congress majority provinces from which the ministers had resigned, Congress would in future be allowed to form ministries provided they formed coalition with the League but without any joint cabinet responsibility. For, Jinnah had adopted the favourite thesis of the Anglo-indians, that Parliamentary type of government being unknown to Indian history would be unsuitable. What these Pundits missed were that many countries have copied the British Parliamentary type of Government; they have not been very successful ; still it is the only alternative to autocarcy, a form of government which strongly appealed to Jinnah and his Anglo-indian comrades. American form of democracy was also possible, but Indians had developed parliamentary traditions since 1861, and it was now too late to throw it overboard for the completely untried Presidential system.

Of Jinnah's demands only one was formally accepted, namely, that no constitutional change would be effected in India to which the Muslim League was not a party. This was of course the most valuable concession and gave Jinnah a veto power. His other demands, though not formally accepted, were in practice conceded, so that it may be said that with the resignation of the Congress Ministries, Jinnah immobilized all attempts at any *rapprochement* between the Congress and the British.

It is possible that in order to attain his supreme objective Jinnah had to pay. As usual with him, at the beginning of the war, he was bargaining both with the Congress and Linlithgow. In the middle of October, Raghunandan Saran found Jinnah and Liaqat eager to come to terms with the Congress and he wrote to Nehru about it.[13] On this Nehru wrote to Jinnah on October, 18, 1939 and as late as December 7 again wrote to him that he (Nehru) would be going to Bombay soon to meet him (Jinnah).[14] Though Jinnah's reply to Nehru is not available, apparently between October 18 to December 7, Jinnah had encouraged him to believe that a meeting between them would be fruitful. But suddenly on December 9, Jinnah publicly declared December 22 to be the "Deliverance Day" that is deliverance from the Congress Ministries which had resigned by the end of October. Next March, Muslim League adopted the Pakistan resolution.

Apparently something had happened. A politician of Jinnah's calibre does not suddenly go off his rail and take a measure calculated

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to create an irrevocable breach with the party with whom negotiations were proceeding for a settlement. Actually on December 9 on reading of the "Deliverance Day" proposed by Jinnah, Nehru wrote to Mahadev Desai: "There is a limit even to political falsehood and indecency but all limits have been passed. I do not see how I can even meet Jinnah now".[15] This reaction was only to be expected, and was apparently desired. But the question is why ?

In the absence of contemporary records any answer is bound to be conjectural, still I offer an explanation which takes into account the known facts.

It is well known that Jinnah had intimate friends among the highly placed Anglo-indians who supplied him with the inner informations during the Cabinet Mission negotiations and even earlier.[16] They helped him by influencing Linlithgow and it is through their help that Jinnah was able to form Muslim League cabinets in Bengal, Sind and N.W.F.P.; in Bengal and Sind the Governors dismissed the non-Muslim League Mussalman Chief Ministers primarily because they were not members of the League; moreover, in Bengal the crucial twenty-five European votes of the Assembly were always at the service of the League.

All these developments happened after Jinnah proclaimed the Deliverance Day and passed the Pakistan resolution which seems to have been the price he was forced to pay by the Anglo-indians as a tangible evidence of his irrevocable breach with the Congress; for Jinnah's and Muslim League's record in this respect till then was ambiguous and his habit of negotiating with the Government and the Congress to sell his support to the highest bidder rendered him suspicious to both. Therefore, just as the Congress was demanding that Jinnah should co-operate with the Congress whole-heartedly against the British, the latter (that is the Anglo-indians) also must have demanded complete alignment against the Congress. In this political auction, the Anglo-indians always could bid higher, and Jinnah was won. In 1939, the Muslim League was practically without any political power in India, which was about to pass into the Congress hands. By 1942, the Congress was in wilderness, and the effective constitutional and political power was in Jinnah's hands. The temptation was irresistible.

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IV

Now I come to a subject which will be discussed by Indian historians for a long time to come: was the Congress justified in resigning the provincial ministries in 1939? Anyone who approves that decision should ponder over Menon's statement that it was after the Congress resignation that "Linlithgow began to lean more on the support of the Muslim League".[17] In the tortuous mental process of that huge English gentleman it was quite axiomatic that, having lost Congress support, he must win over the other party, that is Muslim League; secondly the Congress was troublesome, so it was better to follow Jinnah's advice and keep them out of office during the war at least. This at least is exactly what happened, but could never have taken place if the Congress had not directly played into the hands of the Anglo-indians by leaving the ministries in a fit of petulance.

My conclusion may cause indignation in patriotic hearts, but after having studied the published contemporary records with some care I think that it aptly describes the fateful Congress decision. Part of the explanation may be found in the Hindu view of life that, renunciation is the highest goal and is sure to bring its reward in the next life, but in the main the decision was due to the intellectual crisis in Congress leadership and internal dissensions if not squabbles.

Gandhiji was the acknowledged leader of the Congress; therefore, responsibility for any decision must be his. One has to remember, however, that he had a complete philosophy of life, which for want of a better word may be called idealist socialism, in which the rich were the custodians of the social wealth which was to be distributed among the poor. He was also opposed to giving way to the technical civilization, and the spinning wheel was his symbol of human victory over the machine. And though he had at one time helped recruitment in the British army he had come to realize that non-violence was truth.

Opposed to Gandhiji was Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose. He was a socialist, appointed a planning commission with Nehru as its chairman, believed in violence and in securing outside help for India's liberation. So, in 1941, he left India in disguise and after an adventurous journey, reminiscent of the great Shivaji, arrived in Germany, and thence to Japan to enlist their help in organizing the Indian National Army out of the Indian prisoners of war and local Indians of Malaya and Singapore to wrest power from Britain.

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Between these two extremes hovered Nehru. He too was a socialist, accepted the Chairmanship of the planning commission, but kept on with the spinning wheel, which he still spins dutifully on certain public occasions. Intellectually and, to use his favourite word, 'emotionally' he differed with Gandhiji, but after the death of Motilal, he seems to have developed for Gandhiji a father complex, from which he was able to cut himself adrift only in 1947 when Sardar Patel and Maulana Azad came out definitely against Gandhiji. His accord, however, was with Gandhiji and not with Gandhism; this distinction is somewhat important, for though he was amenable to Gandhiji's leadership, like a *chela* of his *guru's*, he had little patience with the Sardar or Rajendra Prasad whom he and his socialist friends usually dismissed as reactionaries. The late Mr. Govinda Ballabh Pant was one such reactionary and though very friendly inclined to Nehru, was openly criticized by Nehru's newspaper, the *National Herald*, for his (Pant's) unsocialistic activities as the Chief Minister of the U.P.; but it was alleged that apart from Pant's political views, he had committed the mistake of having the Sardar as his friend, which Nehru resented. So split was the Congress over this issue that, while contesting for the Tripuri Congress Presidentship, Netaji got the largest number of votes from the U.P. but her Chief Minister, Pant, moved the resolution against Netaji in the Congress session.

It would have been better if Nehru had either wholeheartedly joined Gandhiji with complete faith in Gandhism, or had broken away from him as Netaji had done. He did neither. Actually he opposed Gandhiji within the Congress, and in June 1940, defied Gandhiji on the crucial issue of violence. Here he was sustained by the support he received from Rajaji and Maulana Azad who persuaded the Working Committee to pass a resolution subscribing to non-violence for internal struggle and to violence for defending India that is keep the Allies in their war against the Nazis.[18] This is actually what Nehru always wanted to do, his attitude towards the Nazis being unequivocal opposition, but the Government spurned this offer, and Jayaprakash wrote to Nehru: "Rajaji has stabbed us in the back".[19] But the clash between Gandhiji and Nehru did not end here: "Secret report of the Intelligence Bureau's Special Branch confirm the basic clash between the two men from May to August 1942",[20] and the Anglo-indians took the fullest advantage of the rift.

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It is difficult to pass verdict on a man for his basic mental make-up, particularly when he attains Nehru's stature, but there is no doubt that Nehru's vacillation, indecision, his strong likes and dislikes with a congenital reluctance to face the logic of events cost us dear during those fateful years. Virtues of a peace-time leader become demerits in an emergency, and Nehru is essentially a man of peace; in any case he was unable to face the non-violent revolutionay ardour of Gandhiji. But Gandhiji was old, Netaji was in Germany[21] and Nehru was the only man left to whom all young India would respond with enthusiasm. He called them, they flocked under his banner, then he went to Gandhiji for advice.

Would it have been better if Nehru had broken with Gandhiji and joined the Government in persecuting the war ? Possibly, for joining the Government would have meant that he could have resisted the pressure tactics which Jinnah was exerting on Linlithgow. He did not do so, one reason being that he could not. This was partly due to his hatred for the Anglo-indians, who for him, symbolized the British imperialism. This was of course known to the Anglo-indians, who among all the Indian leaders, detested him only next to Netaji. The Anglo-indians never realized the fundamental difference between Nehru and Netaji in their approach to Fascism.

Obstruction in joining the Government except on his own terms, would also have come from Nehru's socialist followers like Jayaprakash Narayan. These socialists were fervent intellectuals, but as Lord Attlee, who has had intimate experience of them, says, "the intelligentsia.... can be trusted to take the wrong view on any subject[22]". Lord Attlee was speaking of the British intelligentsia, but his description exactly fits their local counterparts who can be said to be made in India but processed abroad.

The foreign trained intelligentsia were the elite, leaders of a vast horde of Indians at various levels of education, with this common bond among them, that they looked westward for their inspiration as did the Indian Muslims towards Mecca. They usually belonged to the Socialist Party and under the slogan of the popular front were working in close collaboration with the Communists. The Communists, till the German invasion of Russia, saw the war as an imperialist war, and so did the Socialist intelligentsia, but even when the Communists woke up to the fact that it was after all a people's war, the Socialists

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remained firm in their faith. Organizationally they were not strong, but being extremely vocal, it was impossible to ignore their views, which was to launch an anti-imperialist struggle. Actually when the struggle came, some of them like Jayaprakash Narayan and Mrs. Asaf Ali proved their mettle as brave fighters but they were always a drag during a negotiation. And during the war what was necessary was skilful negotiation with the British such as Jinnah did. Incidentally, some of Nehru's speeches which appear to be crude or combative may be attributed to his desire to please the intelligentsia which steadfastly supported him.

Opposed to the intelligentsia was the "reactionary" that is the extreme right wing of the Congress under the leadership of Sardar Patel associated with Rajendra Prasad and Rajagopalachari: all of them men of outstanding ability. Of them Rajaji was the most nimble witted and ultimately broke away from Gandhiji, but the other two were at this time bound up in an indissoluble tie with Gandhiji. The attitude of this group can be given in the words of Rajendra Prasad :

> "Churchill had repeatedly announced that while the British did not want to bring any new country or territory under their occupation she was equally determined, in spite of their adversity not to withdraw from any of her existing possessions. At a most critical juncture of the war, he had proposed a union of Britain and France—a union of two empires consisting of territories over which the two nations had fought and shed each other's blood for centuries. But he could not countenance India as an equal partner. He was not willing to concede equality to Indians even to enable them to fight the Japanese."[23]

Besides these personalities, there were others too in the Congress, who were men of high calibre and distinction. But there was another component of the Congress, numerically the largest, whom for want of a better term, one may call 'the crude element of the organization'. They came in as a result of Gandhiji's mass movement and his obsession with the idea of "generating power" through increasing numbers. This was possibly Gandhiji's interpretation of *loka-sangraha* of the *Gita*. However, he was fond of describing himself as general of an army and the members of the Congress as soldiers. It had never struck him nor his intimates that, Indians were time and again defeated by inferior numbers because of their reliance on numbers alone when opposed to scientific skill. Netaji's complaint that

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"the Congress had mortgaged its intellect to Gandhiji" applies to these men, who were clamouring for another movement to start so that they might go to the gaols again. Possibly they were patriots and strove according to their lights to free their country ; but their huge number and their very enthusiasm gave a false sense of strength to a really weak organization which was as ill equipped to fight British imperialism as it was unable to prevent the Hindu-Muslim riots which came later.

These heterogenous groups allowed themselves to be led by Gandhiji, some because they believed in him and others because they could not find another leader to replace the man who projected a father image across the vast sub-continent. After Netaji no one remained who had Gandhiji's self-confidence. He was, however, a bad negotiator ; possibly the odds were heavily against him but it is a fact that he was never successful in any negotiation in India. Possibly, as he sometimes maintained, he had the mentality of a fighting general, but such people are not sent to conclude a treaty. And he was opposed by a ruthless man, Jinnah, and a solid phalanx of officials who were out to destroy him and all that he stood for. The man who could cope with this situation was the Sardar, but he was never given a chance. So Gandhiji carried on the negotiations with Linlithgow, occasionally helped by Nehru and Azad, but not unnaturally it convinced him of British insincerity. He could be convinced by frank difference of opinion, not by duplicity. It was when Gandhiji was in this frame of mind that Sir Stafford Cripps came. Unfortunately he came too late.

V

By the time Cripps arrived, the Muslim League was committed to Pakistan. Its basic idea that the Hindus and Muslims are two different nations, was first propounded by Sir Syed but its logical sequel, namely, that the two nations must have two different countries to live in was not put forward till much later. Attlee states that when he was a member of the Simon Commission he had heard of Pakistan, a Muslim State composed of the Punjab, Sind, Kashmir, Baluchistan, the North-West Frontier Province and Eastern Bengal.[24] It was, however, formally proposed by Sir Muhammad Iqbal in his Presidential address at the League Session of 1930. This idea was taken up by some Muslim students of Cambridge who canvassed for a Pakstan

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(land of the pure, Pakistan being a later adaptation) consisting of N-W.F.P., the Punjab, Kashmir, Sind and Baluchistan. This idea was scouted during the thirties, but in 1938, at the annual session of the Sind Muslim League a resolution was passed recommending that "India may be divided into two federations, *viz.* the federation of the Muslim states and a federation of the non-Muslim States". Though Jinnah presided over this meeting he does not seem to have taken seriously the enthusiasm of the Sind Leaguers. Within the next two years, however, he changed and the Pakistan resolution was adopted by the Muslim League at its Lahore session in 1940. To Jinnah this was the culmination of the Lucknow Pact, fourteen points, communal award and his unsatisfied demand for coalition ministries.

The idea of partition also fitted with the Anglo-indians' scheme of the future of India, for, with their limited vision they failed to see its consequences. The nationalist Muslims under Allah Bux, the Chief Minister of Sind, protested in a meeting at Delhi but no notice was taken of any Muslim who did not support Pakistan. It seems that the Anglo-indians had accepted the theory of two nations even before Jinnah.

Looking back now it may seem that the Congress should have accepted Pakistan in 1940, so that the subsequent massacre would have been avoided. This view, however, overlooks several facts. In 1940, indeed up to 1946, Pakistan was used by Jinnah as a bargaining counter. He refused to define Pakistan or discuss details and went on insisting that the Congress should accept his thesis, so that he could inflate his demands at leisure.

The Princes, the third party to the Indian Federation, were enjoying the last days of their power oblivious of their impending fate. They had supported the war, and felt secure in their strength to meet any eventualities. The federal part of the Government of India Act 1935 was dead, and the Princes felt relieved that they had escaped contamination with the plebians. The effect of Gandhiji's fast at Rajkot was lost on them. They had ceased to be a factor in Indian politics.

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References

1. P. Moon : *Divide and Quit*, pp. 24-25.
2. ibid, p. 25, footnote.
2a. From the private papers of Sri K. M. Munshi.
2b. Sri K. M. Munshi recorded his conversation with Lord Linlithgow immediately after the interview, and kindly made it available to me. The conversation is reproduced in Appendix IX.
3. Menon (p. 116) gives the details of the draft.
4. J. Connell : *Auchinleck*, p. 948-49.
4a. The details were related to me by the late Mr. Pratul Ch. Ganguly.
4b. See Mr. Munshi's letter to the author in Appendix IX.
5. These lines and Nehru's speech are quoted by Azad in his letter to Nehru dated May 25, 1940. Azad did not agree with Nehru. J. Nehru : *A Bunch of Old Letters*, p. 434; Azad was stating the popular view.
6. A. K. Azad : *India Wins Freedom*, p. 36.
7. Sitaramayya, II, p. 219. Vinoba Bhave, of the Bhoodan fame, was the first individual selected by Gandhiji to offer *satyagraha*. He did so on October 17, 1940. Next, Nehru was sentenced to four years imprisonment for delivering a speech, ibid, p. 221.
8. Menon, p. 78. Linlithgow however gave in to Jinnah.
9. B. R. Ambedkar : *Pakistan and Partition of India*, (Third Edition, 1946) p. 77.
10. The Charge d'Affaires in the U.K. (Mathews) to the Secretary of State; London, February 26, 1942. *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1942, I, p. 608.
11. The British Prime Minister (Churchill) to President Roosevelt, ibid, p. 612.
12. Menon, pp. 81-2.
13. J. Nehru : *A Bunch of Old Letters*, pp. 388-392.
14. The letter of December 7 has not been published but is mentioned in Nehru's letter to Jinnah dated December 9, 1939. ibid, p. 403.
15. ibid, p. 402.
16. Khosla: *Stern Reckoning*, pp. 315-316, quoted in Pyarelal, I, p. 715. L. Mosley : *Last Days of the British Raj*, p. 15.
17. Menon : p. 69. See also P. Moon, op. cit. p. 24.
18. On June 10, 1940, the French Government left Paris and Italy declared War. On June 16, Reynaud resigned and was replaced by Petain, who asked for an armistice the next day which was signed at Compiegne on June 21. The Congress Working Committee met at Wardha on June 17 and continued discussion for five days. For details see Brecher, p. 268; for Gandhiji's attitude see his statement quoted in Sitaramayya, II, pp. 200-02.

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19. From Jayaprakash to Nehru : July 20, 1940 : Jawaharlal Nehru : *A Bunch of Old, Letters* p. 437. Jayaprakash was in prison at this time. For Nehru's pro-British attitude at this time see the letter from Azad to Nehru of May 25, 1940, ibid pp. 433-35.
20. Brecher, p. 285.
21. Netaji escaped on January 17, 1941. Hugh Toye : *The Springing Tiger*, p. 57.
22. Lord Attlee : *As it Happened*, p. 86.
23. Rajendra Prasad, op. cit. p. 528.
24. Lord Attlee, op. cit. p. 182.

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CHAPTER XIV

THE CRIPPS MISSION

Sir Stafford Cripps and Nehru had known each other for some time, and when Nehru was in England in 1938, Cripps took him to Attlee and they had a long talk on the possible lines of dealing with the problem of Indian self-government and had sketched out the idea of a constituent assembly to be summoned in order that Indians themselves might decide on their future.[1] In May 1940, at the darkest period of England's history, Churchill became the Prime Minister, with Attlee's support, and Leopold Amery was selected by Churchill as the Secretary of State for India. This appointment was somewhat peculiar; Amery had distinguished himself in various other offices, but had opposed Churchill stoutly on his Indian policy and compared to him, Amery was pro-Indian. Recalling the days when they were fighting each other over the India Bill, Amery writes : "What neither of us can have expected was that Churchill should within five years invite me to be Secretary of State for India in his great War Government, *to renew, in the privacy of the Cabinet, the same fundamental divergence of outlook which had separated us on the floor of the House for so many years*".[2]

It is apparent that Churchill dominated his Cabinet's India policy, which seems to have been his obsession possibly inherited from Curzon whom he met as a young subaltern in India. In August, 1941, he and President Roosevelt issued the Atlantic Charter, but on September 9, he declared in Parliament that India and Burma were beyond the scope of the Charter.[3]

On December 7, Japan struck at Pearl Harbour; Singapore fell on February 15, 1942 and the Japanese army entered Rangoon on March 8; in the words of Churchill "the shadow of a heavy and far-reaching military defeat" lay over India.

It was to meet this crisis that Churchill wanted to broadcast an appeal and offer certain terms to India which I have already mentioned. But due to Linlithgow's objections the broadcast was deferred and ultimately the idea was dropped.[4]

On February 25, 1942, Churchill formed a Committee consisting of Lord Simon (formerly Sir John Simon) Sir Stafford Cripps, Sir John Anderson (Lord President of the Council, former Governor of

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Bengal), Sir James Grigg (Secretary of State for War, former Finance Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council) and the Secretary of State, Amery, under the Presidentship of Attlee. Churchill reserved his right to attend this Committee, but adds that the views of the Committee were so much in accordance with his own convictions that he never found occasion to do so.[5] The reason for this accord was that Churchill was bullying his colleagues as he makes clear after the failure of Cripps Mission: "Happily I had all my principal colleagues who had studied the Indian problem in agreement with me. Had this not been so, *I would not have hesitated to lay down my personal burden*".[6]

It appears from Churchill that the India Committee appointed on February 25, had within three days prepared a draft which was so important that Churchill felt it necessary to consult all "the Ministers of Cabinet rank and probably all the Under-Secretaries".[7] Linlithgow, however, raised objections and an exchange of telegrams followed. Ultimately the India Committee suddenly terminated the discussions with Linlithgow and on March 10, 1942, decided to send Cripps to India, and a declaration was made on the 11th by Churchill. On March 8, the Japanese Army had entered Rangoon.

II

Regarding the Cripps Mission, Attlee states that a plan was propounded by Cripps and accepted by the Committee. "The plan was a bold one," Attlee adds, "but was accepted by the Cabinet. This decision reflected great credit on those members of the Government who were not sanguine as to the feasibility of Indian self-government, *and especially upon the Prime Minister whose views on the subject were very strong*".[8] Some credit for influencing Churchill's views belong to President Roosevelt.

It is not possible to state as to when the President began to take an active interest in Indian affairs. The American Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, twice took up with the British Government in 1941 the possibility of a prompt recognition of India's aspiration to a freer existence and a full membership of the Commonwealth, apparently with the permission of the President, who is stated to have indicated his sympathy with Secretary Hull's proposals.[9] Nothing however seems to have come out of it. He may have had in mind the British

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empire when the Atlantic Charter was issued in August 1941, but Churchill made the position clear by his forthright statement in the Commons that it did not apply to India.

Churchill came to Washington soon after Pearl Harbour,[10] and the President took this opportunity to discuss the Indian problem with him, as he says, "on the usual American lines". "I reacted so strongly", Churchill adds, "and at such length that he never raised it verbally again".[11]

American interest in India became more urgent as the fall of Singapore became apparent by the beginning of February 1942. American officials reported the political situation of India correctly,[12] and on February 17, 1942, Assistant Secretary of State Berle wrote to Under Secretary of State Welles, that Indian problem should be tackled in a large way and that talks should be initiated through the U.S Ambassador in London.[13] This idea presumably was taken up and on February 25 Welles sent a message for the Ambassador from the President, asking him "to have a slant on what the Prime Minister (Churchill) thinks about new relationship between Britain and India....[14]" The same day the President received a message from Chiang Kai-Shek who had just returned from his Indian tour and had written : ".... If the Japanese should know of the real situation and attack India, they would be virtually unopposed. If the political situation in India were to change for the better, this may prevent the enemy from having any ambitions to enter India".[15] The same day (February 25) the Foreign Relations Committee of the U.S.A. betrayed "a serious undercurrent of anti-British feeling", based on the patriotic attitude that the British Indian policy might adversely affect U.S. interest in the global war.[16]

Thus it appears that considerable pressure was generated in Washington against Churchill's India policy which the President had opposed even earlier. So, when Harriman saw Churchill on February 26, he was forced to adopt a more conciliatory attitude, and pinned his objections on the ground that 75 per cent of the Indian troops and volunteers were Muslims.[17]

During this period, the U.S.A. Government was arranging for a technical aid mission to be sent to India, and on March 9, the Department of State announced the personnel of the Mission which was to be headed by Colonel Louis Johnson, former Assistant Secretary of War. The next day (March 10), President Roosevelt wrote a letter to Churchill,[18] which, if followed in spirit, might have solved

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the Indian problem.

On March 8 the Japanese entered Rangoon and next day the British Cabinet decided to send a War Cabinet Minister to India. In his cable to Linlithgow on March 10, Churchill explained that in case of the failure of Indian Parties to accept the new proposals (which Cripps was to present to them) British sincerity would be proved to the world and added, that it was impossible to stand on a purely negative attitude "owing to unfortunate rumours and publicity and the general American outlook and the Cripps Mission is indispensable to prove our honesty of purpose and to gain time for the necessary consultations".[19] Evidently Churchill agreed to the Cripps Mission, not because he wanted to accommodate the nationalist demands but with a view to soothe the feelings of a section of his own Cabinet and of the U.S.A. and prove generally that the Indian problem was insoluble.

For the time being, Churchill's iron will prevailed over his colleagues and Cripps started on his high mission under evil stars.

III

Cripps arrived here on March 22 with a draft declaration approved by the British Cabinet. It is apparent from subsequent happenings that while Cripps was expected to induce the Congress to accept the draft proposals, the Congress expected the draft to be a basis for negotiations. It was only at his first press conference on March 29 that Cripps made it clear that the "scheme goes through as a whole or is rejected as a whole".[20]

The proposals envisaged the formation of an Indian Union with full Dominion Status with the right of secession after the war on the basis of a constitution drafted by a Constituent Assembly with British Indian delegates elected by the lower houses of provincial assemblies and nominated by the Princes; any province which wanted could opt out of the union.[21]

The "negotiations were held almost exclusively with the Congress, represented by Azad and Nehru, while the Muslim League stood by and awaited developments".[22]

It is apparent that having conceded Pakistan in principle, Cripps directed his energies towards winning over the Congress. But on April 2, the Congress Working Committee approved a draft resolution rejecting the Cripps offer, mainly because it envisaged the virtual par-

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tition of the country. Azad gave a copy of the resolution to Cripps but he agreed not to publish it but to proceed instead with the negotiations on the interim proposals.[23]

Possibly the negotiations would have terminated at this point, but for the arrival on April 3 of Colonel Louis Johnson, President Roosevelt's Personal Representative, whose first words, as he alighted from his plane, was alleged to have been, "What about Cripps ?[24]" Johnson may not have made this remark, but it is evident that he lost little time in gathering informations, and the day after his arrival cabled to the American Secretary of State :

"I have had two long sessions with Stafford Cripps today. He is advising London that the hour has arrived for a final effort to settle the difference here.

"1. Despite Nehru's insistence Cripps is unwilling to modify the provision in the draft declaration regarding non-acceding provinces. Situation in Muslim provinces, particularly in Bengal, appears to justify Cripps in this position.

"2. Cripps recognizes principle of self-determination generally but in States where succession to rulership is guaranteed by treaty he insists that in the first instance treaty rights must be respected and negotiations carried on through treaty recognized rulers. Nehru as president of the All India States Peoples Conference, is desperately insistent that treaties be disregarded and peoples, not rulers, be represented in Constituent Assembly.

"3. Muslims and Sikhs fear that any outright agreement to give India Defense Minister as demanded by Congress would result in a Hindu Minister of Defense. Cripps and Wavell (with whom I have also conferred today) believe that the appointment of an Indian Minister of Defense could lead to chaos and loss of all army morale.

"Cripps has already offered India a seat in the War Cabinet and in the Pacific War Council and has promised a place at the Peace Conference. He regards himself solely as a mediator to set up a plan whereby Indians may solve their problems after the British withdraw so that one group may not play the British against others.

"Cripps is today advising the Prime Minister that the final decision must be based on one of three possible courses: (a) No further changes or concessions; (b) modify draft declaration by granting India Defense Minister if protected by agreement in writing that the Minister could take no action contrary to Empire war policy as exercised by the Commander-in-Chief who would remain ; (c) convert the present Defense Ministry into War Ministry which would be left under the Commander-in-Chief and then create a new office of Minister of Co-ordinator of Defense placing in it relatively innocuous matters such as defense, public relations and appointing an Indian thereto.

"Cripps violently opposes (*a*)prefers (*b*) but believes that War Cabinet, Commander-in-Chief and Viceroy will all oppose both (*b*) and (*c*). Unless

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the President feels that he can intercede with Churchill it would seem that Cripps's efforts are doomed to failure. Cripps so believes too. Such failure will adversely affect war effort. I respectfully urge therefore that the President without disclosing he is advised of Cripps's cable, consider further effort with Churchill...."[25]

It is apparent from this letter as also admitted by Nehru[25a] that, though he (Nehru) objected to several features of the Cripps Plan, the real point at issue was the power of the Defense Minister. Cripps must have known all along that there was no chance of Churchill's modifying his opinion, and possibly on this issue Churchill would have had the support of the British Cabinet. The only hope, therefore, lay in President Roosevelt, but he declined to intervene, though he asked Johnson to telegraph all developments.[26] This telegram, though it did not state anything implied the approval of Johnson's activities.

On April 7, Johnson cabled to the President :

"....At request of Cripps and of Nehru, both absolutely on their own initiative, I have been acting as go-between since last Sunday. Sir Stafford indicated this morning as did Nehru yesterday that the fact that they have not already failed has been due to the efforts of your personal representative (i.e. Johnson). After long session with Nehru last night, the fourth of the day, and a conference with Sir Stafford from which I have just returned, I am for the first time hopeful that negotiations will not be a complete washout provided the military situation does not overwhelm us.

"Sir Stafford is presenting the final proposals at 10 a.m. today. They are based substantially on proposal (*c*) in my 145 of April 4, 8 p.m. I have commitments of Nehru and President of Congress not to throw them out completely until after half a day has been reserved for discussion between Nehru and myself...."[27]

The Congress rejected the Cripps proposals on April 7, whereupon Johnson, with Cripps's approval saw Wavell "who" Johnson states, "with Viceroy had blocked Churchill's approval of (*b*)",[28] Johnson, however, was able to convince Wavell and the latter's

"approval and cooperation were complete. He (Wavell) phoned Viceroy for appointment and went with me (Johnson) to see him. On Wavell's recommendation, Viceroy approved and sent for Cripps. Cripps met with three of us and of course heartily approved."

Thereupon on the evening of April 7 Johnson presented to Nehru his proposals.[29]

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Johnson's optimism was premature; he had not reckoned with the irresistible operation of the negative power exercised by Linlithgow, who was deeply affronted by the Yankee intrusion into his demesne. The effect is best described in the words of Harry Hopkins, Special Assistant to President Roosevelt, who had arrived in London on April 8 on a special mission and recorded as follows on April 9:

"In conference with the Prime Minister in the Cabinet Room at 10 Downing Street, 10:30 to 12. Prime Minister read me a despatch which he had just received from the Governor General of India indicating that Cripps had presented a new proposal to Nehru without consultation with the Governor General but presumably with the assistance of Louis Johnson. The first of this proposal was that an Indian would on paper at any rate be given charge of the Defense Ministry. The Commander in-Chief of the British forces would have powers and duties substantially comparable to those in the original British proposal. The Governor General's despatch indicated that he and Cripps could have got Nehru's agreement to the original proposal had not Cripps and Johnson worked out this new arrangement. It was apparently clear that the Governor General was irritated with the whole business and laid great stress on the fact that Johnson acts and talks as though he were sent to India as Roosevelt's personal representative to mediate in the Indian crisis. It is apparent that this new proposal, which is known as Cripps-Johnson proposal, might well be turned down by the British Cabinet which is meeting at 12 today, in which case Roosevelt would be in the embarrassing position of having ostensibly made a proposal which the British Government rejected. I told the Prime Minister that Johnson's original mission to India had nothing whatever to do with British proposals and that I was very sure that he was not acting as the representative of the President in mediating the Indian business. That I believed Cripps was using Johnson for his own ends, Cripps being very anxious to bring Roosevelt's name in the picture. That it was to Cripps' interest to get Roosevelt identified with his proposals. I told Mr. Churchill of the President's instructions to me, namely, that he would not be drawn into the Indian business except at the personal request of the Prime Minister and then only if he had an assurance both from India and Britain that any plan that he worked out would be acceptable, and that he, Roosevelt, was unwilling to be put into a situation before the world in which he undertook to moderate between the conflicting forces and then have these forces turn down his proposals. Churchill at once wrote in longhand a cable to the Viceroy stating that he was sure Johnson was not acting as personal representative of the President in negotiations between the Indian Congress and Cripps.

"It is clear that Churchill did not wish at this time to bring the United States into what he calls a constitutional question, and he is unhappy at the turn the press has taken, namely, that public opinion in America and Roosevelt in particular can handle this matter over the head of the British Government...."[39]

Two factors seems to have decided the issue, namely, Linlithgow's

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statement that he and Cripps could have induced Nehru to accept the original proposals, and Hopkins's assurance that Johnson was acting without authority from the President. Linlithgow's assertion, to put it mildly, was far, indeed very far from truth. Nehru and the Congress had rejected the original proposal on April 7, and had not yet accepted the modified proposal presented to them by Cripps. The Congress might have accepted the modified Johnson formula,[31] but Hopkins's assertion that Johnson was acting without authority destroyed any chance of success. Johnson cabled to the President on April 11 :

> "The Congress delivered its rejection of Cripps proposals at 7-00 O'clock Friday (April 10) night, Nehru sending me a copy. The rejection is a masterpiece and will appeal to free man everywhere.
>
> "My substitute defense amendment was informally agreed to at Conference between Cripps, Nehru and Congress President Thurdsay night (9th) but then after they disagreed on giving any new authority to new Nationalist Government proposed by Cripps. Cripps said my formula meant the same thing as his original amendment which was quite untrue and denied his earlier press remarks that Nationalist Government any more real self Government now.[32] (*sic*)
>
> "Cripps is sincere, knows this matter could be solved. He and Nehru could solve it in 5 minutes if Cripps had any freedom or authority. To my amazement when satisfactory solution seemed certain, with unimportant concession, Cripps with embarrassment told me that he could not change original draft declaration without Churchill's approval and that Churchill has cabled him that he will give no approval unless Wavell and Viceroy separately send their own code cables unqualifiedly endorsing any change Cripps wants.
>
> "I never lost confidence until then. London wanted a Congress refusal. Why ? Cripps's original offer contained little more than the unkept promise of the first World War. Does England prefer to lose India to enemy retaining claim of title at peace table rather than lose it by giving freedom now ? I have my own opinion about it....
>
> "Nehru has been magnificent in his cooperation with me....I trust him....Cripps, through no fault of his own, has failed.
>
> "Halifax's speech[33] added the finishing touch to the sabotaging of Cripps. It is believed here it was so intended and timed and I am told pleased Wavell and the Viceroy greatly".[34]

President Roosevelt received this message on the morning of April 11.[35] At 2 p.m. he cabled to Hopkins to deliver a message to Churchill urging the postponement of Cripps's departure so that a final effort could be made to find a common ground of understanding.[36] Churchill replied the same day expressing mild regret at his inability

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to accede to the President's request, since Cripps had already left and explanations published by both sides. Years later he wrote in his war memoirs: "I was thankful that events had already made such an act of madness impossible".[37]

Thus the Cripps Mission failed. Johnson made one more unsuccessful attempt to devise a formula for resolving the deadlock;[38] but the circumstances were too strong against him. An interesting sidelight of the effect of Johnson's honest attempt is provided by an entry in King George's diary on April 9 :

> "There is no excuse for this (the keeping of the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief in ignorance) or for bringing Col. Johnson, an American into the negotiation. The latter knows nothing about India and is F.D.R.'s expert sent to deal with supply and munition matters. In fact the whole matter is in a most unsatisfactory state." On April 12 he wrote in his diary : "The Cripps Mission may have failed, but it has cleared up many ambiguities for the rest of the world, especially American, as to our rule in India and what it has done for the Indian peoples. The Hindus will now have to make up their minds whether to hinder our war effort or not."[39]

Obviously the King was reflecting the thought process of his Prime Minister.

It is apparent that on the British side Churchill and Linlithgow were responsible for the failure of the Cripps Mission. Cripps, however, always blamed Gandhiji for his failure and appears to have given currency to the belief that Gandhiji had characterized his proposals as a "post dated cheque on a falling bank", though actually Gandhiji was not the author of this unkind remark.[40]

Cripps himself felt that there were three chances out of seven of a successful outcome of his mission.[41] Even this seems to be somewhat optimistic but he was probably sustained in his belief by the earlier talks he had with Nehru in England in 1938 and again in India in the summer of 1939. Indeed in 1939 he met Gandhiji and discussed with him a "zonal scheme", but failed to interest Gandhiji.[42] He then met the members of the Congress Working Committee at Wardha, and had a discussion with Azad, who assured him that if India were promised freedom, Indians would follow Azad in joining the war against Gandhiji's pacifist views. So impressed was Cripps by this blatant declaration that he sent Azad an *aide-memoire* of their discussion, which Azad believed was later placed before Churchill.[43]

Cripps should have been cautioned by Gandhiji's departure for Wardha on account of Kasturba's illness or possibly he should have

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been warned by Nehru and Azad that Gandhiji was against the plan, for by this time Nehru and Azad could not but have realized Gandhiji's reaction. They seem to have done nothing of the sort, but carried on the neogotiations as if they could carry the Congress with them if their conditions were fulfilled.

Later Nehru and Azad bitterly criticized Cripps, but there can be no doubt about his honesty and sincerity. He genuinely tried to mobilize nationalist Indian effort in the great struggle against Fascism and his optimism was based on Nehru's known views. Even on the morrow of Cripps's departure, Nehru said: "We are not going to surrender to the invader. In spite of all that has happened, we are not going to embarrass the British war effort in India...." Unfortunately Cripps could not strengthen Nehru's hands; he was caught between a hammer and an anvil, Churchill and Gandhiji, none of whom was prepared to make any concession.

Now it appears that the rejection of the Cripps offer was a grave error, from which the Congress was unable to extricate itself. It played directly into the hands of the Muslim League and the Communists, and a few years later Gandhiji would be trying heroically to recover the lost grounds. But it was he, who had really rejected the Cripps offer.

Various reasons are given for Gandhiji's action. His attachment to non-violence naturally made him hesitant to support and organize an army. It is also possible that he was not quite sure that a national government consisting of discordant elements like the Congress and the Muslim League would at that time be of help to the Allies. But Gandhiji's main objection to the acceptance of Cripps's offer was his apprehension, amounting to certainty, that the Japanese would drive the British out of India.

Before criticizing Gandhiji for his miscalculation of the war situation it is well to remember that most Indians at that time shared his views, and none more emphatically than the Sardar, the one man among the Congress leaders, who could be relied upon to be guided by realities. But the destruction of the Allied power in the Far East had been so swift, spectacular and complete that it needed extraordinary foresight to predict the future. Gandhiji and the Sardar were nationalist patriots, and in this respect their value judgement, which may have influenced their analysis of the internal situation, was more

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akin to Netaji's than to Nehru's. Now that war was brought on India's threshold by the ineptitude of the British generals, Netaji's policy of joining the Axis power seemed to be both correct and expedient. A national leader had to take into consideration the consequences of a quite probable Japanese invasion of India.

An unfortunate aspect of Cripps's mission was that it coincided with the greatest Japanese victories, and though the Government of India was not panicky, it did not show any visible sign of firmness. "On March 31", writes Churchill, "it was decided to clear the port of Calcutta". This decision was reversed five days later but on April 15 Churchill wrote to President Roosevelt: "... .The consequences of this Japanese naval action may easily be : (a) the loss of Ceylon (b) invasion of Eastern India, with incalculable internal consequences to our whole war plan, including the loss of Calcutta...."[44] This gloomy appreciation of the war situation must have been based on reports that Churchill received from India, where the Government far from encouraging the people were demoralizing them by enforcing a denial policy which never became necessary.

It was also seen that during the evacuation of the civilian population from Burma, consequent to Japanese invasion, special arrangements had been made for the British evacuees on Indian side of the border, while the Indians were expected to look out for themselves. This could be repeated on a very large scale, and it was almost certain that the retreating British army would destroy whatever they could following a scorched earth policy. If the Congress joined the Government, the Japanese would have treated the conquered population brutally, but possibly their severity would have been mitigated by neutral attitude, and even better by a policy of open opposition. These were weighty considerations and Gandhiji sent the Sardar to Allahabad to represent his views at the A.I.C.C. meeting.[45]

On April 6, the Japanese dropped bombs at Cocanada and Vizagapatam, and the Bay of Bengal lay open to the Japanese navy. Extreme panic gripped the people; Nehru advised them to adopt a scorched earth policy and carry on guerrilla warfare;[46] Gandhiji ignored Nehru and in a letter to the Sardar,[47] (April 27) practically ordered him to resign if the Congress did not adhere to his policy of non-violent, non-cooperation. The A.I.C.C. which met at Allahabad on April 27, 1942 decided to follow Gandhiji.

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IV

The Cripps Mission failed in its immediate purpose, but its impact on the future of India was decisive. Politically it marked a stage in the retrocession of the British power in India which it was never possible to retrace, and in this the Conservatives were as much committed as the Labour Party.

On July 28, 1942, King George wrote in his diary after one of his Tuesday luncheons with Churchill :

> "He (the Prime Minister) amazed me by saying that his colleagues & both, or all 3, parties in Parliament were quite prepared to give up India to the Indians after the war. He felt they had already been talked into giving up India. Cripps, the Press & U.S. public opinion have all contributed to make their minds up that our rule in India is wrong and always has been wrong for India...."[48]

Secondly, the Cripps offer made Pakistan almost inevitable. The draft declaration contained specific provisions which enabled any province to opt out of the Indian Union, and such provinces were promised the same status and recognition as the Indian Union. This point was ceded by the Congress which in its resolution published on April 11 stated: "....the Working Committee cannot think in terms of compelling the people in any territorial unit to remain in an Indian Union against their declared and established will...."[49]

Thus the Cripps Mission committed all the parties to Indian independence on the basis of Pakistan.

References

1. Lord Attlee: *As It Happened*, p. 181.
2. L. S. Amery: *My Political Life*, III, p. 109; italics mine.
3. Churchill was asked whether the provisions of the Atlantic Charter applied to India and gave the shortest possible reply: 'No Sir".
4. See above p. 152.
5. W. Churchill: *The Second World War*, IV, p. 184.
6. ibid, p. 195; italics mine.
7. Prime Minister to Sir Edward Bridges, ibid, p. 185.
8. Lord Attlee, op. cit. p. 181.
9. The Memorandum of Assistant Secretary of State Berle to Under Secretary of State Welles mentions two approaches (*Foreign Relations of the United States*,

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1941, p. 633. See also Memorandum by the Secretary of State to the President ibid, p. 722) of which only one dated May 7, 1941 is published in *Foreign Relations*, 1941, III, p. 178. No record of the second approach is available in the State Department's files.

10. The Japanese attacked Pearl Harbour on December, 7, 1941 and Churchill arrived at Washington on December 22.
11. Churchill, op. cit., p. 185.
12. Memorandum by the Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs (Murray) to the Under Secretary of State (Welles) February 5, 1942. *Foreign Relations*, 1942, I, pp. 601-02.
13. Memorandum by the Assistant Secretary of State (Berle) to the Under Secretary of State (Welles) February 17, 1942. ibid, pp 602-04.
14. For the Ambassador from the President ; ibid, p. 604.
15. Telegram from General Chiang Kai-Shek to Dr. T. V. Soong, dated Kunming, February 24th; ibid, p. 605. This telegram was enclosed in a message from the Chinese Minister for Foreign Affairs, ibid, p. 604.
16. Memorandum by the Assistant Secretary of State (Long) to the Under Secretary of State (Welles), February 25, 1942; ibid, pp. 606-07.
17. Churchill gave the figure 75% to Harriman, the U.S. Minister and the President's Special Representative in London, who saw him on February 26, 1942 in the absence of U.S. Ambassador. ibid, p. 608. On March 4 Churchill cabled to the President: "We are earnestly considering whether a declaration of Dominion Status after the war, carrying with it, if desired, the right to secede, should be made at this critical juncture. We must not on any account break with the Muslims, who represent a hundred million people and the main army elements on which we must rely for the immediate fighting. We have also to consider our duty towards thirty to forty million Untouchables, and our treaties with the Princes' States of India, perhaps eighty millions. Naturally we do not want to throw India into chaos on the eve of invasion". Churchill, op. cit. pp. 185-86. *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1942, I, p. 612. Along with this Churchill sent a note from Jinnah and another from Firoz Khan Noon, to let the President "see the Muslim side of the picture". Churchill op. cit. p. 186.
18. *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1942 , I, pp. 615-16. Churchill op. cit. pp. 188-90.
19. Churchill, op. cit. pp. 190-91.
20. Menon, p. 214.
21. For details of Cripps Mission see Menon, pp. 115-139.
22. Menon, p. 126.
23. ibid, p. 126; Azad : *India Wins Freedom*, p. 59. There are discrepancies between Azad and Menon : I have followed Menon, mainly because Azad's book contains several errors and he did not live to revise the work before sending it to the press.
24. Colonel Louis Johnson came to India as the personal representative of President of the United States, with the personal rank of Minister. He had served as U.S. Assistant Secretary for War 1937-40 and later became Secretary for Defence in President Trumans' Cabinet from 1949-50. Sitaramayya, (II, p. 317)

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records Johnson's statement about Cripps, which may be apocryphal, but shows the popular belief, which as we shall see was not without some basis. On March 14, 1942. Sumner Welles cabled to the U.S. Commissioner at New Delhi, that the Department of State was extremely interested in the Cripps Mission and wanted to be informed about it. *Foreign Relations*, 1942, I., p. 619. The U.S. office in New Delhi was exceptionally well informed and on April 2 and 3 cabled to the Secretary of State that the Congress had decided to submit a memorandum to Cripps, detailing their objections to his scheme and that it would be published after consultation with Cripps. ibid pp. 624-625.

25. The Personal Representative of the President in India (Johnson) to the Secretary of State, New Delhi, For the President and Acting Secretary. April 4, 1942, 8 p.m. (Received, April 4, 7: 44 p.m.) *Foreign Relations*, 1942 I, pp. 626-27.

25*a*. In a personal interview with the author.

26. The Acting Secretary of State to the Officer in Charge at New Delhi, April 5, 1942. *Foreign Relations*. 1942 I, pp. 627-28.

27. ibid, pp. 628-29.

28. For proposal *b* see Johnson's first report given above.

29. Johnson to Secretary of State, April 9, 1942, 6 p.m. ibid, p. 630. For Johnson's formula, Congress amendment and Cripps's final proposals see Menon, pp. 128-30

30. R.E. Sherwood: *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, p. 524. Harry Hopkins's official designation was Special Assistant to the President, but that does not convey his important position. The same evening Hopkins cabled to the President a summary of what he recorded in his diary. But in the meantime he had met Eden and had also assured him that Johnson had no authority to mediate. *Foreign Relations*, 1942, I, pp. 629-30.

31. On the 9th evening Nehru's paper the *National Herald* of Allahabad came out with a special issue announcing the success of the Cripps Mission. Unfortunately the special issues are not maintained in the newspaper office, and I could not check this statement.

32. The sentence is defective : it obviously means that Cripps had gone back on his words, as was alleged by the Congress. See Azad op. cit. pp. 60-61, Brecher p. 279 and Cripps's letter to Nehru appealing to accept his proposals, *A Bunch of Old Letters*, p. 468. On April 11, Roosevelt wrote to Churchill : "I read that an agreement seemed very near last Thursday (9 April) night". *Foreign Relations* 1942, I, p. 634. Sitaramayya, II, p. 326.

33. Apparently a reference to Lord Halifax's radio address in Town Hall in New York on April 7, Sitaramayya, II, p. 326. Halifax, former Irwin, Viceroy of India, was at this time British Ambassador to the U.S.A. His role during this period was dubious. On April 1, 1942, he told Sumner Welles, then Acting Secretary of State, that the Congress could not accept any plan because they could not reach an agreement with the Muslims; in reply to Welles's query as to what could happen if the negotiations failed, he replied : "Nothing". *Foreign Relations*, I, 1942, p. 623.

34. Johnson to the President and Secretary of State April 9, 1942, 9 a.m. *Foreign Relations*, I, 1942, pp. 631-32.

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35. The cable reached the Secretary of State's Office at 7.10 a.m. April 11, i.e. April 12 Indian time. The previous night Churchill's cable advising the failure of negotiations and Cripps's departure on April 12 (Indian time) had reached the U.S. War Department and transmitted to the President next day.

36. For Harry Hopkins from the President, April 11, 1942 2 p.m. *Foreign Relations*, 1942, I. pp. 633-34; Churchill op. cit. p. 193. Churchill received it at 3 a. m. April 12, London Time.

37. Churchill, op. cit, pp. 194-95; *Foreign Relations* 1942, I, pp. 634-35.

38. Johnson to the Secretary of State April 25, 1942; Same to Same, April 28, 1942; President to Colonel Johnson May 8, 1942. *Foreign Relations*, 1942, I, pp. 642; 645-46 650. In his cable of May 8, the President advised Johnson not to risk a failure in trying to resolve the Indian political deadlock. Shortly after Johnson fell ill and on medical advice left India on May 12, 1942. A *Bunch of Old Letters* p. 474.

39. J.W. Wheeler-Bennett: *King George VI*, pp. 698-99.

40. Not only Cripps, but most most Indians attributed the authorship of this biting phrase to Gandhiji which had unfortunate repercussions in England. I saw Lord Pethick-Lawrence in 1960, and even then he was somewhat emotionally moved as he recalled that phrase which he attributed to Gandhiji and remarked: "It was a very cruel thing to say when we were fighting with our back to the wall, very cruel. Everybody thought we would be defeated only we never lost faith in victory. But for Gandhi to have said so was very cruel". Actually the pharase "post-dated cheque on a crushing bank" was coined by the *Roy's Weekly* of Delhi, (Sitaramayya, II, pp. 434; 332) though Gandhiji gave currency to it.

    As for Cripps's allegation against Gandhiji, Lord Pethick-Lawrence told me that when they came in 1946 Cripps's first greetings to Gandhiji was: "Mahatma you ruined my chances of success last time, please don't do it again". Gandhiji smiled and said he would co-operate this time.
    This is corroborated by Chiefs of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs of the U.S.A., who, in a memorandum of May 13, 1942 recorded his long conversation with Spry, Cripps's Special Assistant on his mission to India. Spry attributed the failure of the mission "almost entirely due to the efforts of Mr. Gandhi and four or five members of the Congress Working Committee who, although not particularly sympathetic with Gandhi were quite willing to go along with him in their opposition to the Cripps plan since it coincided with their own narrow political views...." *Foreign Relations*, 1942, I, pp. 651-52.

41. Memorandum of Conversation by the Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs, May 13, 1942 ibid, p. 651.

42. "Sir S. saw Bapu on the 1st and talked to him about his zonal scheme....." From Sardar Patel to Nehru July 3, 1939 : *A Bunch of Old Letters* p. 377.

43. Azad, op. cit. pp. 46-47; Azad then states (ibid, p. 50) that Cripps later alleged that the aide-memoire had been prepared in consultation with Congress leaders including Gandhiji but the latter said that he had no recollection of it.

44. Churchill, op. cit, pp. 159-161.

45. Gandhiji instructed the Sardar to firmly adhere to non-violence and non-co-operation and to resign from the Congress if the A.I.C.C. did not accept his views.

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For Gandhiji's letter to Sardar see N.D. Parikh : *Sardar Patel*, p. 464. During this A.I.C.C. meeting, when some one urged the advisability of an understanding with the British, the Sardar is said to have exclaimed: "*Murdese kya samjhota*" (what agreement can one have with corpses).

46. Brecher, p. 283.

47. K.L. Punjabi : *The Indomitable Sardar*, p. 107. Brecher p. 283. See also Azad, op. cit. p. 72.

48. J.W. Wheeler-Bennett: *King George VI*, p. 703.

49. Azad op. cit. p. 62.

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CHAPTER XV

"QUIT INDIA"

Gandhiji not only rejected the Cripps offer but began to react passionately to his conviction of Japanese victory. The *satyagraha* movement, which he had started at the beginning of the war, was hedged with so many conditions that it had failed; now his thoughts turned on saving India from an invading Japanese army. On May 10, Gandhiji wrote in the *Harijan* : "The presence of the British in India is an invitation to Japan to invade India. Their withdrawal would remove the bait. Assume however that it does not, free India would be better able to cope with invasion. Unadulterated non-co-operation would then have full sway". He told Azad that if the Japanese army ever came into India, it would come not as our enemies, but as enemy of the British. Therefore, if the British left immediately, the Japanese would have had no reason to attack India.[1]

This was the logical basis of the quit India movement, and Gandhiji was not the only prophet of doom. "In the remorseless tide of defeat and ruin", writes Churchill, "which dominated our fortunes at this time the Australian Government could feel very little confidence in the British conduct of war or in our judgment at home. The time had come, they thought, to give all the strength they could gather to the life-and-death peril which menaced their cities and people."[2] Exactly similar line of thinking prompted Gandhiji's action, and if the Japanese army had invaded India and defeated the British, guerilla action as envisaged by Azad[3] would have been the 'height of midsummer madness'.

The Congress Working Committee took up the consideration of the quit India resolution at a meeting held at Wardha. The meeting began on July 5 and on July 14, in the face of stubborn opposition from Nehru and Azad, adopted a resolution which asked British power to withdraw from India so that India could effectively resist Japanese aggression. But it clearly stated that the Congress would not embarrass Great Britain or the Allies in their persecution of war against the Japanese and were aggreable to the stationing of Allied army in India to resist Japanese aggression and help China.[4] The resolution

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was a gesture rather than a plan of action. It is important to remember that the Working Committee had not arrived at any decision regarding the launching of a non-co-operation movement, so that even when Rajendra Prasad asked Gandhiji to advise him about the programme to be followed, he refused to commit himself in advance, and stated that he would work out a plan only after the Congress had adopted the *satyagraha* movement.[5]

In a letter to President Roosevelt (July 1, 1942) Gandhiji had clearly stated that, in an independent India as demanded by him, the Allied troops could operate from India against the Japanese. The President sent a non-commital reply on August 1, but by the time it reached India events had rendered it ineffective.[6]

Gandhiji next sent Miss Slade, popularly known as Mira Ben, to explain to Linlithgow the purport of the Working Committe's resolution ; Linlithgow refused to meet her. It was in this atmosphere of hardening attitude that the A.I.C.C. met at Bombay on August 7 and adopted the Working Committe's resolution the next evening. Early next morning all the leaders and many members were arrested.

Immediately *hartal* was declared spontaneously all over India but people did not know what to do. The suspense was lifted on the evening of August 11, by the Secretary of State, Amery. He was obliged to defend the action of the Government of India to the Americans who had been shocked at the sudden arrest of the Indian leaders. In his broadcast, Amery gave details of the alleged Congress programme which included destruction of means of communications. Indians too listened to the Secretary of State's broadcast and believed that he was really stating the Congress programme, and from the next day part of India was gripped in a violent movement. Amery evidently based his statement on the notorious Puckle Circular of July 1942 claimed to be based on evidence captured during a raid on the A.I.C.C. office at Allahabad. Those were never proved and Michael Brecher, who had access to the secret reports of the Special Branch of the Intelligence Bureau, states that the Puckle Circular contradicts the secret intelligence reports. Therefore his conclusion that "the Government of India precipitated the revolt and must bear responsibility for everything that followed", seems to be borne out by known facts. For example, Sir Ronald Campbell, the British Minister to the U.S.A., called on the Under Secretary of State Sumner Welles on August 18, 1942 and informed him "that the Congress party had

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been taken by surprise and that the disorders which had broken out were not actually due to any concerted effort on the part of the (Congress) party."[7]

The intensive period of the "August Movement" lasted for about a fortnight and in about two months it petered out. According to Amery, the casualties from August 9 to November 30, 1942 were 1,028 killed and 3,125 seriously injured, an evident underestimate. Within a few months the number of persons imprisoned mounted to 100,000. Nothing was left to chance.[8]

The President of Mexico and Chiang Kai-Shek protested through President Roosevelt ; but Churchill's reply that to wage war successfully the authority of the Government of India must remain unimpaired, settled the issue. "American opinion remained quiescent in view of the struggle with Japan", writes Churchill and adds, " the measures proposed by the Viceroy and confirmed by the War Cabinet were soon effective. . . . During the whole of this direct trial of strength with the Congress leaders many thousands of fresh volunteers came forward to join the Indian army. What was at one time feared would become the most serious rebellion in India since the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 fizzled out in a few months with hardly any loss of life."[9] Churchill evidently means loss of British life.

The rejection of Cripps offer was an error, and the "August Movement" a failure. The British Raj in its remaining years exacted cruel price for these lapses.

The Congress was eliminated from the scene albeit temporarily. Anglo-india reigned supreme in alliance with the Muslim League, the war profiteers, black marketeers and tax-dodgers. Corruption stalked into the secretariat, recalling the early days of the Company and the Nabobs. The great gift of the British to India, the administrative service, was marred during these years by the increasing corruption which went on unchecked. Inefficiency increased; there was a certain amount of callousness in people who in various stages of their career suddenly realized that their days were over.

The Bengal famine of 1943-44 claimed one-and-a-half to two million lives. But the preparations of war went on unabated. Upwards of two-and-a-half million Indians volunteered to serve in the forces, and by 1942 an Indian army of one million was in being, and volunteers were coming in at the monthly rate of fifty thousand.[10] They and the Allied soldiers needed the various equipments required

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in a modern war, and the capacity of Indian industries, large, medium and small, were extended to the full. England and the U.S.A. began to pump money into India and Indians 'never had it so good'. Employment for the educated, uneducated, the technician and the labourer was to be had for the asking.

The nationalist sentiment, which for about four decades had raged at a fever heat, appeared almost quiescent. The leaders were in gaol, and their followers too. "The press as a whole benefited financially during the war. The compulsion felt by the English-owned Press to limit its circulation, coupled with the spread of the reading habit and the quickened interest in events, afforded opportunities to the Indians press. Moreover, it was possible for Indian proprietors to inflate their circulations more easily than for their British counterpart, and available newsprint commanded high prices."[11] So obliging even the fire-eating Press of Calcutta had become, that when for writing two editorials on the food situation in Bengal, the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* was served with an order imposing pre-censorship of editorials, the rest of the newspapers docilely obeyed the order, which forbade them to comment on the order.[12] Actually attention was focused on the Bengal Famine after the publication of a series of harrowing pictures and news by the *Statesman.* Nothing could be done against this British owned paper, which followed by publishing a small pamphlet on Bengal Famine in defiance of official policy. For the first time one felt grateful for having a British paper in Calcutta.

II

If the resignation of the provincial Congress ministries gave Jinnah the scope to organize the League, the August movement afforded him the opportunity to forge it into the instrument of his inexorable will. On August 20, 1942, the Working Committee of the League passed a resolution condemning the Congress movement and directing the Muslims not to take any part in it, which in any case they were most unlikely to have done. Rewards soon came. In August 1942, Saadullah was helped by the Governor to form a League Ministry in Assam. A month later, Allah Bux, the head of the Nationalist Muslims of India, renounced his titles of Khan Bahadur and O.B.E. For this the Governor dismissed him from his office of Chief Minister of Sind though he commanded a majority. (Later

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several Muslim League Ministers relinquished their titles, but they continued in office.) In March 1943, the Governor of Bengal forced his Chief Minister, Fazlul Huq, to sign on the dotted line of a resignation letter, and then, with the help of the over-represented European group, Nazimuddin, Jinnah's lieutenant in Bengal, formed a Muslim League ministry. In May 1943, Muslim League was enabled to form a Ministry in the N.W.F.P., where out of the total of 50 seats in the legislature the Congress held 22, but 10 of the Congress members were in prison, and seven seats were vacant.

This, however, does not exhaust the list of the Anglo-indian services rendered to build up the Muslim League. Sometime before his death, Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan, the Chief Minister of the Punjab, had prepared a plan under which the predominant Muslim Punjab was given the right to opt out of the Indian Union, but similar right to opt out of the Muslim Punjab was given to the predominantly Hindu areas. This clearly showed that any scheme of Pakistan would involve a dismemberment of that great province. This would have chilled the ardour of many a champion of Pakistan, for the Punjabis had a loyalty to their province, which cut across communalism. Linlithgow, however, persuaded Sir Sikandar not to publish or proceed with his scheme.[13] Suddenly at the close of 1942 Sir Sikandar died and the only obstacle to Jinnah's leadership in the Punjab was removed.

The Communists were the other party which under the patronage of Linlithgow's Government blossomed forth to strengthen its position in the inevitable struggle with the Congress.

On the morning of June 22, 1941, Hitler's army invaded Russia. Immediately to the Communists all over the world, it now became a people's war. Still the ban on the Communist Party of India was not lifted. On July 14, 1942 the Congress Working Committee passed the Quit India resolution, and on July 23 the Government announced that the Communist Party was now legal and began releasing them from gaol.[14] A little while previous to this the Government had launched a scheme for training a guerilla army mainly composed of Communist volunteers. A fair amount of training in the handling of arms, destruction of bridges, preparation of Molotov cocktails and map reading were given before it was called off. Who started this adventure and who stopped it still remains a mystery, but it was at that time widely rumoured that the Home Member, Sir Reginald Max-

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well had been in secret contact with the Communist Party Secretary P. C. Joshi, and Joshi had induced him into this mad venture. It does not require much imagination to suppose that these British trained Communist guerillas were responsible for the Telengana outrages of 1947-48.

According to the Communist Party, its membership which was about 4,500 in 1942, increased to 9,200 at the beginning of 1943, 15,000 in mid-1943 and 30,000 in 1945. It also began to publish a weekly newspaper, the *People's War*, and a string of provincial newspapers, and within a year claimed a total circulation of 66,350 for these organs, which under the war time regulations could only be published with Government's approval. In September 1942, the Communist Party held its first open conference.

The policy of the Communist Party also underwent a very significant change. Hitherto their attitude was that the Congress was the representative organization of the Indians. This attitude was now modified by Joshi's statement that the Muslim League was "the premier political organization of the second largest community in our country", therefore, the Congress must accept the demands of the Muslim League.[15] This was then developed by the Central Committee member Sajjad Zaheer, who admonished the Congress for the failure "to see that the demand for Muslim self-determination or Pakistan is a just, progressive and national demand...."[16]

Jinnah, however, was too wary a politician to walk into a Communist trap. Besides, the Muslim League was dominated by the upper middle class and landed interests, the last persons to form an alliance with the Communists. Explanation clearly lies elsewhere. The Communist Party at this time began to term each linguistic group as a distinct "nationality", and gave encouragement to regional separatism in every possible way. It was determined on breaking the unity of India, on the assumption that in an India divided into fourteen or more States the identity of the Congress would be lost in linguistic and communal quarrels and the Communist Party would emerge as the only cohesive force in the sub-continent. Thus the Communists began their role as an anti-national party in which they have persisted till now.

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QUIT INDIA

III

Linlithgow laid down his Viceroyalty on October 20, 1943 after a term of seven-and-a-half years. During this period the political scene in India had changed beyond recognition. In 1937, there was chance of the Government of India Act 1935 being accepted by all the parties, but Linlithgow ruined it by his inept handling of the Princes under advice from the Political Department. Next he alienated the Congress by his wooden policy, and turned for support to the Muslim League, which in September 1939 declared itself opposed to any federation and in following March passed the Pakistan resolution. For the next three-and-half years of his office, Linlithgow did his utmost to promote the interest of the Muslim League and Pakistan. Possibly he did not do it deliberately, but he could not have been more instrumental to the partition of India had be been working on purpose.

It is interesting to recall that Churchill wanted Anthony Eden to succeed Linlithgow and Eden had agreed. But King George intervened and pointed out the obvious difficulty so that the idea was ultimately dropped, and Field Marshal Lord Wavell was selected.

This is not the place to delineate the great qualities which distinguished Wavell as a man and as a soldier. But he suffered from one strange defect: even among his taciturn compatriots, he was held up as lacking both in eloquence and small talk. This was a grave handicap in the new task which Churchill thrust on this war-scarred veteran.

It is said of Churchill that once when he was changing an unsuccessful commander some one told him that the General had been unlucky, and Churchill snapped that he wanted a lucky general. Wavell was not lucky, indeed after his great African campaign of December 1940, he had suffered a succession of defeats, in all of which he had to work under impossible conditions and insufficient resources. He took up the Viceroyalty of India under almost similar conditions.

Wavell wanted to inaugurate his Viceroyalty by releasing Gandhiji and Nehru and inviting them to join his Executive Council. This would have immediately made him popular in India and eased his task. But as the biographer of King George writes :

> This suggestion received no support at all from London and made King George very angry. "Gandhi is now discredited in U.S.A. and in India,"

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he (King George) wrote in his diary, "and to let him out of confinement now is a suicidal policy. I was very annoyed when I heard of it some days ago".[17]

King George usually received his war time informations from his Prime Minister, and one may presume that Wavell received Churchill's unstinted comments on his presumptuous suggestion.[18] Wavell as usual submitted and lost a great chance. However, he persisted in his aim which he later explained in a letter to King George ;

"The vital necessity, not only to the British Commonwealth but to the whole world, (is) of a united stable and friendly India; and that therefore all our efforts in the next few years must be directed to promoting this stability, and, as far as possible friendliness. The first obvious difficulty was that real stability seemed only possible if we retained our control; but that if we did so it was unlikely that we should secure the friendliness at any rate of the educated part of the population. I was also convinced in my mind, from what I had seen of the psychology of our people at the end of the First World War and during this last one, that it was most unlikely that the British could be induced to make the necessary effort to retain control of India against the wishes of a large part of its population. Nor did I think it was right that we should do so".[19]

This was an unexceptionable principle, but needed much more drastic methods to execute it than Wavell was prepared to follow, nor indeed was he authorized to do so.

When Wavell was appointed Viceroy (October 1943) England had a National Government, which had not been able to decide on the constitutional future of India;[20] this deadlock persisted even a year later partly because Churchill and Attlee had developed different views, particularly after the adoption by the Labour Party in 1944, of a resolution promising India independence after the war, and partly due to the exigencies of war. On May 8, 1945, the war in Europe ended and on May 23 the National Cabinet was dissolved. Then followed the election and Churchill was replaced by Attlee on July 26. As we shall see these events affected Wavell's course of conduct.

Another contributory factor, perhaps the biggest, of Wavell's ultimate failure, was his perfidious advisers. At least one of his closest advisers was known to divulge the secrets to Jinnah during the Simla Conference and deliberately wrecked it. It is possible that Wavell, like many men of honour, was not given to suspicion, but that cannot absolve him from retaining traitors in his confidence. Thus, badly instructed and ill supported by his masters, and ill served and betray-

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ed by his subordinates Wavell ultimately foundered in the uncharted sea of Indian politics.

It would be instructive to consider here the Anglo-indian reaction to the political situation in India. Penderel Moon was at this time serving in the Indian Civil Service and in his recently published book reveals his attitude towards the Indian problem; another interesting book is by General Tuker, G.O.C. in C. Eastern Command, which attempts to speak for the army officers.

Moon's attitude is typical of the Anglo-indians; he was a Punjab Civilian and judged India from a purely Punjab point of view. His main objection to Pakistan seems to have been that, in any scheme for the partition of India, the Punjab would have to be divided; true statesmanship, therefore, was to keep the Punjab united at any cost, even by sacrificing to the League domination, Assam and Bengal; his disinterestedness to the fate of the Bengali and Assamese Hindus seems to be based on apathy and ignorance. With this he betrays an aversion for Gandhiji without any attempt to understand the latter's motivation. It is apparent from a reading of Moon's book, that Jinnah had by this time imposed his will not only on the Muslims but on the Anglo-indians as well, so that all they cared for now was a Hindu-Muslim settlement at any price and not a just solution of the problem. The corollary to this was the deplorable mental habit of equating the pugnacious Muslims of the League, who were on the offensive, with the Congress and the Hindus in general, who. whatever they had done against the British, had been amicably inclined towards the Muslims. But this tradition of placing the aggressive Muslims and the defensive Hindus, the accused and the complainant, on the same level still persists. Moon, and there were others like him, entirely failed to consider the feelings of the non-Muslims other than Sikhs in their amateurish attempts to preserve the facade of Indian unity. And they were exasperated when logic of events destroyed their preconceived notions of the desirable political structure of India.

Another school of thought is represented by Tuker, the last British G.O.C. in C. Eastern Command. The thirty-four years he spent in the army, mostly in India, seems to have been well spent in meditation on political philosophy which enabled him to propound one or two startling theories. The most important, so far as India

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was concerned was this: Parliamentary democracy had operated successfully in Britain, Holland and Switzerland; therefore, only the Protestant Christian countries were fit to receive its benefits. And then Tuker adds within parenthesis: "Some who have witnessed the irresponsible behaviour of certain sections of the British people in recent years may perhaps doubt if even the British are sufficiently educated or morally advanced to live fittingly within their democratic system"[21]. It is possible that Sir Winston will not agree with Tuker on this point, but Tuker's conclusions about India are Churchillian and must be quoted in his own words.

> "Regardless of the religious, social and tribal division in India" Tuker writes, "all and sundry in England and in India were speaking of India's 'national aspirations'. They said that before this great 'national movement' we British were powerless and that if we did not leave gracefully we should be forcibly thrown out. In fact, had we wished to stay and firmly said we would stay until we considered India to be ready for self-government we could very easily have stayed. It meant that we should have had to clap into gaol five or six thousand political firebrands".[22]

This, written after the Calcutta and the East Bengal riots, which Tuker failed to suppress, automatically raises the question as to why Tuker never attempted to throw into the gaol a couple of hundred Muslim firebrands though he admits that "in Calcutta the Muslim Government was definitely attempting to conduct on communal lines the suppression of disturbances"[23], and again declares that, "in short the Bengal ministry, by unfair treatment and taking a communal line, was fast ruining the one reliable police force that Calcutta possessed".[24] Tuker was not the only person who noticed it; the Hindus also noticed the action of the Muslim League Ministry of Bengal and the inadequate measures adopted by the British military so long only the Hindus were the victims. The Hindus of Bihar for example, had seen how promptly the August movement was quelled in 1942. It was diffcult for them to believe that in 1946 under more favourable conditions the British were unable to protect the Hindus if they wanted to. Hence began the riots in Bihar. Secondly, the Hindus all over India realized after what had happened in Calcutta, that it was impossible for the Hindus to live under a Muslim League Government. Thirdly, the Hindus were convinced that the British must quit, for, the most urgent problem in 1946 was the communal riots, and the British with the largest ever concentration of troops in India had failed to cope

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with it; the moral justification of British rule, that they maintained peace and tranquility in India, lay shattered and the only remedy the British officials in India could suggest was a Congress understanding with the League.

Tuker's book reveals what hatred for the Hindus motivated this British General who was in overall command of Assam, Bengal, Orissa, Bihar and the U.P. To expect impartiality from a man of this type was useless.

As early as 1945, Tuker had decided that Pakistan was inevitable and had drawn up a plan for the division of Indian army into two communal armies, with the Gurkhas officered by the British holding the balance.[25] Pakistan was necessary, according to Tuker, not because the Muslims wanted it, but the international situation rendered its creation imperative. Russo-Islamic penetration could no longer be blocked by Turkey who had lost her leadership of the Islamic world. "There was much therefore to be said for the introduction of a new Muslim power", Tuker writes, "supported by the science of Britain.... It seemed to some of us very necessary to place Islam between Russian Communism and Hindustan".[26]

How many British officers shared Tuker's views ? This we shall never know, but probably quite a considerable number. It is also possible that Wavell ultimately adopted Tuker's scheme of evacuating India province by province[27] which led Attlee to recall him.

It is evident, however, that Field Marshal Sir Claude Auchinleck, the Commander-in-Chief of the Indian army did not share Tuker's views. Indeed Auchinleck's views were far in advance of most Anglo-indians. Though he had spent a large part of his life in India his vision was not blurred and he was neither afraid to face the truth nor to express it.[28] "His was the sunset hour of British responsibility and authority"; his biographer writes and adds: "In the fading light of an imperial system in retreat he had no lamp to guide himself.... no lamp except his own steadfast courage, his forty-two years of experience, and his boundless love of the peoples, all the peoples of India, whom in those years he had striven to serve".[29] Auchinleck ultimately lost the confidence of the Congress; probably he had never gained it. Neither he nor they could cross the barrier of mutual suspicion, and in any case Auchinleck had never pulled on well with politicians, neither British nor Indian.

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2. W. Churchill : *The Second World War*, IV, pp. 137-38.
3. Azad, op. cit, p. 73.
4. For the text of the Wardha Resolution of July 14, 1942, Sitaramayya, II, pp. 340-42.
5. Rajendra Prasad : *Autobiography*, p. 535.
6. Gandhiji's letter was sent through Louis Fischer and the date of its receipt is not stated. Possibly the President replied within about a week of receiving Gandhiji's letter, but by the time the President's letter arrived Gandhiji was in gaol, and the letter was not delivered to him. For the text of letters see, *Foreign Relations* 1942, I. pp. 677-78, 703, for non delivery of the letter, ibid, p. 728.
7. Brecher, p. 29; Memorandum of Conversation by the Under Secretary of State, Sumner Welles : *Foreign Relations*, 1942, I, p. 723.
8. For details of repressive measures adopted by the Government see Sitaramayya, II, pp. 373-77.
9. To President Roosevelt from the Generalissimo; Chunking, August 11, 1942; *Foreign Relations*, 1942, I. pp. 714-15 : President Roosevelt to Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek August 12, 1942, ibid pp. 715-16; Memorandum of Conversation by the Under Secretary of State (Welles) August 12, 1942. For Churchill's letter to the President and President's reply of August 9, see Churchill, op. cit. p. 456.
10. Churchill, op. cit. p. 182.
11. S. Natarajan : *A History of the Press in India*, p. 261.
12. ibid, p. 265.
13. "The underlying idea of Sir Sikandar's scheme was to bring home to all rasonably-minded men that if it should ever eventuate, Pakistan would smash the Punjab as it existed. He was, however, dissuaded by the Viceroy from publishing or proceeding with his scheme". Menon, p. 144. See also ibid, p. 79 for Linlithgow's general attitude towards Jinnah.
14. The Government of India had been for some time encouraging the Leftists. The U.S.A. officer in charge at New Delhi to the Secretary of State, New Delhi, July 23, 1942. *Foreign Relations* 1942, I, p. 695.
15. G. D. Overstreet and M. Windmiller : *Communism in India*, p. 201.
16. ibid, p. 215.
17. King George's Diary, October 12, 1943. J.W. Wheeler-Bennett: *King George VI.*, p. 703.
18. Wavell was completely dominated by Churchill; for example see his apologetic letter of February 21, 1942 to Churchill after the failure of the imposaible A.B.D.A. Defence; Churchill op. cit. p. 127.
19. Lord Wavell to King George, February 24, 1947; Wheeler-Bennett, op. cit. p. 702.
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22. ibid, p. 33.
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28. For example see Auchinleck's letter to Wavell of August 22, 1945, and his Memorandum on the first I.N.A. trial circulated in February 1946. John Connell : *Auchinleck*, pp. 790, 945-52.
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CHAPTER XVI

THE SUNSET HOUR

Gandhiji came out of the prison on May 6, 1944. He was released because he was suffering from an attack of malaria. Kasturba and Mahadev Desai had died in prison.

The political scene in India, as he looked around, was dismal. The Congress workers were in jail, their organization destroyed; the Communists had become the dominating non-communal party, trying their best to fill the void left by the Congress; the Muslim League had consolidated its position; the Hindu Mahasabha was beginning to gather strength and the R.S.S. was capturing the allegiance of a section of the Hindu youth.

Gandhiji immediately set himself to retrieve the situation. But he was old, ill, and alone. He wrote in vain to Wavell on June 17 begging for permission to meet the members of the Working Committee.[1] On July 11, the *Times of India* published Gandhiji's views as expressed to Stuart Gelder. In this interview, Gandhiji had pledged the Congress to help the war if a national government were formed; defence would be the exclusive charge of the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief, subject to advice and criticism from the national government.[2] Barren correspondence between Gandhiji and Wavell followed, and ultimately Gandhiji exclaimed that it was "as clear as crystal that the British Government did not propose to give up the power they possess over the four hundred millions unless the latter develop strength enough to wrest it from them".[3] Gandhiji then turned to Jinnah.

The Gandhi-Jinnah talks of 1944 had as its basis the terms which Raja Maheswar Dayal Seth, the General Secretary of the Hindu Mahasabha, had obtained from Jinnah through a common friend in answer to the Mahasabha's attempt to negotiate terms with the League. These terms were made available to Rajagopalachari in December 1942, and when he met Gandhiji in prison, during his twenty-one-day fast in February 1943, he obtained the latters' approval to the formula. On April 8, 1943 Rajaji put the formula to Jinnah in a somewhat modified form which was thereafter known as the C.R. formula, the principle features of which were :

(1) The Muslim League should endorse the Indian demand for

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independence and co-operate with the Congress in the formation of a provisional interim Government for the transitional period; (2) the Congress would agree, after the termination of the war, to the appointment of a commission for demarcating contiguous districts in the north-west and north-east of India, where the Muslims were in absolute majority; (3) in the area thus demarcated a plebiscite of all the inhabitants held on the basis of adult franchise or some equivalent device would decide the issue of separation from India. If the majority decided in favour of forming a sovereign State separate from India, such decision would be given effect to; (4) in the event of separation, mutual agreement would be entered into for safeguarding defence, commerce, communications, and other essential matters; and finally (5) these terms would be binding only in case of transfer by Britain of full power and responsibility for the government of India.[4]

In April 1943, while Gandhiji was in prison, Jinnah had publicly solicited a move from him to settle the Hindu-Muslim problem and had bragged that if Gandhiji wrote him a letter the British Government would not dare to withhold it. Gandhiji wrote, the British Government withheld the letter, sending Jinnah the substance of it and Jinnah roared: "This letter of Mr. Gandhi can only be considered as a move on his part to embroil the Muslim League to come into clash with the British Government solely for the purpose of his release".[5]

But after Gandhiji's release when his appeals to Wavell failed to evoke any response he allowed himself to be persuaded by Rajaji to approach Jinnah for a settlement of the communal issue, and Jinnah readily agreed to meet him. So the talks began on September 9, 1944 at Jinnah's Bombay residence and continued for eighteen days. As usual it failed to achieve Gandhiji's objective while greatly strengthening Jinnah's position.

The time selected for the talks was inopportune. In 1937 Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan, the Chief Minister of the Punjab, had joined the Muslim League with the Muslim members of the Unionist Party on the understanding given by Jinnah that the Unionist Party would be unaffected by its Muslim members' joining the League which would not interfere in provincial politics. After Sikandar's death, Jinnah attempted to coerce the former's successor, Khizr Hyat Khan, into changing the name of the Unionist Party to Muslim League Coalition. Khizr attempted to accomodate Jinnah as far as practicable, but failed to placate him, whereupon Jinnah expelled Khizr from the

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Muslim League. This, however, came as a boomerang on Jinnah's head, because an overwhelming majority of the Muslim members of the Punjab Assembly followed Khizr and left the League. This happened during April 1944.[6]

Jinnah's prestige therefore was low when Gandhiji came out of the gaol; the Punjab was the key to Pakistan, and the defection in the Punjab Assembly meant that Jinnah was not entitled to speak for the martial Muslims, for the Bengali Muslims were never taken in the army. Gandhiji's talks boosted Jinnah's prestige, and entitled the latter to claim that he was the only Muslim leader recognized by the Congress; and curiously enough, the Congress had never attempted to come to any terms either with Sir Sikandar or Khizr; they were pro-British, but they were non-communal and at one time exercised much more effective power than Jinnah. Secondly, Gandhiji implicitly accepted the Pakistan demand in principle while Jinnah made no concession.

Gandhiji later explained that what he had agreed to was not different from the self-determination principle to which the Congress Working Committee was committed by its resolution of April 2, 1942. But that resolution and the C.R. Formula were well-known, and Jinnah had rejected both, so there was hardly any point in approaching Jinnah with the same set of proposals. In the result what happened was that Jinnah used it as a bargaining counter with the British and a starting point in the future negotiations with the Congress. Ultimately he practically accepted what Gandhiji had offered him, but his intransigence and megalomania cost the unfortunate country about two hundred thousands lives and untold misery.

Soon after the breakdown of the Gandhi-Jinnah talks, Wavell suggested to Bhulabhai Desai, the leader of the Congress Party in the Central Legislature, that if Bhulabhai could persuade the Muslim League into forming a coalition cabinet, he (Wavell) would himself go to the fullest extent to meet their viewpoint, though the coalition would have had to act within the restrictions of the 1935 Act. Bhulabhai tried, and Gandhiji gave him his passive support, but was tricked by Liaqat and Jinnah and the negotiations failed.[7]

It is doubtful as to whether in case of a successful pact between the Congress and the League the British Government at this time would have acceded to their joint request. Commenting on the Gandhi-Jinnah talks the London *Times* wrote in an editorial : "No

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agreement between Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Jinnah, however satisfactory to their adherents, can materially advance political progress in India unless it takes into account wider interests.....the anxiety of the depressed classes ....the claims of the princes"[8]

This was a warning to Jinnah that agreement with the Congress would gain him nothing and might cost him the support of the Tories. But as if this were not enough, Sir Francis Mudie, Home Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, undertook a tour of North India in January 1945, in an attempt to win over such Congressmen who were out of prison. Mudie's intention is not known, but later, if not now, he developed great intimacy with Jinnah and after the formation of Pakistan was rewarded with the Governorship of the West Punjab. Bolitho, Jinnah's biographer, writes that Mudie had known Jinnah "through many hazards and arguments since 1936"; and Mudie wrote to Bolitho after Jinnah's death: ".....I got to know that I could trust him (Jinnah) absolutely. He was thoroughly loyal to those who had supported him in the past".[9]

In the meantime Wavell had been active. He had realized after the failure of the Gandhi-Jinnah talks that the initiative of the solution of Indian problem must come from the Government. In order to strengthen his hands he called a conference of the Provincial Governors in August 1944, who unanimously supported his idea that, in the absence of agreement between the Indian parties, constructive approach by the Government was needed, and in view of the impending German defeat, a move should be made as early as possible.

Wavell then formed his plan under which his Executive Council was to be reconstituted with equal number of caste Hindus and Muslims and one Sikh and one Schedule Caste member after a preliminary conference with Gandhiji, Jinnah and one representative each of the Congress, Muslim League, Sikhs, Schedule Caste, non-Congress Hindus, non-League Muslims, and Labour. Both the conference and the Executive Council would have considerable power. Amery, however, opposed the plan mainly because he was afraid that if Jinnah were allowed to nominate all the Muslim members of the Executive Council the Punjab Muslims would be alienated. He therefore suggested a cumbrous alternative which would keep the Executive Council unaltered.

Wavell rightly rejected Amery's plan as unpractical and then

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Amery suggested a plan which showed his imagination and grasp of the situation. He postulated that the Indian leaders were suspicious of Downing Street and India Office : the first necessity therefore was to assure the Indian leaders and create a healthy political atmosphere. To achieve this, Amery suggested that India's status should immediately be raised to that of a Dominion with all that it implied, so that Parliament would cease to enact laws for her. This bold scheme was not accepted then, but was in essence executed by the Labour Government later. At the Labour Party Conference in May, when Ernest Bevin declared, "If we are returned, we shall close the India Office and transfer this business to the Dominions", he may have been proclaiming this idea which Amery was never able to execute, undoubtedly due to Churchill's opposition.

Wavell then wrote a letter appealing to Churchill for a change of spirit which would convince the Indians of the British Government's sincerity and friendly intentions. The summary of their letters, given by Menon, shows the futility of the Viceroy's position who had all the responsibility but no power.[10] British historians will in future judge Churchill's conduct towards Wavell; to us it appears to be an extremely cavalier treatment of a great servant of his country.

Along with his letter to Churchill, Wavell suggested to Amery the adoption of certain practical measures to win over Indian goodwill. These were : a declaration by Churchill that India would be granted self-government as early as possible; a guarantee that Britain would pay her debt to India; transfer or gift of some ships to India; higher status for the Indian High Commissioner in London and the transfer to him of some business done in the India Office; conferment on the Indian representative in the U.S.A. the status of a Minister; and transfer the affairs of India from India Office to the Dominion Office.[11]

Amery was sympathetic and it was now necessary for Wavell to go to London and place his views before the Cabinet, but a strange twist of fate prevented his going, for Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru selected this particular time (November 19, 1944) to call a non-party conference to heal the breach created by the breakdown of the Gandhi-Jinnah talks. Nothing came out of this conference, for when in December, Sir Tej Bahadur announced the name of his committee, Jinnah refused to meet them or even to recognize them. The only result of Sir Tej Bahadur's mis-spent energy was to postpone

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Wavell's departure to England; for, in spite of his insistence the Cabinet advised him to come to London after the Sapru Committee findings were out. Wavell next wanted to come to England in January but Amery asked him to come in March. It was at the beginning of 1945 that Bhulabhai had his abortive talks with Liaqat for a coalition Government at the centre and Wavell gave him his complete support for he was at this time eager to find a way out of the impasse. But as we have seen, nothing came out of the so-called Desai-Liaqat pact and Wavell again urged on Amery for permission to come to England. Amery now advised Wavell to postpone his visit till June as the Sapru Committee's report was expected in June, but ultimately gave way to Wavell's energetic protests and permitted him to come to London by the third week of March. But the delay was fatal to Wavell's scheme.

Wavell, accompanied by his Private Secretary, Jenkins, and constitutional adviser, V.P. Menon, arrived in London on March 23, 1945. He discussed his plan with Amery and the India Committee who were in general agreement with him, and he was sustained by the support of Cripps. But Germany surrendered on May 7; the British coalition Cabinet was dissolved on May 23, and Churchill formed a Conservative Ministry; with the change of the Government Wavell was faced with Churchill's determined obstruction to any real progress in Indian affairs. He returned to India on June 4.

However, Wavell was authorized to form an Interim Government for which purpose he called a conference of political leaders at Simla, wherefore this historic meeting is known as the Simla Conference. It came very near to success, and its failure sealed the fate of united India for which this honest middle-class soldier had been working untiringly even braving the wrath of his imperious master. If the Conservative Party under Churchill had not used the Simla Conference as a pawn in their election propaganda, Wavell would have succeeded in forming an interim Government. Another peculiar feature of this conference was the betrayal of the Viceroy's secrets by top ranking officials. Mosley writes : "One British governor of an important Indian Province successfully wrecked a conference at Simla at which the Hindus and Muslims had come together, first by advising Jinnah on tactics, and then using his influence on the Viceroy to make sure that the tactics worked. It is also true that, emotionally the majority of British civil servants in India were pro-

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Muslim".[12] This is supported by Menon who was told by Husain Imam that a member of the Executive Council was advising Jinnah to be intransigent.[13]

Wavell called the Simla Conference on June 25, ten days before the British general election. Because of the delay in getting the votes of the troops overseas, an interval of three weeks separated the polling day, July 5, from the declaration of the polls on July 26. During this interval, the Simla Conference was ended abruptly on July 14. It is essential to remember this background of the British general election to understand the progress of the Simla Conference.

Wavell returned to Delhi on June 4, and on the evening of June 14, announced on the radio, that he had issued orders for the release of the members of the Congress Working Committee the next morning and would call a conference of the leaders at Simla to discuss his proposals for forming a national government in the centre. His announcement was extremely well received in the country and hopes ran high. The members of the Congress Working Committee were released on June 15.

Twenty-one persons were invited to Simla: eleven provincial Chief Ministers, (ex-Chief Ministers from several Congress provinces), leader of the Congress party and the deputy leader of the Muslim League Party in the Central Assembly, leaders of the Congress and the League in the Council of State, the leaders of the Nationalist Patry and the European group in the Central Assembly, one representative of the Sikhs and one of the Schedule Caste and Gandhiji and Jinnah "as the recognised leaders of. the two main political parties". This parity was ominous, but still more significant was the ommission of Azad, the Congress President. Gandhiji replied, that he was not even a primary member of the Comgress, so that he could not join the Conference; the proper person who could do so was Azad, though Gandhiji agreed to attend the Conference as an adviser. He was at Simla during the Conference and had several private meetings with Wavell but did not attend the Conference.

After some preliminary speeches and some discussion, the Congress accepted Wavell's plan of caste Hindu and Muslim parity in the formation of the central executive. But by June 29 it was evident that Congress and the League had failed to agree, so Wavell invited the parties to submit to him panel of names of those whom they wanted to be members of the Executive Council; he would

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scrutinize the lists and if necessary add a few more and after consultation with the parties concerned draw a list of names which would be generally acceptable to all concerned. On this Jinnah asked Wavell as to whether he would accept the League panel *en bloc* and whether he would still proceed with the formation of the Executive Council, if one of the parties rejected his list. Wavell refused to accede to the first demand and to commit himself to the second.

All the parties sent their panel of names except the Muslim League. Correspondence took place between Jinnah and Wavell in which Jinnah pointed out on July 9, that under similar circumstances Linlithgow had specially provided for the Muslim League that their representatives would not be selected from a panel formally submitted but on "confidential discussion"[14] between Jinnah and Linlithgow. When Wavell refused to follow this procedure Jinnah informed him that unless all the Muslim members selected were members of the League, he would not submit the names.

On the afternoon of July 11, Wavell told Jinnah that he was prepared to include four members of the League in the Executive Council but the fifth Muslim Executive Councillor would have to be a non-League Punjabi Muslim. Wavell was quite justified; for, at this time the League's fortune was at its lowest ebb, and it was not in power in any province. Still Jinnah pressed his claim that all the five Muslim members of the Executive Council must be taken from the League, and that the Viceroy's power of veto must be reinforced by a special safeguard for the Muslims within the Council. When Wavell pointed out his inability to accept either of these conditions, Jinnah declared that in that case he would not co-operate. This meant, Wavell told Jinnah, the failure of his efforts.

Soon after Jinnah left, Wavell, called his advisers and informed them that he had been in communication with the Secretary of State and that it had been decided that the proposals should not be proceeded with.

On the same day Wavell informed Gandhiji that in view of Jinnah's unwillingness to co-operate except on his own terms the Conference had failed, and he refused to impose his own decision in spite of Gandhiji's request.[15] After explaining the position to Azad and Khizr Hyat Khan, the Unionist Chief Minister of the Punjab, on the 12th, Wavell made a statement at the last session of the conference

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on July 14, acknowledging failure for which he accepted full responsibility.

The real responsibility was, however, Jinnah's. Some other members of the League like Husain Imam were distressed at the failure of the conference and possibly Liaqat was not happy about it, but Jinnah was adamant. For, the failure demonstrated conclusively that he personally wielded the veto power in any constitutional settlement; the Viceroy had extended *de facto* recognition to the League as the only Muslim organization, and to equal representation with the Caste Hindus. And having surrendered to Jinnah these points, Wavell came round to support or at least to sympathize with Jinnah's claims in future. The Muslim League became jubilant and Congress became suspicious, particularly of Wavell whom they never trusted again.

The Labour Party under Attlee came to power on July 26, less than two weeks after the failure of the Simla Conference. It is interesting to speculate what would have happened had the counting of votes in England been finished before July 14.

References

1. Pyarelal : *Mahatma Gandhi, The Last Phase*, I. p. 19.
2. ibid, p. 27. Gandhiji gave this interview on the understanding that Gelder would transmit his views to the Viceroy and not publish them.
3. Menon, p. 162.
4. Ram Gopal, p. 302.
5. Pyarelal, I, p. 70.
6. Ram Gopal, p. 282.
7. For details of Bhulabhai's attempt to form a coalition Cabinet see Pyarelal, I, pp. 122-126; ; Azad gives a distorted picture of Bhulabhai's attempts and accuses Gandhiji without citing any evidence; Azad : *India Wins Freedom*, pp. 135-136. See also Menon p. 177.
8. Pyarelal, I, pp. 85-6.
9. H. Bolitho : *Jinnah*, p. 208.
10. For details see Menon, pp. 166-171.
11. ibid, pp.171-172.
12. L. Mosley : *The Last Days of the British Raj*, p. 15.
13. Menon, p. 214, Husain Imam was the leader of the Muslim League Party in the Upper House of the Central Legislature and a delegate to the Simla Conference.
14. Pyarelal, I, p. 135.
15. Menon, p. 207.

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CHAPTER XVII

VAIN EFFORTS

On July 26, 1945, Attlee formed the Labour Government in England; on August 6, the first atom bomb was dropped on Hiroshima; on August 15 Japan surrendered. The war was over.

Azad, the Congress President, congratulated Attlee on his great success but there were sceptics in the Congress who had little faith in the Labour Government[1]. But the Congress politicians need not have had any misgivings, for the Labour Government on assuming office set itself to tackle the Indian problem, and Lord Pethick-Lawrence the new Secretary of State, rescinded Amery's order for holding the Indian Civil Service examination in England which had been suspended since 1941[2]. On August 21, Wavell, with the Cabinet's permission, announced that the elections in India were to take place in the winter, and that he would leave shortly for consultation with the British Government. He left three days later, and on his return to India on September 16 announced that provincial autonomy would be restored immediately after the elections, a constituent assembly for preparing the future constitution of India would be established as soon as possible, the Viceroy's Executive Council would be reconstituted in consultation with the principal Indian parties, and the future relation between India and the U.K. would be determined by a treaty[3]. The same evening Attlee also broadcast a message to India in which he assured the Indian leaders his Government's intention to come to a fair settlement with India, and appealed to the Indian leaders to evolve a constitution which would be acceptable to all the parties; as for the treaty, Attlee declared that the treaty would have no provision which were "incompatible with the interests of India".

The Congress reaction, that Wavell's proposals were "vague and inadequate and unsatisfactory", was expressed in an A.I.C.C. resolution passed at Bombay on September 21[4]. Their suspicion increased when the Government rejected, on the advice of the provincial Governors, the Congress demand for immediate formation of provincial ministries in the Congress provinces. As the Muslim League was also opposed to restoring Congress ministries, the Congress saw in the rejection of their just demand another instance of appeasing the League. The reason for the Governors' decision is not known,

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but their action increased the suspicion about British intention which had become very pronounced after the failure of the Simla Conference. There were also a very large number of Congressmen, who genuinely believed that the success of their August movement had forced the British Government to offer these terms, which, being inadequate, should be forthwith rejected and another movement launched to force the British to really quit India. But Nehru recalling those days is said to have observed later:"We were tired men, we were not prepared to go to jail again".[5]

II

The elections were due to begin in December, and in November began the trial of the personnel of the I.N.A. or the Indian National Army, raised by Netaji partly out of the Indian prisoners of war captured by the Japanese in Malaya, Singapore and Burma; of about 65,000 Indian prisoners of war only 20,000 joined Netaji while the rest, 45,000, preferred to stay in Japanese prisons where 11,000 died of disease and starvation or were murdered. Some of the survivors were extremely bitter against the I.N.A., but a large number of I.N.A. prisoners could not be repatriated to India for about a year for want of shipping, and during this period there was wide-spread fraternization between them and the regular personnel of the Indian Army resulting in a political consciousness which the Indian servicemen never before possessed. To this Attlee hinted when he said on March 15, 1946 : "Today the national idea has spread....not least perhaps among some of those soldiers who have done such wonderful service in the war."[6]

The rank and file of the I.N.A. were treated leniently but the officers were put on trial; the first three to be tried were a Hindu, a Sikh and a Muslim: Sahgal, Dhillon and Shah Nawaz. Their trial began in the Red Fort at Delhi on November 5, 1945 and concluded on December 31. The charges against the accused were, murder, abetment of murder and waging war against the King, but the Court found the first two accused not guilty on the first two charges but found them guilty of waging war against the King, while Shah Nawaz was found guilty of abetment of murder also. All three were sentenced to transportation for life, cashiering, and forfeiture of pay and allowance while with the Japanese. Auchinleck commuted the sentence to cashiering and forfeiture of pay, and in a long memo-

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randum justified his action. One of the most important considerations, which decided Auchinleck, was, as he put it:

> "...having considered all the evidence and appreciated to the best of my ability the general trend of Indian public opinion and of the feeling in the Indian army, I have no doubt at all that to have confirmed the sentence of imprisonment solely on the charge of 'waging war against the King' would have had disastrous results, in that it would have probably precipitated a violent outbreak throughout the country, and have created active and widespread disaffection in the Army, especially amongst the Indian officers and the more highly educated rank and file. To have taken this risk would have been seriously to jeopardize our object".[7]

The next person tried was Burhanuddin, who was found guilty of waging war against the King , and of causing grievous hurt to one Teja Singh who was made to stand on a table, his wrists tied to a rope eight feet from the ground, the table removed and Teja Singh beaten by 120 men in succession under Burhanuddin's orders until he lost consciousness and subsequently died. For waging war against the King the Court sentenced Burhanuddin to transportation, but recommended mercy for causing grievous hurt because they considered that the accused was doing his duty 'according to his lights' as an I.N.A. officer. Auchinleck commuted the sentence for waging war against the King, but sentenced Burhanuddin to seven years rigorous imprisonment which was the maximum penalty for causing grievous hurt under the civil law, while under military law it was fourteen years.

Fourteen other I.N.A. men were also tried and sentenced before Auchinleck decided at the end of April to discontinue all further proceedings.

It is important to remember that the decision of commuting the sentences was Auchinleck's who was supported all through by Wavell. A large volume of Anglo-indian opinion since then has condemned the leniency shown to the I.N.A. men and fixed the responsibility on the Congress leaders, who undoubtedly came out on the side of the I.N.A. men; even Gandhiji met the prisoners at the Red Fort and congratulated them. Before the trial began Gandhiji wrote to the Viceroy's Private Secretary: "....Though I can have nothing in common with any defence by force of arms, I am never blind to valour and patriotism often displayed by persons in arms....India

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adores these men who are on trial...."[8] He was echoing the sentiments of his countrymen, who, moreover, had little faith in non-violence. What, therefore, the Congress leaders did was as much due to compulsion of events, as to their conviction of the heroism of the I.N.A. prisoners. After the failure of the Simla talks the Congress prestige had reached a low level and at that time they could not attract the people with any new programme, having lost all initiative. The I.N.A. trial retrieved the situation for them, and Nehru seized the opportunity to put on a counsel's robe and appear for their defence, which was really conducted by Bhulabhai.

Many writers have criticized the I.N.A. trial as inopportune and ill-timed, for it increased the ill will towards the British. There is some truth in it, but the alternatives were to defer the trial or to hold the trials in camera in a remote corner of India though none of these alternatives would have appealed to any one. The I.N.A. men could be released without trial but that would have also raised objection in the army and in England. The fact is that political atmosphere in India at that time was such, that any decision on such an issue was bound to have emotional reaction.

III

While the I.N.A. trials were proceeding, polling began in India first for election to the Central Legislature, next for the provinces, where a ministry was functioning and last for the other provinces. The election results, which became available from the end of December, showed the unmistakable trend of the country : division between the Hindus and Muslims, and the identification of the Hindus with the Congress and of the Muslims with the Muslim League. This was to a great extent due to the deference paid to Jinnah by the Government at the ill-fated Simla Conference, which made clear to the Muslims that, only Jinnah's nominees had any chance of gaining offices, and that such chance would not be long in coming. So the Muslim leaders, who never made any secret of their longing for office, preferred to jump into Jinnah's band-wagon and even the Deputy Leader of the Congress in the Central Legislature, Abdul Qayum Khan, crossed over to the League, as Khaliquzzaman had done in U.P. just before the 1937 elections.[9] The results of their action was far more ominous than crossing the floor in the House of Commons.

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The Congress won almost all the General Constituency (an useful euphemism for Hindu) seats while the Muslim League won almost all the Muslim seats, the Hindu Mahasabha and the Nationalist Muslims either withdrawing in time or losing their deposits. The final figures for the Central Assembly were : Congress 57, Muslim League 30, Independents 5, Akali Sikhs 2, and Europeans 8.

In Assam the Congress won all the General territorial seats, that is 58 seats in a house of 108, and being commissioned by the Governor formed the Government with five Hindu, one Indian Christian and one Nationalist Muslim, the Muslim League rejecting the two seats offered to it because of the inclusion of a Nationalist Muslim.

In Sind, Jinnah's home province, the position as usual, was unstable. The Muslim League captured twenty-seven seats, and one independent Muslim joined it after the election raising its strength to twenty-eight. Three Nationalist Muslims, however, stood out and joined another anti-Muslim League group of four members led by G.M. Syed. These seven, with the twenty-one Congress and the solitary Labour member formed a coalition which thus had a majority of one amongst the Indian members. But the Governor, Jinnah's old friend Sir Francis Mudie, called the Muslim League leader to form a ministry, which the latter did with the support of the three European members. As Kaliquzzaman says: "He (Francis Mudie) saved Sind for Pakistan at a very crucial time in the history of the League." [96]

In the N.W.F.P. the Congress won thirty seats including nineteen Muslims, and the Muslim League seventeen; other Muslims got two seats and the Akali Sikhs got one. The Congress formed the ministry.

In Punjab, out of a total of eighty-six Muslim seats, the Muslim League captured seventy-five. The Congress won fifty-one seats, the Panthic Akali Sikhs twenty-two and the Unionist Party twenty, while the remaining seven had been won by independent candidates. Some Muslim members, however, changed allegiance after the election, so that the final party position in the Punjab was, Muslim League seventy-nine, Congress fifty-one, Panthic Akali Sikhs twenty-two, Unionist and Independents ten each while three by-elections were pending. The Muslim League as the single largest party was asked to form the Ministry but they failed to win over any other group; the Congress and the Akalis formed an working alliance and

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they promised support to the League on the following three conditions : (1) Congress should have the freedom to nominate any person to the Ministry irrespective of community; (2) the Congress-Akali group should nominate half the number of ministers; (3) extra-provincial questions such as Pakistan, should not be brought before the Assembly. The Muslim League refused to entertain these demands and approached the Akalis, who promised support on condition of the League assuring to aid it in the formation of a Sikh State in case Pakistan was formed. As the League declined to satisfy the Sikhs, a coalition was formed consisting of the Congress, the Akali Sikhs, and the Unionist Party under the ladership of Khizr Hyat Khan.

In the Bihar Assembly of 152 seats the Congress won ninety-eight seats including one Muslim seat; the Muslim League won thirty-four out of forty Muslim seats, the remaining five going to the Momins, a group of depressed-class Muslims, whom the arrogance of the higher-caste Muslims had turned pro-Congress.

In the U.P., the Assembly had 228 seats of which the Congress captured 152 while the Muslim League captured fifty-four of the sixty Muslims seats.

In Bombay the Congress won 126 seats out of a total of 175, while the Muslim League captured all the thirty Muslim seats.

In the Central Provinces the Congress won ninety-two seats out of a total of 112, while the Muslim League captured thirteen out of the fourteen Muslim seats.

In Orissa, out of a total of sixty seats, the Congress secured forty-seven, while the Muslim League captured all the four Muslim seats.

In Bengal out of a total of 250 seats, there were 119 Muslim seats of which the Muslim League captured 113, while the Congress won eighty-seven general seats. There were however twenty-two European members who helped the Muslim League to form the Ministry.

Thus though the League had won the majority of Muslim seats it could form ministry in only two provinces out of the five it claimed for Pakistan (Baluchistan not having any elected ministry) and there too only with the support of the Anglo-indians. This unconditional Anglo-indian support to the Muslim League was extremely ill-advised,

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for it was taken, both by the Muslims and the non-Muslims, to indicate that the Muslim League enjoyed the support of the Government. If by Government was meant the officialdom then this assumption was in the main correct. The result of this Anglo-indian-Muslim League coalition was that it stiffened the Congress and Hindu attitude towards the Government while the Muslim League became more truculent in their demand for Pakistan. The Anglo-indians were serving their own interest in supporting the Muslim League and Pakistan.

While the election results were being declared, the Labour Government sent out a Parliamentary delegation which arrived in India on January 5, 1946. It consisted of ten members led by Professor Richards of the Labour Party, a former Under-Secretary of State for India (1924). The Parliamentary delegation toured India for a month and studied the political situation in India at first hand by meeting all the leading political figures. Though the delegation did not attract much notice in India, the British Cabinet attached great weight to their report.[10]

While the Parliamentary delegation was touring India, Wavell addressed the Central Legislature on January 28, 1946 in a brief speech habitual to him. He declared the British Government's intention to constitute a new Executive Council consisting of political leaders, and a constitution making body as soon as possible.

The Viceroy's seven-minute speech was lost on the average Indian; among the leaders only two understood its significance, Sardar Patel and Jinnah. Indeed the Sardar had realized after coming out of the gaol that the struggle with the British was over, and now the battle with the communal elements, that is the Muslim League, would have to be fought. In response to Wavell's speech, the Sardar said : "The ship has reached the shore.....The freedom of India is at hand".[11] Jinnah declared that if the British established a single constitution-making body and refused to concede Pakistan, the result would be a Muslim revolt throughout India.

Wavell followed his speech by a report to the Cabinet in which he first analyzed the political situation and then suggested a course of action. He pointed out the respective strength of the Congress and the Muslim League and the unwisdom of getting involved in another conflict with the Congress. He therefore recommended, what he had declared in the Central Assembly, namely, the formation

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of an interim Executive Council with political leaders, and a constitution making body. His third proposal to the Cabinet was to bring about coalition governments in the provinces, but as we have already seen, this could not take place owing to the intransigence of the Muslim League and the ready help they received from the Anglo-indians. Under the circumstances, Wavell recommended that no weakening of the Viceroy's power of veto was possible but he was equally firm about forming his Executive Council without the Muslim League in case Jinnah refused to join the interim Government.

About Pakistan, Wavell had no doubt that Muslim League's demand for self-determination in genuinely Muslim areas would have to be conceded. At the same time he refused the right of the Muslims to amalgamate predominantly Hindu areas within Pakistan. Thus he recommended the East Punjab and the whole of the West Bengal including Calcutta be allowed to join the Indian Union.[12]

Wavell's analysis of the situation and the proposed remedy was justified by later history. If only his version of Pakistan had been adopted by the British Government and declared before the elections, the results in all probability would have been quite different. But the events were moving so fast, that it is difficult to fix responsibility on the newly-formed Labour Government who had their hands full with purely British problems. As we shall see, the Cabinet Mission approached the problem on the basis of Wavell's recommendation.

The British Cabinet in the main agreed with Wavell except on one important aspect. He had clearly defined his obejctives in seriatim, proposing to realize one before proceeding to the next. Thus the Viceroy's Executive Council would be formed first, then the constituent assembly, and next the provincial ministries, as far as possible on a coalition basis. The British Cabinet, however, held such compartmental negotiations to be impractical, and felt that the situation demanded a different approach. So they proposed to send out a mission consisting of three Cabinet Ministers, who, in association with the Viceroy, would negotiate with the Indian leaders. They would have had the obvious advantage of being able to take decisions on the spot, but as Wavell pointed out, it would form the worst possible impression if they left without having achieved results. As it turned out, his forebodings proved correct.

It is related that Attlee assured Wavell that the Cabinet Mission

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was not intended to by pass the Viceroy, and asked for the latter's fullest help and co-operation. Wavell's typical reaction to the Prime Minister's telegram was to say : "He didn't think I would withhold it, did he ? What does he think I have been working for ?"[13] But whatever might have been the Cabinet's intention, the Viceroy was overshadowed by the high-powered delegation consisting of Lord Pethick-Lawrence, the Secretary of State for India, Sir Stafford Cripps, President of the Board of Trade, and A.V. Alexander, First Lord of the Admiralty. With these three veteran politicians, who enjoyed the full confidence of the Prime Minister and his Cabinet, Wavell had little chance to put across his ideas. Cripps particularly took charge of the negotiations from the beginning, and both he and Pethick-Lawrence had many important conversations with the party leaders in the absence of the Viceroy.

Cripps was a genuine friend of India if ever there was one, and was endowed with uncommon intellectual gifts, which brought him to the top of his profession as well as to the front rank of British politics. But as Attlee states :"He (Cripps) was not always a good judge of men, nor had he very much experience with which to temper his enthusiasm".[14] All along he misjudged Gandhiji and Jinnah, and trusted in his ability to convert them to his views. In the result, he was partially converted to Jinnah's views, and alienated Gandhiji. When Mountbatten was coming out to India, Cripps again volunteered his services but his offer to come to India was refused politely but with alacrity.[15] It is sad to think that all his well-intentioned negotiations failed to achieve the results he hoped for. In this his toils resembled Gandhiji's like whom he was a vegetarian and it is said, a faddist about his food.

Like Cripps, Pethick-Lawrence was a genuine friend of India, and his transparent sincerity won the heart of the Indians. In one of his small notes, which he sometimes exchanged with Gandhiji while in Delhi, he wrote: "I have come out here for the express purpose of launching India on its passage to sovereignty and independence. . . .".[16] He meant it. With Gandhiji he shared a deep religious faith, which brought them close together, but as the negotiations progressed he developed an awesome respect for Gandhiji's political dexterity. Faith sustained him at Delhi, and everyone who met the Secretary of State retains an affectionate memory of a kind old gentleman strug-

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gling to find a way out for India during one of the worst summers of Delhi.

Alexander took little part in the discussions. It is said that he was sent to act as a brake on Cripps's enthusiasm, and to make the ultimate arrangements acceptable to the right-wing of the Labour Party.

The announcement of the decision to send the Cabinet Mission on February 19, 1946, had a sobering effect in India. The day before (February 18) the ratings of the Royal Indian Navy had refused to eat their food or attend parade. Next day they came out of their barracks, attacked British soldiers and hoisted Congress and League flags, so the army moved in on February 20, and on 21st there was more fighting. The situation might have become very ugly but for the energetic handling of the situation by Sardar Patel. He sternly told the mutineers to surrender unconditionally which they did, a promise being given that they would not be punished with undue severity. Nehru also appealed to the mutineers to surrender and said: "Our freedom is near today"; and the naval mutiny, which under former circumstances might have become a major factor in Indian politics, fizzled out.[17]

References

1. See Pant's letter to Nehru, *A Bunch of Old Letters*, pp. 493-4; see also Kripalani's circular of October 25, 1945; Congress Bulletin No. 2, January 24, 1946.
2. Told by Lord Pethick-Lawrence to the author.
3. The declaration was made on September 19. For text of the declaration see Menon, 218-19. Sitaramayya, II, pp. 667-670 gives the text of Wavell's and Attlee's broadcasts.
4. For Pethick-Lawrence's reply to the Congress Resolution see Sitaramayya, II, p. 672.
5. L. Mosley : *The Last Days of the British Raj*, p. 49.
6. H. Toye : *The Springing Tiger*, p. 171.
7. J. Connell : *Auchinleck*, p. 950; see also Nehru's letter to Auchinleck, ibid, pp. 817-19.
8. Pyarelal, I, p. 185.
9. At the time of writing Abdul Qayum is in a Pakistan gaol, and Khaliquzzaman is trying to revive the League in Pakistan.

9a. Khaliquzzaman : *Pathway to Pakistan*, p. 333.

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10. As told by Lord Pethick-Lawrence and Mr. R. Sorensen, a member of the delegation, to the author. But the average Congressman's reaction is reflected by Sitaramayya : "But the crowning shame of it all lay in the scheme of Parliamentary Delegation...." Sitaramayya, II, p. 676.
11. Menon : p. 228, for the text of Wavell's speech see Sitaramayya, II, p. 789.
12. Menon, p. 233.
13. Mosley, op. cit. p. 20.
14. Lord Attlee : *As It Happened* p. 76.
15. See Lord Mountbatten's letter to King George VI, January 4, 1947, J.W. Wheeler-Bennett : *King George VI*, p. 711.
16. Pethick-Lawrence to Gandhiji, May 25, 1946; Pyarelal, I. p. 222.
17. Azad (*India Wins Freedom*, p. 131) takes the credit for putting down the R.I.N. mutiny and states that he met Auchinleck in this connection. This is not corroborated by any other source, so I have followed Auchinleck's biography by Connell, pp. 828-29.

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CHAPTER XVIII

TANGLED SKEIN

The announcement of the Cabinet Mission on February 19, was followed by a debate in the House of Commons on March 15, in course of which Attlee declared :

> "India must choose what will be her future constitution. I hope that the Indian people may elect to remain within the British Commonwealth... ...But if she does so elect, it must be by her own free will.....If, on the other hand, she elects for independence, in our view she has a right to do so.....I am well aware, when I speak of India, that I speak of a country containing a congeries of races, religions and languages.....We are very mindful of the rights of minorities, and minorities should be able to live free from fear. On the other hand, we cannot allow a minority to place a veto on the advance of the majority....There is the problem of the Indian States..... I do not believe for a moment that the Indian princes would desire to be a bar to the forward march of India. But as in the case of any other problem, this is a matter that Indians will settle themselves."

Attlee's decision to take away Jinnah's veto power convinced the Congress that the Cabinet Mission would earnestly seek a solution to the Indian problem, and their arrival in New Delhi on March 24, 1946 was widely welcomed. Jinnah, however, growled and Pethick-Lawrence on arrival soothed him by saying that,"while the Congress are representative of large numbers, it would not be right to regard the Muslim League as merely a minority political party—they are in fact majority representatives of the great Muslim community".[1]

Cripps, on behalf of the Mission, declared that they had not come with any prepared solution. "We really have no scheme", he said, "either on paper or in our heads, so its non-disclosure means nothing except that it is not there, and I hope that will be quite clear to everyone".[2]

Now, this was of course the truth, for the Cabinet Mission did not really bring any plan from England, as Cripps had done in 1942, but there was a deliberately preconceived basis of their approach to the problem which was not disclosed to the Congress leaders: this related to the defence problem of South-East Asia.

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"Future British and Commonwealth defence strategy played a greater part in these (Cabinet Mission's) preparations", writes John Connell "than either the Opposition at the time or historians subsequently were able to appreciate. The Labour Government under Attlee's firm guidance, were a good deal less naively idealistic, or muddle-headed, about this great issue than was believed."

In support of his contention, Connell quotes the following letter from Auchinleck to Wavell:

General Auchinleck to Viceroy 9 March, 1946

"I enclose an extract from a letter from Mayne[3] which arrived yesterday as I think you will be interested in it, though I realize you may already be aware of these proposals.

"My own opinion is that this subject requires to be handled with the greatest possible care and tact, and I feel that it might well be very risky to make it in any way a 'condition' of agreement on the future constitutional set up.

"Indian opinion is undoubtedly extremely sensitive in these matters of defence.

"*Enclosure*

"At a meeting at Chequers last week-end of the new 'Big three'-Pethick-Lawrence, Alexander and Cripps - to discuss with the Prime Minister a mass of questions connected with the Ministerial Mission to India, it was decided that 'as a condition precedent to implementing a new constitution satisfactory arrangements must be made for the defence of the "South-East Asia Area".' There was no soldier present at that meeting. The formula which I have quoted was based on the Cripps offer of 1942, which laid down that H.M.G. undertook to implement the constitutional recommendations of the constitution-making body subject to the negotiation of a Treaty which would 'cover all necessary matters arising out of the complete transfer of responsibility from British to Indian hands'.

"What it amounts to is that the Prime Minister has it in mind to make a condition, precedent to the grant of Dominion Status or independence to India, that India should undertake to provide defence forces sufficient for her own local defence and in addition assist, in Commonwealth or United Nations interests, in the defence of the 'South-East Asia Area'. (The 'South-East Asia Area' means nothing but can be taken to include Burma, Malaya, and Aden.)

"Can we expect Indian politicians at this stage to give such agreement? I think obviously not and I said so; but I was told nevertheless, to devil the question. So I discussed things with Monteath and 'Pug' Ismay[4] and as a result of our talks we have asked the Chiefs of Staff the following questions which, as you see, deal both with the question of British forces loaned to the Government of India, and also with that of British strategic reserves located in India.

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"(*i*) What defence obligations should fall to India to discharge with her own resources as a consequence of the attainment of full self-government? (It would assist if these requirements could be given under their main heads in some detail for the purpose of exposition to Indian political leaders.)

"(*ii*) If India is not yet fully able to meet with her own unaided resources the obligations in (*i*) for what restricted purposes only should H.M.G. be prepared to make British forces available?

'(*iii*) What conditions should be stipulated by H.M.G. as to operational and administrative command and as to the authority competent to decide the propriety of the proposed employment of any British forces made available as under (*ii*)?

"(*iv*) Apart from such forces as may be made available under (*ii*) and (*iii*) above to assist India in the discharge of her own essential minimum defence requirements, is it essential that H.M.G. should secure the agreement in principle of the new Indian Government:

"(*a*) to the location in India at the request of H.M.G. of other British forces for the performance of some wider common defence purpose, such as defence of the Indian Ocean area, or as a strategic reserve in that area, and

"(*b*) to the provision of facilities of all kind for the use of India as a base for such forces?

"If so, what conditions should be stipulated as to the command of such forces and the authority competent to authorize their operational employment?

"(*v*) Is it essential, or alternatively, would it be desirable that India should agree to furnish Indian forces for service outside India in British territory on conditions reciprocal to those in (*iv*)?"[5]

Attlee's speech, of March 15, part of which has been quoted above, should be read in context of the objective set forth in this letter.

If India had to take a prominent part in the defence of South-East Asia, it was necessary to maintain intact the Indian Army, which in 1946 was the strongest military force in Asia. That, however, demanded that India should not be divided, for, it was obvious that the formation of Pakistan would lead to the splitting up of the Indian Army. Hence all the energies of the Cabinet Mission was put to devising an arrangement under which there could be a joint defence for the sub-continent. But the Cripps offer of 1942 had accepted Pakistan in principle, so, the Cabinet Mission's task became in the main to avoid Pakistan without breaking faith with Jinnah. This meant in effect conceding certain concessions to Jinnah which the

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Cabinet Mission did not think was too high a price provided their fundamental strategic objective was secured, and it was here that they clashed with the Congress and particularly Gandhiji. This was unfortunate, but the reason which led the Cabinet Mission to maintain secrecy about this is also evident. If they had presented their objectives in a formal proposal, they would have been accused of offering a conditional independence, which would have been rejected. In the light of later events, it is obvious that the failure of the Cabinet Mission to devise a really workable solution of the Indian problem was due to their eagerness to maintain the integrity of the Indian Army. This aslo explains Auchinleck's refusal to consider any proposal to divide the Indian Army till the end in which he was helped by Ismay, who came later with Mountbatten.

However, the net result of this infructuous proposal was that Jinnah regained his veto power.

II

The Cabinet Mission began their interviews with the political leaders a week after their arrival. Though these interviews covered almost the entire section of the Indian political opinion, the two parties that counted were the Congress and the Muslim League. The Princes had their own importance, but at this time the Mission's interest was centred on devising a scheme which would be acceptable to the Congress and the League.

The Congress demands, as presented to the Mission by Azad on April 3, were briefly the following: (1) a constitution-making body should be set up to frame the future constitution of India; (2) the future constitution should be a federation with defence, communication and foreign affairs as federal subjects, all other subjects and residuary power being vested in the federal units; (3) there would also be a list of optional subjects, so that it would be open for any province to decide for itself whether to transfer those subjects to the federation or to retain them as provincial subjects; (4) after the constitution was ready a province could (*a*) opt out of the federation, (*b*) join the federation in respect of either or both the compulsory and the optional subjects; (5) during the intervening period an interim government should be formed at the centre consisting of fifteen members of which eleven would come from the eleven provinces, while

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the remaining four would be allotted to the minorities.

A more cumbrous system can hardly be imagined. All that remained was to decide whether one or two assemblies would form the constitution of the two countries, for, as will be apparent, Pakistan was conceded. However, it accorded with the ideas of the Mission, and Cripps asked Azad whether they would be prepared to consider a separate list of optional subjects for the Muslim majority provinces. When Azad replied that the idea was inconsistent in a federation, Pethick-Lawrence intervened to say that in case the Punjab, N-W.F.P. and Sind decided to stand out of the optional list, but had a number of subjects of common interest, how could they be prevented from forming a close union, even if it meant a federation within a federation. To this neither Azad nor the Congress had any answer.

Next day Jinnah met the Mission, and expounded at length his arguments in favour of Pakistan. The Mission partially agreed to Jinnah's views, but pointed out that, after the British withdrawal, India would be confronted with problems of defence; England would be prepared to help India but in return would expect help in the defence of Malaya, Burma, and Ceylon.[6] (Apparently, this was not divulged to the Congress). Thereafter the Mission met other political leaders and saw Jinnah again on April 16, when they presented him with two alternatives, namely, (1) truncated Pakistan, consisting of Sind, N-W.F.P., Baluchistan and the Muslim majority districts of Bengal, the Punjab and Assam, it being distinctly understood that Calcutta could on no account be given to Pakistan; (2) if the League joined an Indian federation even for the limited subjects of defence and foreign affairs, then Sind, Baluchistan N-W.F.P., the whole of the Punjab and Bengal, plus perhaps the Sylhet district of Assam might be federated together, and this federation would have the same representation as the federation of the other (i.e. Congress) Provinces in the centre with the right of secession after fifteen years. That is, there would be two federations, one Hindu and another Muslim linked by a Union Centre, actually reducing the Union Centre to a confederation. Jinnah protested, particularly against the exclusion of Calcutta from Pakistan, but ultimately he was presented with the choice of of sovereignty over a small area or a large area on the basis of confederation.

Jinnah rejected both the alternatives and Gandhiji and Nehru

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informed the Mission that they could not accept the three tier scheme though it was really the logical conclusion of the scheme presented to the Mission by Azad. The Cabinet Mission then put forward another plan which provided for a plebiscite to determine the formation and extent of Pakistan. This too was rejected by both Jinnah and the Congress. Cripps then prepared another plan on the basis of the three-tier scheme, which he is said to have drafted one morning during breakfast.[7]

Jinnah agreed to accept the revised confederation plan provided the Congress accepted it, and Azad promised the Mission that he would induce the Congress to accept it, and suggested the possibility of a meeting between the Mission, and representatives of the Congress and the League. So a meeting was arranged in the cooler atmosphere of Simla between May 5 to 12.

The Simla Conference failed as would any conference of which Jinnah was a member. However, it afforded Jinnah an opportunity to state the price for which he would join a common confederation centre. The price was, (1) the right of the Muslims to frame their own group and provincial constitutions for the six Muslim provinces through a separate constitution-making body, (2) the six provinces to include Sind, Baluchistan, N-W.F.P., the whole of the Punjab, Bengal and Assam.

Though the Simla Conference ended in failure because the Congress would not yield to the League demands, the Cabinet Mission on May 16 declared its award which included the demands of Jinnah as follows : (1) there were to be three sections for British India : Section B consisting of Sind, Baluchistn, N-W.F.P. and the whole of the Punjab; section C consisting of the whole of Bengal and Assam; section A the rest of British India; (2) the sections would meet to form groups and to draft the Provincial and Group Constitutions; (3) each province would have the right to opt out of a group by a simple majority of its legislature *after* the first elections under the new provincial constitutions; (4) while the constitution making was in progress, the administration would be carried on by an interim government having the support of the major political parties; (5) regarding the Native States, England would relinquish paramountcy which, however, could not be transferred to the new government.

This was Pakistan, for all practical purposes, so the Muslim

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League adopted it by a resolution passed by its Council on June 6 which stated that "in as much as the basis and the foundation of Pakistan" were "inherent in the Mission plan, by virtue of the compulsory grouping of the six Muslim provinces," they would accept the plan "in the hope" that it would "ultimately result in the establishment of complete sovereign Pakistan".

The Congress, however, found several objectionable features in the plan, the chief of which was compulsory grouping of Bengal and Assam. It also objected to the abolition of paramountcy and the right of the Europeans to take part in the constituent assembly and several other features either mentioned in the Plan or implied in it which caused some friction at the time but were not really as important as the others.

The abolition of paramouncty would have meant that about seven hundred 'rulerships', (ranging from Kashmir and Hyderabad to the owners of few acres) would suddenly emerge as independent States. The common term 'Native States' obscured the fact that the smaller States had very restricted power over the life and limb of their subjects, but under the Cabinet Mission's "Memorandum on States' Treaties and Paramountcy" of May 12 (published on May 22) all the rulers big or small would enjoy sovereign power. It is surprising indeed that a lawyer of Sir Stafford Cripps's standing should have been a party to such a scheme. The only explanation that I can think of is that the brief prepared for him by the Political Department did not point out these drawbacks; as it turned out the 'Memorandum' fitted in with the scheme of the Political Department to create a "third force" in India.

The Europeans, as has been noted above, were grossly over-represented in the Bengal Assembly and by the system of proportional representation proposed for the constituent assembly, they would have formed a decisive factor in the Bengal-Assam, group, the position of representatives in this group being as follows:

	Muslims	Europeans	Others (Hindus)	Tot
Bengal	33	5	22	60
Assam	3	1	6	10

Objection was raised to this as soon as the plan was published, but

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matters came to a head with the publication of a statement by the President of the European Association on June 13, in which he said that the Europeans (*i. e.* the Anglo-indians) had "obligations and contributions to make in constitution-making", and that they were going to exercise that right. Ten days later Gandhiji wrote:

> "The British power in India has four arms—the official military, the official civil, the unofficial civil and the unofficial military. So, when the ruling class speaks of the unofficial Europeans as not being under their control it is nonsense. The official exists for the non-official. The former would have no work if the latter did not exist. The British flag came in the wake of British commerce. The whole of India is an occupied country. ....It is the straw which shows the way wind is blowing.....The unreasonable performance of the European Association.....is the greatest disturbing factor to shake the faith in the reality of Mission's work....Will the gun - protected Europeans of India silence their guns and stake their fortunes....purely on the good will of masses of India?....They have been made to look so foolish in their latest statement as to say that they would refrain from voting for themselves but would use their votes for electing their henchmen wearing the Indian skin. They would, if they could, repeat the trick, which has enabled them, a handful, to strangle the dumb millions of India. How long will this agony last." [8]

This was one of the strongest political diatribes ever to come out of Gandhiji's pen and a few days later the European Association announced that it would not join the constituent assembly. The Anglo-indians vanished from the stage of Indian politics.

The most objectionable feature of the May 16 plan was, however, the grouping of provinces in sections B and C. It was believed in Congress circle, that the Cabinet Mission was influenced by Sir William Craft, a former Private Secretary to Sir Samuel Hoare and an expert on Middle Eastern Affairs, and Sir Olaf Caroe then the Governor of the N-W.F.P., and other Anglo-indian officials, who wanted to create a bloc of friendly Muslim States in the Middle East. This, as we have seen, was advocated by Tuker. This policy, it was argued, required the whole of the Punjab to be included in the Western Muslim unit to make it viable. The other explanation is that the Cabinet Mission had brought as one of its advisers one Major Short, a great friend of the Sikhs, who believed that it was in the Sikh interest to retain an undivided Punjab, for in whichever way the Punjab was divided, the Sikhs were bound to suffer. That, however, was not what the Sikhs felt. They knew their likely fate under the League rule, and were not prepared to submit to it tamely. Significantly Jinnah made

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no attempt to reassure the Sikhs or the Hindus, who might find themselves in Pakistan.

The grouping of Bengal and Assam was even worse. The difference between the Hindu and Muslim population in Bengal was about 4 %, but under the Communal Award the Muslims were given an extra weightage, so that the Hindus including the Schedule Castes got only 78 seats while the Muslims got 117. This undue weightage was reflected in the Constituent Assembly, which was to have thirty-three Muslim and twenty-two Hindu members, from Bengal. It may be recalled that in 1911, when partitioned Bengal was reunited several Bengali speaking districts were added to Bihar transforming Bengal into a slightly Muslim majority province. If Bihar had returned those districts to Bengal, as requested by the Bengalis, Bengal would have been a Hindu majority province, and this situation would never have arisen. Those districts were added to Bengal as a result of the award of the Boundry Commission a few years after independence.

Assam, however, was clearly a Hindu majority province and there was no justification for grouping it with Bengal, which in effect meant presenting that Province to the Muslim League as a sop to Jinnah to induce him to stay in the Union. Many Congress leaders, particularly Azad, was in favour of this arrangement but Gandhiji refused to join them. Later he advised Bardoloi, the Congress Chief Minister of Assam, not to go into the section, and if necessary go outside the Congress and fight against this iniquitous award.[9]

Indeed Gandhiji's feelings were so strong that it was believed at one time that if the Assam Congressmen started a movement on this issue, he himself would go and lead it, and there is no doubt that he would have been justified.

The Bengal-Assam grouping was closely linked with British commercial interest. For, this area contained the entire jute industry, and the tea gardens which at this time was mainly in British hands. It was widely believed that this grouping arrangement, which would give control of this area to the Muslims, was dictated by the British commercial interest of Calcutta.

In face of Gandhiji's oppostion, the Congress leaders did not dare to accept the May 16 plan, but neither did they want to reject it. So they put their own interpretation on grouping by taking recourse to two conflicting clauses of the May 16 plan. Paragraph 15 clause

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5 of the plan stated that" Provinces should be free to form Groups with executives and legislatures, and each Group could determine the provincial subjects to be taken in common"; but paragraph 19 sub-clause iv and v stipulated that "....the provincial representatives will divide up into three sections..... These sections shall proceed to settle provincial Constitutions...and shall also decide whether any Group Constitution shall be set up for those provinces..." The first provision made grouping voluntary, the second compulsory. The Congress Working Committee in its meeting of May 24, "read paragraph 15 to mean that, in the first instance, the respective provinces shall make their choice whether or not to belong to the section in which they are placed ...." Thus according to this interpretation Assam might or might not join section C. Immediately, on May 25, the Cabinet Mission and the Viceroy issued a statement in course of which it was stated that "the interpretation put by the Congress resolution on paragraph 15 of the Statement (May 16 plan) to the effect that the provinces can in the first instance make the choice whether or not to belong to the sections in which they are placed does not accord with the Delegation's intentions".[10] The use of the word 'intention' was unfortunate and led to further controversy, but there was no doubt that, under the Cabinet Mission Plan, Assam would have to sit with Bengal and form her constitution, and could opt out only after the majority of the members elected under the new constitution so decided. The danger was that Jinnah would devise such a constitution by splitting Hindus into Caste Hindus, Schedule Castes and Tribals that it would not have been possible for Assam to opt out later; for the Cabinet Mission had assured Jinnah that decision in the sections would be by a majority vote of the representatives of the provinces within the section and that the voting would not be by provinces and that the constitutions for the provinces would definitely be framed by the Sections.[11]

The Congress, instead of clarifying the matter allowed the problem of grouping to rest on their own interpretation and busied themselves with the formation of the interim government and Azad approached Wavell for further discussion regarding the formation of the interim government. The Congress at this time was insisting that the interim government should have the same status and power as a Dominion Cabinet,which was constitutionally impossible, and, in view of the attitude of the Muslim League, impracticable. Still, Azad managed to extract from Wavell a fairly decent assurance in

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this regard. It would have been better, however, if instead of these discussions the Congress leaders had stooped to look at these negotiations more objectively. For Jinnah induced Wavell to agree to parity of representation between the Congress and the Muslim League in the Government: five Congress, five League and two members from the minorities. The Congress rejected it upon which Wavell proposed an Executive Council of thirteen members, six Congress (including a member of the Schedule Caste), five League and two representatives of minorities. Congress rejected this offer also. As Jinnah always stipulated that he would consider the proposal after the Congress had accepted it, he had never had to take any decision.

This led to a deadlock, so on June 16, the Viceroy issued a statement and announced the names of fourteen persons who were to compose the Executive Council. Of them six belonged to the Congress including one Schedule Caste member, five belonged to the League, one was a Sikh, one Indian Christian and there was one Parsi.

Jinnah, as usual held out his hand till he could learn the Congress decision. The Congress took exception to the fact that Hare Krushna Mahtab had been substituted for Sarat Chandra Bose, (Netaji's elder brother) the Congress nominee, and Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, and Dr. Zakir Husain omitted from the list, which on the other hand included Abdur Rab Nishtar, to whose inclusion the Congress had objected earlier because he had been defeated in the last election (1946), and N.P. Engineer, who was the prosecution counsel in the I.N.A. trial.

Still the Working Committee decided to accept the June 16 plan, but waited for Abdul Gaffar Khan's arrival in view of Nishtar's inclusion in the Executive Council. Nehru took this opportunity to go to Kashmir where his friend, Sheikh Abdullah, was being tried. Next day the *Statesman* published the substance of a letter from Jinnah to Wavell in which Jinnah had asked for certain assurances. Azad immediately demanded and got from Wavell copy of this correspondence and it was found that Wavell had assured Jinnah privately that before filling up any future vacancy the Viceroy would consult the Congress and the League, and that no decision on a major communal issue could be taken in the interim government if the majority of either of the parties were opposed to it. The last guarantee was said to have been based on Azad's approval, though he later denied it.[18]

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The Congress, since the Simla Conference, had ceased to have faith in Wavell's impartiality, and these developments convinced them that he was in actual alliance with the League. The conviction seemed to gain proof when in response to their request to include a Nationalist Muslim in the Executive Council, Wavell wrote on June 22: "For reason of which you are well aware it is not possible, for the Cabinet Mission or myself to accept this request". This was in glaring contrast with the reply Wavell had given to Azad on June 15 when the Congress had taken exception to a League nominee for the interim Government. "I cannot accept", Wavell had told Azad, "the right of the Congress to object to names put forward by the Muslim League, any more than I would accept similar objections from the other side".[13] It is interesting to note that though the Cabinet Mission was a party to all these, Wavell alone assumed the responsibility.

On June 19, Gandhiji gave notice to the Working Committee that if they agreed to the non-inclusion of a Nationalist Muslim and the inclusion of Engineer he would have nothing to do with the whole business and leave Delhi. Gandhiji talked in the same vein to Cripps who came to see him the next day, but on June 21 he had possibly had his suspicions, for in the evening he told the Sardar that henceforth Azad should not conduct the negotiations for the inclusion of a Nationalist Muslim in the Executive Council. The suspicion was confirmed on June 22, when Cripps told Gandhiji's emissary, Sudhir Ghosh, that the Congress stand in regard to the inclusion of a Nationalist Muslim was absolutely logical and legitimate, but they had proceeded on a written assurance from Azad that the Working Committee would not insist on it. Later, Abell, Wavell's Private Secretary, showed Azad's letter to Rajkumari Amrit Kaur and stated that it was only on receiving Azad's letter that they conceded Jinnah's demands.[14] However, the Working Committee decided not to join the interim government according to the June 16 plan since the Congress could not nominate a Nationalist Muslim.

Throughout these negotiations Azad as the Congress President, had taken a leading part and V.P. Menon writes that "throughout the negotiations (Azad) had striven to build up an attitude of co-operation and conciliation to the League",[15] though it is remarkable that Jinnah had all along shown marked hostility to Azad's presence as a negotiator. It is equally significant that in his book, *India Wins Freedom*, in which Azad has freely calumniated all his Congress

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colleagues, he has omitted to make any mention of this crucial letter, which resulted in the Congress refusal to accept the June 16 plan. As it appears now, Azad's approach to the problem was peculiar. In August 1945, he proposed to Gandhiji a plan for a communal settlement under which the future constitution of India was to be a federation with fully autonomous units having the right of secession. "There must be joint electorates both at the centre and in the provinces", Azad had suggested, "with reservation of seats and such *differential franchise* as might be needed to make electorates reflect the strength of population of the communities. There must be parity of Hindus and Muslims in the central legislature and the central executive till such time as communal suspicion disappeared ..... There should also be a convention by which the head of the Indian Federation would, in the initial period, be Hindu and Muslim by turn."[16a] His justification of this was that it would induce the Muslims to give up the demand for Pakistan, to which he was opposed as he felt that Pakistan would be harmful to the Muslims. He therefore supported the Cabinet Mission's plan of May 16 because it conferred the greatest benefit on the Muslims and took exception when Gandhiji supported the stand of the Assam Congress on grouping.[16]

Actually, the Cabinet Mission plan of May 16 contained the most dangerous potentialities for the Hindus. Jinnah had made no secret,indeed he had publicly declared, that he accepted the plan because it would ultimately lead to Pakistan and there is hardly any doubt that in the loose confederation which the plan envisaged Jinnah would have been successful. The joint defence instead of becoming a source of unity would have become a source of danger to the non-Muslims, which Ambedkar alone amongst the Hindus had realized.[17] Once the British had left, Jinnah would have had his Pakistan, not the truncated Pakistan which he got from the British, but his real Pakistan of six provinces, for the Congress would have been powerless to prevent it.

However, to resume our narrative, the Congress Working Committee after rejecting the June 16 plan met on the 25th June to consider the May 16 plan. Gandhiji had written a letter the night before informing Cripps of his decision to advise the Working Committee not to accept the Plan. The rest is better told in Pyarelal's language:

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New Delhi, 25th June, 1946

"At 8 a.m. Bapu went to attend the Working Committee meeting. He asked me to read out the note which he had written to Cripps last night. He then addressed them very briefly : 'I admit defeat. You are not bound to act upon my unsupported suspicion. You should follow my intuition only if it appeals to your reason. Otherwise you should take an independent course. I shall now leave with your permission. You should follow the dictates of your reason.'

"A hush fell over the gathering. Nobody spoke for some time, The Maulana Saheb with his unfailing alertness at once took in the situation. 'What do you desire? Is there any need to detain Bapu any further?' he asked. Everybody was silent. Everybody understood. In that hour of decision they had no use for Bapu. They decided to drop the pilot. Bapu returned to his residence.

"The Working Committee again met at noon and addressed a letter to the Cabinet Mission, rejecting the proposal for the formation of the interim government at the Centre and accepting the long term plan with its own interpretation of the disputed clauses. In spite of it they made Bapu to attend the afternoon session of the Working Committee. At noon the Cabinet Mission invited the members of the Working Committee to meet them. Bapu not being a member was not sent for and did not go. On their return nobody told Bapu a word about what had happened at the meeting." [18]

On June 28, Gandhiji left Delhi for Poona. That day ended the Gandhian era of the Congress. Even his Sardar had ceased to follow him. From Poona he wrote to the Sardar on July 1:

"I did not like our conversation today.[19] It is nobody's fault. The fault, if at all, is of the circumstances. What can you or I do for it? You go by your experience, I by mine. You know I have been at a loss to understand a number of things which you have done.....You speak in the Committee with much heat. I do not like it. On top of it today came the question of the Constituent Assembly.....All this is not by way of complaint. But I see, we are drifting in different directions".

To this the Sardar replied:

"What can I say after your letter? I must be at fault. Only I cannot yet see it and that makes me feel unhappy. I do not want to take a different path....My own instinct was to the contrary but if I had not done what I did, the Congress would have been held to blame afterwards.....I do betray some heat when I speak in the Committee.....That is a temperamental defect....but there is nothing in it".[20]

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III

On June 25, the Working Committee rejected the plan for an interim government but accepted the long term plan (of May 16) with its own interpretation of the disputed clauses and concluded that it was essential that a representative and responsible provisional national government should be formed at the earliest possible date. The Cabinet Mission saw Jinnah as soon as they came to know of the Congress decision and told him that the June 16 plan had fallen through, but now that the Congress had accepted the May 16 plan, it was proposed to set up a coalition government, the League having already accepted the May 16 plan; but for various reasons a short interval was necessary before further negotiations could be taken up. This was confirmed in a letter which was issued the same day but which Jinnah said later did not reach him till late at night.

Here, for the first time in his life Jinnah's megalomania had the better of his common sense. From the meeting with the Cabinet Mission he went straight to a meeting of the Working Committee of the League which passed a resolution agreeing to join the interim government on the basis of the June 16 plan. This manouvre was based on clause 8 of the June 16 plan which stipulated that "in the event of the two major parties or either of them proving unwilling to join in the setting up of a coalition Government on the above lines, it is the intention of the Viceroy to proceed with the formation of an interim Government which will be as representative as possible of those willing to accept the statement of May 16". Jinnah now claimed that as the Congress had previously refused to join the interim Government under the May 16 plan, the Viceroy was obliged to form an interim Government consisting in effect of the Muslim League only.

This was the apex of Jinnah's career. From his "Fourteen points" he had gradually progressed till the League claimed parity with the rest of India; now the League alone would rule India with the great Qaid-i-Azam as the head of the Government. However, this shyster tactics failed to work, and the Cabinet Mission left Delhi on June 29, leaving Wavell to form an interim Government. Jinnah became very angry and lustily abused the Cabinet Mission and Wavell.

It has been said that the Cabinet Mission left for England "having accomplished virtually nothing".[21] This is an exaggeration. The

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Mission failed to break the deadlock between the Congress and the League but that was not its principal objective. It succeeded in convincing the Indians that the British Government was sincere in its desire to quit India. Also, by its long stay in India (over three months) three important members of the British Cabinet learnt at first hand the realities of Indian politics, which made the later decisions of the British Cabinet possible; but they may have to some extent undermined Wavell's authority, who was always singled out for attack both by the Congress and the League.

The Congress leaders now realized that the struggle with the British was over, and the problem facing them was how to share power with the League. Jinnah had realized this long ago.

References

1. Menon, p. 236.
2. ibid, p. 236-37.
3. General Mayne was Military Secretary to the Secretary of State for India.
4. Sir David Monteath was Under-Secretary of State for India; "Pug" Ismay is Lord Ismay, who later came out to India with Lord Mountbatten. During the Second World War Lord Ismay was the head of the military wing of the War Cabinet Secretariat, one of the key men in the British defence service.
5. J. Connell : *Auchinleck*, pp. 830-32.
6. Menon, pp. 241-42; for discussions with Azad see ibid, pp. 237-38.
7. Related to Brecher by the Private Secretary of Cripps during the Cabinet Mission. Brecher, op. cit. p. 310.
8. *Harijan*, June, 23, 1946; p. 188, Pyarelal, I, p. 227. Similar sentiments were expressed in a *Times* editorial on February 26, 1883 in connection with the Ilbert Bill agitation : "We do not govern India exclusively through the Civil Service. Every man who plants tea or indigo or cinchona, who exports wheat, or who runs a mill, is part of an agency for the development of India which is the necessary complement of the machinery of government....."
9. Account of an interview given by Gandhiji to two Assam Congressmen who saw him on behalf of Gopinath Bardoloi, Chief Minister of Assam on December 15, 1946. A.T. Hingorani : *To the Protagonists of Pakistan* (Gandhi series, No.5) pp. 188-90.
10. On June 15 Lord Wavell in a letter to Azad maintained that the May 16 Plan did not make grouping compulsory. Wavell to Azad June 15, 1946; Pyarelal I, p.216. Curiously enough Maulana Azad nowhere mentions this letter.
11. Menon, p. 307.

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12. ibid, p. 277. f.n.
13. Payarelal I. p. 232.
14. ibid, pp. 233-34.
15. Menon p. 296.
15a. ibid, p. 221,
16. Azad : *India Wins Freedom* pp. 143,172.
17. B.R. Ambedkar : *Pakistan or Partition of India* (1946 ed.) p. 360.
18. Pyarelal, I. p. 239.
19. This referred to a conversation Gandhiji had with Sardar the day he left Delhi regarding the Working Committee decision.
20. Pyarelal, I, p. 240. On December 15, 1946, Sardar wrote to Cripps: ".... you know when Gandhiji was strongly against our settlement, I threw my weight in favour of it. You have created a very unpleasant situation for me. All of us here feel that there has been a betrayal". ibid, p. 477.
21. Brecher : op. cit. p. 313.

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CHAPTER XIX

FAILURE OF A MISSION

The departure of the Cabinet Mission on June, 29, 1946, provides a convenient date for tracing the starting point of the new pattern of Indian politics. Hitherto the British provided a focus for converging the various elements of our political life; now the focal point was withdrawn, and Indian politics became canalized into two parallel streams, Congress and Muslim League; the one insisting on a strong centre and the other for Pakistan ; and the knowledge that the British had as good as left, added terrific impetus to their activities. The political parties also resolved into Congress and the League: there were indeed the Hindu Mahasabha, Akalis, Khaksars and several other parties, but from now on till August 15, 1947 only two parties counted. All the Muslims, except a handful of Nationalist Muslim leaders, were for the League; the rest of the country with the Congress.

The initiative had passed out of the hands of the British Government, but it was not yet within the reach of either the Congress or the Muslim League. This resulted in a political vacuum in the centre, aggravated by the fact that the Government had divested itself of political power while retaining the administrative responsibility. This provided the curious spectacle that while the British in India controlled the greatest army in her history, the administration was the weakest, and a civil war or the communal riots decided India's fate.

The A.I.C.C. met in Bombay on the first week of July and approved the Working Committee's resolutions accepting the long-term provisions of the May 16 plan, or in other words, decided to join the Constituent Assembly. The Socialists opposed, but few took their opposition seriously. Azad, who had been the Congress President since 1940, retired and Nehru succeeded him. Gandhiji explaining his choice at a prayer meeting said: "Jawaharlal cannot be replaced today, whilst the charge is being taken from Englishmen. He, a Harrow boy, a Cambridge graduate and a barrister, is wanted to carry on the negotiations with Englishmen".[1] Thus Sardar Patel, who did not have the advantages of an expensive English education was passed over, and missed the chance of being the first Prime Minister of India.

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Winding up the A.I.C.C. meeting, Nehru explained the Congress position by stating: "We are not bound by a single thing except that we have decided for the moment to go to the Constituent Assembly". Later at a press conference he gave a long interpretation of the rationale of the Congress action during the course of which he said with regard to grouping :

> "The big probability is, from any approach to the question, there will be no grouping. Obviously, section A will decide against grouping. Speaking in betting language, there is a four to one chance of the North-West Frontier Province deciding against grouping. Then Group B collapses. It is highly likely that Bengal and Assam will decide against grouping, although I would not like to say what the initial decision may be since it is evenly balanced. But I can say with every assurance and conviction that there is going to be finally no grouping there, because Assam will not tolerate it under any circumstances whatever. Thus you see this grouping business, approached from any point of view, does not get us on at all".[2]

Nehru said a few other things, as he usually does under similar circumstances, but it was these remarks about grouping which provided the spark Jinnah was waiting for to set fire to the gunpowder of the Muslim League's emotion and criminal instincts.

Nehru has been criticized for this speech, and with particular severity by Azad, who apparently forgot that on June 15 Wavell had given him a written assurance that the May 16 Plan did not make grouping compulsory.[3] But as Nehru maintains, Jinnah did not need any serious provocation to do what he did.[4] There is also no doubt that Nehru's speech had the support of the Congress, of Gandhiji and of the Hindus in general, who detested the grouping of the provinces. It may have been one of Nehru's most provocative speeches, but after a great deal of equivocation the Congress leader had described the situation as it was. The speech had a very good effect on the Sikhs, who at this time were intent on boycotting the Constituent Assembly.

Jinnah, however, at once took up Nehru's speech as a repudiation of the Cabinet Mission plan, and at his insistence Pethick-Lawrence in the House of Lords and Cripps in the Commons made it clear that Nehru's interpretation—that is the Congress interpretation—of the grouping, was wrong. However, Cripps in course of his speech said: "A fear was expressed that somehow or other the new provincial constitutions might be so manoeuvred as to make it impossible for the

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province afterwards to opt out. I do not know myself how such a thing would be possible, but if anything of that kind were to be attempted, it would be a clear breach of the basic understanding of the scheme".[5] Cripps had either forgotten or was repudiating the assurance the Cabinet Mission had given to Jinnah at Simla that the decisions in the sections would be by a majority vote of the representatives of the section and that the constitution for the provinces would definitely be framed by the sections,[6] so that the Muslim majority in section C could make it impossible for Assam to opt out. Similarly the Muslim League majority in section B could prevent the N-W.F.P. to opt out. But this assurance was privately given to Jinnah unknown to the Congress, so that the Congress was not a party to it, and from what Cripps said now it was evident to Jinnah that even if Assam was forced to join Section C, her permanent association with Bengal might not follow.

Jinnah therefore had the League acceptance of the Cabinet Mission plans of May 16 and June 16 revoked by a resolution of the League Council at Bombay on July 27. By another resolution the League Council decided upon "direct action" to achieve their objectives. After the resolution was passed Jinnah declared :

> "What we have done today is the most historic act in our history. Never had we in the whole history of the League done anything except by constitutional methods and by constitutionalism. . . .This day we bid goodbye to constitutional methods."

He might have added that he was also bidding goodbye to a few other virtues which distinguish an honest man from a criminal.

Jinnah's decision to adopt the vile tactics of the direct action is difficult to explain. All his life, he had acted as a cold calculating lawyer. Had he changed in his old age? Or was he listening to advice? The Cabinet Mission had told him that he could either have a truncated Pakistan or the six provinces under May 16 plan: he selected the latter because it was better of the two and yet contained promise for a future Pakistan. He was now sacrificing this positive gain for doubtful advantages to be wrested for him by the gangsters of Calcutta's underworld. His direct action got him the truncated Pakistan, but he could have obtained it from the Cabinet Mission, had he selected that alternative, and spared the country the holocaust. Possibly he wanted to frighten the Congress, that is the Hindus, to subjection.

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The Congress now explained that their objection had not been to the principle of a grouping but to forcing a province to remain in a group. But Jinnah would not be appeased.

II

By the end of July 1946, the election for the 296 seats in the Constituent Assembly assigned to the Indian provinces was completed. Only, the four Sikh seats in the Punjab remained to be elected. and the ninty-three seats allotted to the Native States were to be filled by negotiation later.

The Sikhs had felt that the Cabinet Mission plan seriously injured their interest. Baldev Singh appealed to Attlee in the beginning of July, pointing out that the group system would in the end amount to a perpetual Muslim communal rule. As Attlee failed to assure the Sikhs, they decided to hold to their decision of boycotting the Constituent Assembly. The Congress then passed a resolution assuring the Sikhs that the Congress would give them all possible support in removing their legitimate grievances and in securing adequate safeguards for the protection of their just interests in the Punjab, but there being no provision for bye election in the plan, their election was long delayed.

During the election to the Constituent Assembly, Wavell had sought and obtained permission from Pethick-Lawrence to form an interim government, and on July 22 he invited Nehru and Jinnah to join his Executive Council to be composed of fourteen members of whom six, including one Scheduled Caste representative, were to be nominated by the Congress, five by the League and the remaining three, including one Sikh, representing the minorities, were to be nominated by the Viceroy.

Next day, (July 23) Nehru replied demanding that the Viceroy's position on formation of the new Executive Council should be that of a constitutional head, and that it would not be proper for him to select the minority representatives. This was followed by an interview with Nehru but nothing tangible came out of it.

Wavell was now in a difficult position. Communal tension was visibly increasing after the League's "Direct Action" resolution of July 27 and he felt that a coalition government in the centre was the only solution. He was, however, adverse to approaching Jinnah,

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lest such a course should put up the latter's "stock and increase his intransigence".[7] On the other hand he could not disregard his commitment to form a Government as representative as possible of those who had accepted the May 16 plan.

On July 31, Jinnah replied to Wavell, rejecting his offer to join the Executive Council. Wavell then obtained the Secretary of State's permission to form a Government with the Congress alone in case the Muslim League refused to join it. So on August 6, 1946, Wavell invited Nehru to form a Government with the request that he (Nehru) should discuss his proposals with Jinnah.[8]

Wavell did not agree to become a constitutional head, as Nehru had been demanding all along but this time the Working Committee at a meeting at Wardha on August 8, accepted the Viceroy's proposals. So Nehru wrote to the Viceroy accepting his offer to form an interim government, but requested the latter to make a public announcement on the basis of which it would be possible for him (Nehru) to approach Jinnah and invite the League's co-operation. The announcement was made on August 13, and within a few days Nehru saw Jinnah; but as expected, Jinnah refused to join the interim government. So on August 17, the day after the "Direct Action" day, Nehru proposed to Wavell the formation of a Government with six Congress and five non-League Muslim members. Wavell suggested the dubious course of not filling the Muslim League seats, but Nehru correctly pointed out that it would give his government an appearance of unstability.

The Calcutta killings[9] had by this time begun to influence Wavell and he came to the erroneous conclusion that its effect on the Muslim League was salutary. So when Nehru met him on August 17, Wavell suggested that in view of what had happened at Calcutta, Jinnah now might be more tractable and should be approached. However, Jinnah's violent statement on August 18, seems to have clinched the issue and Wavell wrote to Nehru on August 19 : "I have read the statement by Mr. Jinnah in today's paper and in the present circumstances I agree that there would be no use in my sending for him". But on August 22, Wavell apparently changed his mind and wrote to Nehru that, "the matter of paramount importance is to leave no stone unturned to get the Muslim League to join the Executive Council". The *volte-face* is so complete and irrational that I am inclined to believe that Wavell was acting according to instructions received from England.[10]

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On August 22, Nehru replied to Wavell stating the Congress position clearly that while it was willing to enter into a coalition with the League, it did not "believe that co-operation will come out of appeasement of wrong doing" ; Nehru also pointed out that Wavell's new proposal meant reverting to a former stage of negotiations.[11]

However, on August 24, doubts were set at rest for the time being, and an official *communique* announced the names of the members of the Interim Government, which was headed by Nehru and consisted for six Congressmen a Sikh, an Indian Christian, a Parsi and three non-League Muslims.

But a change had come over Wavell; he persisted in his attempt to cajole the Muslim League into joining the Government and in a broadcast on August 24, while welcoming the formation of the Interim Government, appealed to the Muslim League to join the Government, on the basis of the League's interpretation of grouping. But this had no effect on Jinnah.[12]

Mosley states that Wavell wished to postpone the swearing in of the Interim Government until the Muslim League joined it but Attlee overruled him.[13] If this is true, it would show a lack of appreciation of the position of the Congress on the part of Wavell, and would justify the charges levelled againt him by Pyarelal.[14]

Unfortunately Wavell was surrounded by a group of British officials who could not shed their distrust of the Congress.[15] They had equated it in their minds with "Hindu nationalism" which, according to them, could never be friendly towards British interests, and in any case, had not much political value in their plan of Middle East strategy. In an undivided India, after independence, the Muslim League could be depended upon to neutralize the sinister "Hindu Congress" influence; in case of India being divided, creation of a strong sovereign friendly Pakistan on the north-western border, would help to strengthen their Middle East policy.

" The whole attitude and pattern of conduct of the higher British officials in India at this juncture", writes Pyarelal, "provides an illustration of what Pandit Nehru characterised as a 'mental alliance' between them and the Muslim League. Lord Wavell became a vehicle of their policies. Pandit Nehru complained afterwards that he found that the Viceroy was 'gradually removing the wheels of the car'. The one consistent policy of these British officials was to equate Congress with the Muslim League and set up Jinnah as an equal and opposite number of Gandhiji. " [16]

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Pyarelal adds that a theory was developed among the higher British officials, that the Muslim League being the "politically aggrieved party", indulgence in lawlessness on their part was not only "natural" and "condonable" but even became clothed with merit by reason of "elementary justice".[17]

> "Throughout the negotiations with the Cabinet Mission and after, there existed a close collaboration between these officials and the Muslim League. They kept the League High Command fully posted with the goings-on at their end and passed on to the League all important information in regard to the Congress plan likely to be of use to the League that reached them either in the normal course or through interception....
>
> "The fact was that the pro-League section of British officials felt that their protege, the Muslim League, had overplayed its cards by remaining out of the Interim Government and they were determined to bring it in at any price. To that end the Viceroy and his group now opened negotiations with the Muslim League on their own." [18]

III

Wavell came to Calcutta on August 25, and saw the effect of the Muslim League's 'Direct Action'. Gandhiji later said that the sight "unnerved" Wavell; even if that is discounted as an exaggeration, there is no doubt that it profoundly affected his judgement, and he came to the conclusion that the only solution was to form a Congress-League coalition government at the centre. In this he was influenced not only by the British officials but also by Nazimuddin, the Muslim League leader of Bengal, who told Wavell that, Jinnah would reconsider his decision if the Congress declared unequivocally that the provinces would not be allowed to opt out of the groups, and if the League were allowed to fill the Muslim quota of five seats.[19]

Wavell was now convinced that the only way to save India from chaos was to induce the Congress to appease the League, so on August 27, immediately after his return from Calcutta, he called Gandhiji and Nehru and in course of a heated discussion practically ordered them to accept a prepared formula which amounted to a declaration by the Congress that it agreed to the principle of grouping as interpreted by the League.[20] Gandhiji and Nehru declined to sign the formula.

On his return, Gandhiji sent a cable to Attlee saying that the Viceroy was "unnerved owing to the Bengal tragedy", and needed

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to be assisted by "an abler and legal mind", otherwise the repetition of the Bengal tragedy (was) a certainty". He was later informed by one of his friends, that his warning had perturbed Attlee, who realized that there was a good case for a new Viceroy, but the difficulty was to find the proper person to replace Wavell.[21]

For the first time the Congress had decided to co-operate with the Government, and this was to a great measure due to Wavell's patience and persistence. At this moment he allowed himself to be influenced—or as the Congress leaders said intimidated—by the Muslim League at Calcutta and elsewhere to bring his relations with the Congress to a breaking point. That there was not an open rupture was due to the statesmanship of the Congress leaders, who realized that the time had come when they must shoulder the burden of governing their country even under adverse circumstances.

The Congress was installed in office on September 2, 1946, and immediately difference arose between them and Wavell over the portfolios of Sir Safaat Ahmad Khan and Rajaji, who could not join the government, the former having sustained a murderous attack and the latter being ill. Wavell now demanded that their portfolios should either remain vacant or revert to him. This was an impossible position to maintain and he had to give it up in the face of Nehru's valid objections.[22]

On September 7, Nehru broadcast an appeal to the League to enter the Constituent Assembly as an equal partner with no binding commitments. But Jinnah refused to be assured, and also rejected the idea of the formation of League-Congress coalition government in Bengal as suggested by Suhrawardy, the Muslim League Chief Minister of Bengal, as the only devise to restore confidence.

"At this stage" writes V. P. Menon, "there arose between the Viceroy and the Secretary of State a conflict of views as to the method of dealing with the deadlock. Theirs was a common purpose, but they differed in their approach to the problem. While the Secretary of State was inclined to give the new Congress Government some time so that the responsibilities of office might guide it to adjust its attitude towards the demands of the Muslim League, the Viceroy was for taking immediate steps to clinch the issue. In the Viceroy's view it was essential that the Statement of 16 May should be adhered to ; he would rather loose the co-operation of the Congress at the Centre and in the provinces than go ahead with constitution making on a one-party basis which the Cabinet Mission had never intended." [23]

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There is no doubt that Wavell was wrong and Pethick-Lawrence right. Jinnah had by this time realized his blunder, and was only too eager to join the Government, and Wavell unwittingly provided him the chance he was seeking by opening negotiations with him on September 16. Wavell opened with almost an apologetic tone and Jinnah took the fullest advantage. He again saw Wavell on September 25 and the latter practically conceded every point raised by Jinnah.[24]

Next day (September 26) Wavell saw Nehru and Gandhiji and pressed on them the advisability of placating Jinnah by not insisting on the inclusion of a Nationalist Muslim in the Government. His main pre-occupation, as he told Gandhiji was that "the League must be brought in somehow". His fear was that the League would not join the Constituent Assembly unless they were allowed to join the Interim Government on their own terms. Gandhiji admitted that if the League did not join the Constituent Assembly it could not properly meet; but he advised that in that eventuality the present Interim Government should carry on the administration. To this Wavell could not agree.[25]

After this meeting was over, Gandhiji sent precis of their conversation to Wavell who corrected Gandhiji's impression that he (Wavell) had said that he had "leanings towards the League" but refused to maintain agreed minutes of conversation. This resulted in deepening Gandhiji's suspicion of Wavell.

Encouraged by the Viceroy, Jinnah on October 2, presented nine points which had to be elucidated before the League would join the Government.[26] These were really demands intended to break up the Cabinet form of Government and it was on this score that Nehru objected.

In the meantime the Nawab of Bhopal had been at work to exploit the cordial relations which he had long enjoyed with Gandhiji. He managed to get Gandhiji's signature to the following formula :

> I. The Congress does not challenge and accepts that the Muslim League now is the authoritative representative of an overwhelming majority of the Muslims of India. As such and in accordance with democratic principles they alone have today an unquestionable right to represent Muslims of India. But the Congress cannot agree that any restriction or limitations should be put upon the Congress to choose such representation as they think proper from amongst the members of the Congress as their representatives.

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II. It is understood that all the Ministers of the Interim Government will work as a team for the good of the whole of India and will never invoke the intervention of the Governor-General in any case.

Jinnah accepted the first part but Gandhiji made it clear that acceptance of the first part was conditional on his acceptance of the second; the Congress Working Committee accepted Gandhiji's formula and Nehru saw Jinnah at Bhopal's residence on October 5 and 7 and had prolonged, and as he fancied, friendly discussions with him. On the 7th evening Nehru was disillusioned; he received from Jinnah a letter which did not betray any friendliness and, attached to his letter were the nine demands.[27]

On October 10, the Muslim League unleashed their holocaust at Noakhali. Describing the conditions about a month later Miss Muriel Lester wrote :

"The worst of all was the plight of the women. Several of them had to watch their husbands being murdered and then be forcibly converted and married to some of those responsible for their death. These women had a dead look. It was not despair, nothing so active as that. It was utter blankness....The eating of beef and declaration of allegiance to Islam has been forced upon many thousands as price of their lives....." [28]

Tuker's reaction to this tragedy, typical of the Anglo-indians, was somewhat different. He writes :

"As tempers cooled and the general difficulties of movement in a waterlogged land were overcome, stock was taken of the situation. This survey confirmed that the newspaper reports were absurdly overdrawn and that casualties were far fewer than generally reported. I again emphasise here that these wilfully mischievous reports were directly responsible for the tragedies in Eastern Command later in 1946 and indirectly at least for the acute irritation which led to civil war in the Punjab. *The object of the uprising (at Noakahli) had been conversions to Islam and not extermination of Hindus.*

"In affected areas the Hindu population had panicked and fled, in many cases women and children being left behind in the villages whilst the men dashed for safety to Chandpur and other towns and even to Calcutta. Refugees were mostly of the latter classes and seemed *prosperous and well fed*....." [29]

Pyarelal later went to Noakhali with Gandhiji and his carefully drawn up account shows that all the statements made by Tuker were false. But it was these type of reports which influenced Wavell, while Gandhiji and the Congress were getting the correct version.

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It is important to remember this for an understanding of the Congress attitude to Wavell's attempts to win over the Muslim League.

On October 13, Jinnah on behalf of the League accepted Wavell's invitation to join the Interim Government because it would be "fatal to leave the entire field of administration of the Central Government in the hands of the Congress". Before this, however, Jinnah had extracted another concession from Wavell, namely, the Muslim League's right to nominate a Schedule Caste member out of its quota of five seats. That is how Jogendra Nath Mandal, an obscure lawyer from the Barisal bar, came to occupy the position of the last Law Member of the Government of India. Lord Sinha had been the first Indian Law Member.

IV

Wavell had insisted up to the last that the League should reverse its earlier decision in favour of joining the Constituent Assembly. Jinnah gave him a vague assurance that the League Council would revoke its decision later. It never did.

On October 15 it was announced that the League had agreed to join the Government at the Viceroy's invitation. On October 23 Wavell wrote to Nehru :

> "I have made it clear to Mr. Jinnah....that the Muslim League's entry into the Interim Government is conditional on the acceptance of the scheme of....May 16th....and that he must call his Council at an early date to agree to this.
>
> "As I have told you, Mr. Jinnah has assured me that the Muslim League will come into the Interim Government and the Constituent Assembly with the intention of co-operating."
>
> "I am glad," Nehru replied, "that Mr. Jinnah has assured you that the Muslim League is coming into the Interim Government and Constituent Assembly with the intention of co-operating....(and) that....the Muslim League's entry into the Interim Government is conditional on the acceptance of the scheme of the Cabinet Delegation....of May 16th. While you have made this clear to Mr. Jinnah it is not equally clear what the Muslim League's view is on this subject." [30]

Thus, so far as the Congress was concerned, it was Wavell, who had taken on the obligation of inducing the League to join the Constituent Assembly. As an honourable man, he expected others to act similarly but that was hardly a justification in a man of his position

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and experience to have walked into Jinnah's trap.

The League had received satisfaction from the Congress on all the terms it had demanded from Wavell, yet it rejected the Congress overtures and joined at the instance of the latter. That itself was ominous. If only Wavell had stayed his hands, the League would have come to terms with the Congress and joined the Government. Then the responsibility for any rift between the two would have been theirs ; now having brought in the League by his own endeavours Wavell had to shoulder responsibility for what followed.

Describing the coalition which Wavell formed, Ismay wrote later: "I doubt whether there has ever been a coalition whose members were so determined not to co-operate with each other".[31] If this could not have been predicted, at least it became apparent as soon as the League joined the Government. The League members made no secret of their intention of preventing the Government from functioning. Ispahani, Jinnah's personal envoy to the U.S.A., declared in a broadcast address reported by the *New York Herald Tribune* of October 29, 1946 : "The League has come into the Government....principally to retrieve the machinery of Government, at least partially from the monopolistic control of its political opponents. The League's participation in the new Government only means that the struggle for Pakistan will now be carried on within as well as without the Government."

With this end in view, the League began to introduce in the Central Secretariat officials of their choice. As their sudden promotion was entirely due to their religion and the League they felt morally bound to help their co-religionists and the League by every possible means. Within an incredibly short time, the Central Secretariat became honeycombed with League cells. In this the League received considerable help from the senior Anglo-indian officials.

Only in one respect the League suffered a defeat: Wavell had decided to give them one major portfolio amongst Defence, External Affairs or Home. It was well-known that Nehru would not give up the External Affairs ministry and any attempt to take away the Defence portfolio from Baldev Singh would lead to a major crisis with the Sikhs ; so Wavell advised that the Home Department should be transferred from the Sardar to a League Member. Sardar threatened resignation, so the League had to be satisfied with Finance. This decision to retain the Home Department at the cost of Finance has

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been criticized very trenchantly by Azad who assumed that the Home Department was unimportant because "the issue of law and order was a provincial subject".[32] It is evident that during the long years Azad spent as a Cabinet Minister, he had not taken the trouble to study the workings of the Home Ministry. It is the key to the Central administration and the certain way to collapsing the administration was to have handed it over to the League, as Azad advised. It is indeed difficult to understand Azad's attitude in view of the following speech of Ghazanfar Ali, a League nominee to the Interim Government : "We are going into the Interim Government to get a foothold to fight for our cherished goal of Pakistan... .The Interim Government is one of the fronts of the Direct Action campaign".[33]

The Muslim League took office on October 26, 1946, and Wavell began to insist on the League's acceptance of the May 16 Plan so that they might join the Constituent Assembly. After some prevarication, Jinnah wrote to Wavell categorically stating that the Muslim League would not join the Constituent Assembly, and advised the Viceroy to postpone the Constituent Assembly *sine die*. But Wavell had in the meantime fixed December 9 as a provisional date for the first meetting of the Constituent Assembly and Nehru was pressing for the issue of invitations. So after another round of conversations with Jinnah and Nehru he issued invitations on November 20 for the meeting of the Constituent Assembly. Immediately Jinnah sent a call to the Muslim League representatives not to participate in the Constituent Assembly.

Wavell thereupon asked Liaqat Ali to resign but was satisfied with the latter's explanation that the League would join the Constituent Assembly if assurance was forthcoming that their interpretation of the grouping of the provinces were valid. Actually Jinnah had by this time so adroitly manipulated the situation that the minority veto, which Attlee had declared on March 15 would not be allowed to stop the progress of the majority, was in actual operation.

The issue between the Congress and the League remained what it had been from the very beginning, namely, a strong centre versus a loose confederation. If the Muslim League could get a weak centre and strong group constitution, Pakistan would have been achieved, therefore the Congress was determined not to yield on these two points.

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V

The strength of the Muslim League lay in their unified command and a knowledge of their ultimate objective. The Congress unfortunately was somewhat divided not only amongst its supporters but amongst its top leaders. As Pyarelal puts it · "A difference in temperament and approach divided Sardar Patel from Pandit Nehru". This was common knowledge at the time, but unfortunately no authentic detail of the inner workings of the Congress "High Command" is yet available except for the two letters published by Pyarelal which are given below.

On October 26, the League took office and the next day Gandhiji declared his intention of going to the riot affected area of Noakhali. There he remained in one of the greatest missions of his life till another set of riots compelled him to leave Noakhali for Bihar on March 2, 1947 where he stayed till he left for Delhi on March 30 at the invitation of the new Viceroy, Lord Mountbatten.

During this period, in spite of appeals by Congress leaders, Gandhiji preferred not to meddle in Congress affairs and Nehru had to go to Noakhali to seek his advice in January 1947. Soon after Nehru left Gandhiji wrote to the Sardar :

> " I heard many complaints against you....Your speeches are inflammatory and made to please the crowd; you have left behind all distinction between violence and non-violence; you are teaching the people to meet sword by the sowrd ; you miss no opportunity to insult the League in season and out of season. All this is very harmful if true. They say, you talk about sticking to office. That again is very jarring, if it is true. Whatever I have heard I have passed on to you for your consideration. This is a very delicate time. If we deviate from the straight path by ever so little, we are done for. There is not that unison in the Working Committee that there should be. Root out corruption — you know how to do it. Send some trustworthy and intelligent person, if you think fit, to explain things to me and understand my mind. There is no need whatever for you to come yourself. You are no longer physically fit to run about. You seem to take no care of your health ; this is bad."

This was cruel denunciation of a man who had served Gandhiji faithfully for more than two decades. Indeed, had it not been written by so saintly a person, one might have thought that at last he was having his revenge on the Sardar for daring to oppose him on the issue of the Cabinet Mission plan. However, it was most unfortunate and the Sardar's reply is quite revealing. He wrote :

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"I have your letter. It has pained me. Naturally you have written on the basis of the reports that you have received and the complaints that you have heard. The complaints are false of course but some of them do not even make sense.

"The charge that I want to stick to office is a pure concoction. Only I was opposed to Jawaharlal's hurling idle threats of resigning from the Interim Government. They damage the prestige of the Congress and have a demoralising effect on the services. We should take a firm decision to resign first. Repetition of empty threats has lost us the Viceroy's respect and now he regards our threats of resignation as nothing but bluff. It took me not a moment to offer my resignation when the Viceroy demanded the surrender of my portfolio. It was no bluff and it had a very salutary effect. What interest have I in sticking to office? I am bed-ridden. I would feel happy and relieved to be a free man once more....I cannot understand how you could lend ear to such a complaint.

"Not even any Leaguer has said that I insult the League time and again. It is news to me that my speeches are made with an eye to the gallery. It is my habit to tell people the bitterest truths. At the time of the Royal Indian Navy mutiny, I condemned the disturbances unsparingly and without mincing words even though it displeased many at the time....The remark about meeting sword by the sword has been torn out of a long passage and presented out of context.

"If there are divisions in the Working Committee, they are not today's growth. They have been there for a long time. At present, on the contrary, there is a very large measure of accord in most matters. If any of my colleagues has complained to you about me I should like to know. None of them has said anything to me." [84]

VI

In the clash of interests between the two political parties some measure of stability could be obtained had Wavell adopted a determined course of action. Admitting that any vigorous lead from him was beset with difficulties, it still remains that his vacillating policy just after the League joined the Interim Government worsened the situation. He had come to the conclusion that it was impossible to reconcile the Congress and the League so that it would be better in the interest of both U.K. and India to remove British control by stages as soon as possible and leave Indians to determine their own future. This plan he had put before a civil and military committee during the autumn of 1946, and they had been unable to recommend anything better.[85]

It was during the autumn that the Muslim League joined the Interim Government and precipitated the crisis. Possibly the ageing

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soldier had no weapon to meet the onslaught of the League politicians and was baffled by the Congress. One of the main reasons which led Wavell to adopt this policy of desperation was his failure to receive from his political masters a definite policy. The British Cabinet was afraid of adopting a firm attitude lest there should be an irrevocable breach between them and either of the two parties, which would destroy their cherished objective of a united Indian army.

So Attlee made another attempt to bring the two parties together and on his instruction Wavell invited Nehru, Liaqat, and Baldev Singh to go to London for a discussion with His Majesty's Government on December 3. Liaqat agreed but Nehru objected, for, as he wrote to Wavell, the invitation would "reopen the whole problem", and "any further postponement....would....result in the abandonment of the plan." Attlee assured Nehru in a private message that the meeting had been called to assure the success of the Cabinet Mission plan, and the venue had to be London, for neither he nor his colleagues could come out to India. But to Jinnah, who refused to attend the proposed conference "unless it is open....to discuss the whole situation," the assurance was given that "there is nothing in it to prejudice full consideration of all points of view." [36]

The London talks, as expected, failed to bring about any agreement. So on December 6 the British Government issued a statement which confirmed that the League's interpretation of the grouping of provinces was correct according to legal advice. However, His Majesty's Government hoped that if after the League joined the Constituent Assembly any doubt arose as to the interpretation of May 16 plan, the points at issue might be referred to the Federal Court of India for final decision. This was in deference to the wishes of the Congress which had been advocating this course of action for some time.

But on December 16, Pethick-Lawrence announced in the House of Lords that the British Government would "by no means depart from (its interpretation of the grouping scheme) even if the Federal Court should be appealed to".[37] But the significant part of the December 6 statement was contained in its concluding part which practically declared that, if a constitution was framed by the Constituent Assembly in which the Muslim League did not participate, such a constitution would not be forced by the British Government upon any unwilling part of India. This was a Pakistan Award, and as Brecher

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says, "The British Government had yielded to Nehru in constitutional *discussion* (by assuring him that the Cabinet Mission plan would not be altered by the London Conference) and had yielded to Jinnah in the matter of constitutional *decision* (by virtually assuring him Pakistan)."[38] It was not unnatural that at a Buckingham Palace luncheon King George found Nehru "very uncommunicative on any subject." while Jinnah told him "a great deal".[39]

Gandhiji's reaction was published in the *Harijan* of December 29. "The decision of the Federal Court will go against the Congress interpretation of grouping," declared Gandhiji, "as far as I can make out, for the simple reason that the (British) Cabinet says it has got legal advice which upholds their decision. The Federal Court is the creation of the British. It is a packed court". Therefore, he advised Assam to launch a *Satyagraha* against the Congress.[40]

It will be remembered that Jinnah had been plainly told by the Cabinet Mission in their first interview that the alternative to an agreed centre could only be truncated Pakistan consisting of parts of the Punjab and Bengal, with Calcutta definitely excluded from it. So, he reacted even more violently than was usual with him. The Muslim League Working Committee met at Karachi on December 29 and passed a resolution denouncing the right of "veto" within the section of a province, and the right of self-determination of a part of a province or of the Sikhs was dubbed as "absurd". It also resolved not to join the Constituent Assembly, which after adjourning in December in expectation of the League joining it, reassembled on January 20, and passed the objective resolution.

Gandhiji's uncompromising attitude resolved the doubt created by the ambiguous statement issued by the Congress Working Committee on December 22. Nehru was now forced to go to Noakhali to consult Gandhiji [41] and on his return moved a resolution in the A.I.C.C. meeting of January 6, 1947.[42] This resolution, which was opposed by the Socialists but adopted by an overwhelming majority, changed the earlier stand of the Congress; regarding reference to the Federal Court, the resolution declared unequivocally in its concluding paragraph that, while the Congress accepted the British Cabinet's interpretation of grouping, such grouping "must not involve any compulsion of a province and that the rights of the Sikhs in the Punjab should not be jeopardised", and added the significant sentence: "In the event of any attempt at compulsion a province or part of a province has

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the right to take such action as may be deemed necessary in order to give effect to the wishes of the people concerned." This resolution was based on the advice Gandhiji had given Nehru at Noakhali.[43]

For the first time the Congress officially approved the idea of the division of provinces in case Pakistan was imposed openly or under the May 16 plan and both in the Punjab and Bengal public opinion began to veer round the idea of partioning the provinces.

The League Working Committee meeting was followed by repeated demands from the Congress and the minority members of the Interim Government for the League members' resignation from the Government. Their ground for this demand was that the League had not joined the Constituent Assembly, had rejected the May 16 Plan, and had launched their "Direct Action" programme. Wavell again was indecisive. At first he told Nehru (February 1) that the "Congress was in a position to demand the resignation of the Muslim League members from the Interim Government",[44] but after listening to Liaqat's explanation on February 6 he seems to have completely changed his mind.

> "The Viceroy was in sympathy with the Muslim League's contention," writes Menon, "and was himself of the view that the Congress had not in fact accepted the Cabinet Mission plan. His personal inclination was to call upon the Congress to accept the plan without any reservation. On the other hand, the Congress had taken the stand that there should be 'no compulsion of a province', and that 'rights of the Sikhs must not be jeopardised' and there seemed to be no question of any compromise. My advice to the Viceroy at this time was that, in attempting to placate the League he should not take any step that might cause the withdrawal of the Congress from the interim Government as that would lead to a much more serious political situation." [45]

Wavell, however was not quite convinced and requested Pethick-Lawrence to issue another statement calling upon the Congress to accept the League's interpretation of grouping. But soon matters were brought to a head. On February 13, Nehru formally wrote to Wavell demanding the resignation of the League members, failing which, he informed Wavell, all the non-League members would have to reconsider their decision. Two days later, the Sardar revealed in a press interview that the Congress had demanded that either the League join the Constituent Assembly or resign from the Interim Government : "Unless the Muslim League goes out we will go out", declared

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the Sardar. Five days later came Attlee's declaration (February 20) changing the policy as well as the Viceroy.

Explaining Wavell's recall Attlee writes :

"Meanwhile, the machinery of government in India was running down. ....Lord Wavell had reported very fully on this. I recalled Lord Wavell in order to discuss the whole position with him. No progress had been made since the return of the Cabinet Mission and Lord Wavell and his chief Service advisers were despondent and could only suggest a progressive retirement from India province by province, which was, in my view, a counsel of despair. I had a great admiration for Lord Wavell, both as a soldier and a man, but I did not think that he was likely to find a solution. I did not think that he and the Indian could really understand each other. New men were needed for a new policy." [46]

Attlee's decision was, under the circumstances, correct and was vindicated by its result. But Wavell also had something to say, and this he did in the following letter to King George :

" I put before the Prime Minister and Committee the absolute necessity for a definite policy of some kind, and said that I could see four courses open to us if the Mission Plan broke down.

"(a) To make up our minds to re-establish our power and prestige in India, and to rule the country for a further period, which must be for at least fifteen years if we were to obtain any effective support whatever within the country. The Prime Minister made it quite clear that this policy was totally inacceptable, it was the one point on which I got a definite decision.

"(b) To try and deal the cards afresh. i.e. to make one further attempt to bring the two Parties together. This seemed to me to involve a recognition of Pakistan in one form or another, and I did not think that we should do this.

"(c) To support the majority party, i.e. the Congress in establishing their control over India. I did not think that this policy was a just or honourable one, in view of our pledges to the Minorities and to the Indian States; we might not be able to protect them any longer, but it would be wrong to help the Congress to suppress them which was what this policy might amount to.

"(d) To recognise that we had failed to reconcile the two main parties, and that it would be better for the interests both of ourselves and of India to remove our control as soon as possible, and leave Indians to determine their own future. This was the policy which I advocated and I recommended the withdrawal of British control by stages beginning with the south of India, as the safest method of proceeding. (I had put this proposal to a civil and military committee in India in the previous autumn and they had been unable to recommend to me any better plan.) The date I recommended for final transfer of power was March 31st, 1948.

"I failed, after many hours of conference, to get any definite policy

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from Your Majesty's Government. Their chief difficulty was reluctance to face Parliament with any proposal which would make it clear that we were withdrawing our control very shortly.

"My own view was that our own interests would probably best be served now by a definite decision to withdraw our control from India by a given date thus enabling our nationals, of whom there are about 100,000 excluding military, to take a decision whether or not to leave India, while we still have the power to protect them. We should also thus avoid being responsible for, and probably involved in, any widespread breakdown of law and order which may result from the communal situation or from labour troubles induced by revolutionary preaching or economic conditions. The worst danger for us is an anti-European movement which might result in the killing of some of our nationals and of our having to carry out an ignominious forced withdrawal ; instead of leaving in our own time and voluntarily.

"On the other hand it is probably in India's best interests that we should remain as long as we possibly can and still try and influence events in the direction of political sanity. We still have a great deal of prestige and may still be able to do great service to India. But the longer we stay the more risk we run of becoming involved in a civil war, or in anti-European troubles and being eventually forced to scuttle out ignominiously ; or of being compelled to make an effort to re-establish law and order and protect our nationals, or prevent civil war, which might throw a great strain on our resources and gravely retard our economic recovery.

"My efforts since I returned from England have been directed to the following objects, so far as internal security is concerned :

"(a) That we should have as good and detailed a plan as possible for the protection and withdrawal of our nationals in an emergency ;

"(b) that we should try to prevent British troops being used for the suppression of one party in the interest of another, and that we should not become involved in communal or labour disturbances.

"(c) that we should for as long as possible maintain the stability and integrity of the Indian army, which is at the present time perhaps the brightest part of the Indian outlook".[47]

A significant of part of the letter is that Wavell failed "to get any definite policy" from the Cabinet. His idea of British withdrawal by stages was wrong, for it would have left a political void in the sub-continent which might have had disastrous result for the whole of South-East-Asia, and Attlee quite properly refused to accept this suggestion. But Wavell had recognized the necessity for fixing a final date for the transfer of power, which later was the secret of Mountbatten's success. Mountbatten had also received a written directive from Attlee, which Wavell had never been able to procure.

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FAILURE OF A MISSION

Finally, Wavell had exhausted the possibility of a *rapproachement* between the Congress and the League. His failure demonstrated its impossibility. Division of India was inevitable, so was the division of the army. British statesmanship, now reconciled to Pakistan, selected as its objective the retention of India and Pakistan in the British Commonwealth. That was the task of Wavell's successor.

References

1. Brecher : *Nehru* p. 315. This of course was not the only reason for Gandhiji's selection.
2. Menon, p. 281.
3. Pyarelal, I. p. 216.
4. Related to the author by Mr. Nehru in course of a conversation.
5. For the relevant parts of the speeches of Pethick-Lawrence and Cripps, see Menon, p. 282.
6. Menon, p. 307. As usual Wavell had to suffer the consequences of this rash and injudicious promise.
7. Menon, p. 288. Pethick-Lawrence had advised Wavell to meet Jinnah and persuade him to join the interim Governmnt, see also Pyarelal, I, pp. 264-65.
8. Wavell wrote to Nehru and Jinnah regarding the formation of an interim Government on July 22. On August 6 he formally invited Nehru to form an interim Government. For the letters see Pyarelal, I, pp. 264-65.
9. The Calcutta killing started on August 16, when the Muslim League launched their Direct Action programme by massacring several thousand Hindus and destroying their property ; a large number of Hindu women were raped. For an account of the killing see Tuker : *While Memory Serves*, Chapter XII. Tuker is extremely anti-Congress and tries to gloss over the League's responsibility, as much as possible. For a shorter account see L. Mosley : *The Last Days of the British Raj*, p. 32-39. Mosley seems to have taken most of his details from Tuker. What neither Tuker nor Mosley point out is that the riot lasted till August 15, 1947. Also see below p. 280, n. 20.
10. For Wavell's letters see Pyarelal, I, p. 267. For the attitude of the British Cabinet towards the Muslim League at this time see the letter written to Gandhiji by a British friend. ibid, pp. 264-65. The British Cabinet's excuse would be that any decent person would be appalled by the brutalities committed by the Muslim League at Calcutta. See also Menon, p. 288.
11. For text of Nehru's letter see Pyarelal, I, p. 267.
12. For Wavell's speech and Jinnah's reaction see Menon, pp. 298-300.
13. Mosley : *The Last Days of the British Raj*, p. 48.
14. Pyarelal, I, p.263-77. But Wavell was not spared by the Muslim League ; see Bolitho : *Jinnah*, pp. 161-63.

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15. Tuker says (op. cit. p. 143) that the British in India often compared the Congress party with the Nazis. Nehru, according to Mosley (op. cit. p. 47) referred to Sir Francis Mudie, Governor of Sind (not Bombay as Mosley writes) and Sir Charles Abell, Private Secretary to the Viceroy, as "English Mullahs" for their pro-Muslim attitude.
16. Pyarelal, I, p. 263.
17. Ibid, I, p. 268.
18. ibid, pp. 263 ; 277.
19. Menon, p. 301.
20. "....Your language last evening was minatory....You threatened not to convene the Constitutent Assembly...." Gandhiji to Wavell, August 27, 1946. Pyarelal, I, p. 270.
21. Pyarelal I, pp. 270-71. Gandhiji in his letter to Wavell had suggested that he (Wavell) should be helped by a "legal mind". Wavell cabled the letter to Attlee, who is said to have remarked that Nehru might provide the "legal mind".
22. For Nehru's letter to Wavell see Pyarelal, I, p. 273.
23. Menon, p. 306-07. Wavell was partly justified by the promise given by the Cabinet Mission to Jinnah regarding the grouping, as mentioned above.
24. Menon, pp. 307-10.
25. Pyarelal, I, p. 274 gives a record of Gandhiji's conversation with Wavell. For Nehru's interview with Wavell the same day see Menon, p. 310.
26. Menon, p. 312. Pyarelal, I, p. 277-78.
27. Pyarelal, I, p. 281. Gandhiji had committed a mistake; acting under terrible pressure he forgot to add at the end of the first clause: "For identical reasons the League recognises the Congress as the authoritative organization representing all non-Muslims and such Muslims as have thrown in their lot with the Congress."
28. *Hindustan Standard* November 8, 1946, Pyarelal I, p. 296-97. The best account of Noakhali riots is given by Pyarelal, I, Chapter XI.
29. Tuker : *While Memory Serves*, pp. 176-77, italics mine. Tuker's statement that the refugees were prosperous and well fed is quite wrong.
30. Pyarelal, I, p. 285.
31. Lord Ismay : *Memoirs*, p. 418.
32. Azad : *India Wins Freedom*, p. 166.
33. *Indian Annual Register*, II, 1946, p. 270. Brecher, p. 323.
34. Pyarelal, I, pp. 488-90. It appears from Pyarelal's comments that Gandhiji was not satisfied with the Sardar's reply.
35. Lord Wavell to King George VI, February 24, 1947, J. W. Wheeler-Bennett, *King George VI*, p. 708.
36. Pyarelal, I, pp. 474-75.
37. Hansard, *House of Lords Debates*, 1946-47. Vol. 144. Col. 945 ; Brecher, op. cit. p. 326.
38. ibid, p. 327.

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39. Wheeler-Bennett: op. cit. p. 706.
40. Pyarelal, I, p. 477, also see A. T. Hingorani : *To the Protagonists of Pakistan*, pp. 188-191.
41. It was after Nehru's visit that Gandhiji wrote the letter to the Sardar mentioned above; see above n. 34.
42. For the operative part of the resolution see Pyarelal I, p. 530-31. For the full text see *Congress Bulletin* No. 2, February 8, 1947, pp. 6-7.
43. Pyarelal, I, p. 482.
44. Menon, p. 335.
45. ibid, p. 336.
46. Lord Attlee, *As It Happened*. pp. 182-83.
47. Lord Wavell to King George VI, February 24, 1947 ; Wheeler-Bennett : op. cit. pp. 708-09.

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CHAPTER XX

THE LAST PHASE

Wavell submitted his plan of gradual retreat to Attlee during the London Conference of December, 1946. That decided Attlee, and on December 17 he submitted the name of Rear-Admiral Lord Mountbatten to King George for his approval for appointment as the Viceroy of India. The King "warmly approved" his Prime Minister's choice, but made one stipulation. "Lord Mountbatten", he said, "must have concrete orders as to what he is to do. Is he to lead the retreat out of India or is he to work for the reconciliation of Hindus and Muslims ?" [1]

Next day (December 18) Attlee called Mountbatten and invited him to succeed Wavell as Viceroy. "They ofered me 'carte blanche' ", Mountbatten later wrote to King George, and added, "I could take anyone out on my staff I liked.. .I only await the directive and announcement before giving a final answer."[1a]

That directive, given to him in March 1947 before he left England for India, was as follows :

Prime Minister to Admiral Mountbatten : March 1947

"The statement which was issued at the time of the announcement of your appointment sets out the policy of the Government and the principles in accordance with which the transfer of power to Indian hands should be effected.

"My colleagues of the Cabinet Mission and I have discussed with you the general lines of your approach to the problem which will confront you in India. It will, I think, be useful to you to have on record the salient points which you should have in mind in dealing with the situation. I have, therefore, set them down here.

"It is the definite objective of His Majesty's Government to obtain a unitary Government for British India and the Indian States, if possible within the British Commonwealth, through the medium of a Constituent Assembly, set up and run in accordance with the Cabinet Mission's plan, and you should do the utmost in your power to persuade all parties to work together to this end, and advise His Majesty's Government, in the light of developments, as to the steps that will have to be taken.

"Since, however, this plan can only become operative in respect of British India by agreement between the major Parties, there can be no question of compelling either major Party to accept it.

"If by October 1 you consider that there is no prospect of reaching a settlement on the basis of a unitary government for British India, either

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with or without the co-operation of the Indian States, you should report to His Majesty's Government on the steps which you consider should be taken for the handing over of power on the due date.

"It is of course, important that the Indian States should adjust their relations with the authorities to whom it is intended to hand over power in British India, but as was explicitly stated by the Cabinet Mission, His Majesty's Government do not intend to hand over their powers and obligations under paramountcy to any successor Government. *It is not intended to bring paramountcy as a system to a conclusion earlier than the date of the final transfer of power,* but you are authorized, at such time as you think appropriate to enter into negotiations with individual States for adjusting their relations with the Crown.

"You will do your best to persuade the rulers of any Indian States in which political progress has been slow to progress rapidly towards some form of more democratic government in their States. *You will also aid and assist the States in coming to fair and just arrangements with the leaders of British India as to their future relationships.*

"The date fixed for the transfer of power is a flexible one to within one month ; but you should aim at 1 June 1948 as the effective date for the transfer of power.

"In your relations with the Interim Government you will be guided by the general terms of the Viceroy's letter of 30 May 1946 to the President of the Congress Party, and of the statement made by the Secretary of State for India in the House of Lords on 13 March 1947. These statements made it clear that, while the Interim Government would not have the same powers as a Dominion Government, His Majesty's Government would treat the Interim Government with the same consultation and consideration as a Dominion Government, and give it the greatest possible freedom in the day-to-day exercise of the administration of the country.

"It is essential that there should be the fullest co-operation with the Indian leaders in all steps that are taken as to the withdrawal of British power so that the process may go forward as smoothly as possible.

"The keynote of your administration should therefore be the closest co-operation with the Indians and you should make it clear to the whole of the Secretary of State's services that this is so, and that it is their duty to their countries to work to this end.

"*You should take every opportunity of stressing the importance of ensuring that the transfer of power is effected with full regard to the defence requirements of India. In the first place you will impress upon the Indian leaders of the great importance of avoiding any breach in the continuity of the Indian army and of maintaining the organization of defence on an all India basis. Secondly you will point out the need for continued collaboration in the security of the Indian Ocean area for which provision might be made in an agreement between the two countries. At a suitable date His Majesty's Government would be ready to send military and other experts to India to assist in discussing the terms of such an agreement.*

"You will no doubt inform Provincial Governors of the substance of this letter".[2]

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It will be seen that while visualizing the inevitability of Pakistan, Attlee was still attempting to maintain a united Indian Army (i.e. Indo-Pakistan army) with British collaboration for the security of the Indian Ocean area. Such an arrangement had much to recommend itself as a stabilizing factor, but as we shall see, all attempts to preserve the unity of the Indian Army was blocked by Jinnah's insistence on having an army of his own. He was never satisfied by the truncated Pakistan which he obtained; so he determined to achieve his dream-Pakistan by conquering a few Indian provinces. But all this was still in the future.

II

On February 20, 1947, Attlee announced Mountbatten's appointment and defined the policy of his Government. He declared the British Government's "definite intention to take the necessary steps to effect the transfer of power into responsible Indian hands by a date not later than June 1948". However, if a constitution could not be drafted by a "fully representative Constituent Assembly before that time, His Majesty's Government", Attlee continued, "will have to consider to whom the powers of the Central Government of British India should be handed over on the due date, whether as a whole to some form of Central Government for British India or in some areas to the existing Provincial Governments, or in such other way as may seem most reasonable and in the best interest of the Indian people". Regarding the Native States, Attlee declared that the British Government did not "intend to hand over their powers and obligations under paramountcy to any Government of British India". "It is not intended to bring paramountcy as a system," Attlee said, "to a conclusion earlier than the date of the final transfer of power...."[3] At this time possibly no one realized the significance of this part of the British Prime Minister's declaration.

"Evidently I had anticipated practically the whole of it (Attlee's declaration)...." Gandhiji wrote to Nehru on February 24, and added, "My interpretation of the speech is this :

(1) Independence will be recognized of those parts which desire it and will do without British protection ;

(2) The British will remain where they are wanted ;

(3) This may lead to Pakistan for those provinces or portions which

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may want it. No one will be forced one way or the other. The Congress provinces, if they are *wise*, will get what they want ;

(4) Much will depend upon what the Constituent Assembly will do and what you as the Interim Government are able to do ;

(5) If the British Government are and are able to remain sincere the declaration is good. Otherwise it is dangerous." [4]

As it happened, the British Government was sincere, and their declaration held good, though as Gandhiji had correctly predicted, it led to Pakistan.

Doubts were set at rest by the great debates in the British Parliament. In the House of Lords, Lord Halifax (formerly Lord Irwin) delivered his memorable speech which induced Lord Templewood (formerly Sir Samuel Hoare) to withdraw his resolution which was virtually a censure on the Government for their declaration of February 20.[5] In the Commons, Churchill made some interesting prophecies, but his brilliant speech failed to carry conviction by its evident exaggeration and Attlee gained the support of the House by his sincerity and "genuine eloquence".[6] He concluded by saying that he was sure the whole House would wish "Godspeed to the new Viceroy in his great mission". "It is a mission", Attlee concluded, "not, as has been suggested, of betrayal on our part, it is a mission of fulfilment."

So it was, and for this Mountbatten was eminently qualified. Of him, King George's biographer writes: "He (Mountbatten) was possessed of tremendous energy, of imagination, tact and charm, together with a certain romanticism and considerable ruthlessness".[7] If the gossips of New Delhi have any foundation in fact, his ruthlessness indeed was quite considerable, but so were his other qualities. Possibly a lesser man could have ushered independence in a 'divided India' but only Mountbatten would have been invited by the Congress to continue as the Governor-General of the Indian Dominion.

In his work Mountbatten was greatly helped by his wife who genuinely loved India. She was as fearless as her husband and her tour in the riot affected areas of the Punjab won for her a place in Indian hearts.

Mountbatten brought with him from England a team of six as his personal staff. Of them the most important was Lord Ismay,

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and next to him was Sir Eric Mieville. Ismay had spent his early career in the Indian Army, and had been Military Secretary to Willingdon; during World War II he had served with great distinction as Churchill's personal military adviser and Liason Officer with the Combined Chiefs of Staff. He volunteered to come out with Mountbatten to perform a duty ; the nature of that duty, which he expected to carry out is not specified, but it is apparent that he found his work in connection with Indian independence rather uncongenial.[8]

Mieville had served in India as Willingdon's Private Secretary and was at that time Ismay's colleague, and it was Ismay, who induced him to join Mountbatten's staff. Mieville had also worked as Assistant Private Secretary to King George VI, from which post he had retired to take up a lucrative appointment in the city. It has been said that both Ismay and Mieville had been brought by Mountbatten to maintain a link with the Tories; Ismay could also help Mountbatten in his dealings with the army, for though Mountbatten was quite friendly with Auchinleck, he does not seem to have been very popular with other British officers. The most important thing was that Mountbatten could absolutely rely on the loyalty and discretion of the personal staff which he brought from England and which included besides Ismay and Mieville, two senior officers of the Royal Navy, one officer of the British Army, while the fourth was Campbell-Johnson, the author of the *Mission with Mountbatten.*

III

Mountbatten was of the opinion that "it was probably better to take over when the situation was at its lowest ebb".[9] By the time he arrived in India his wish in this regard was pretty well fulfilled.

The Punjab was the key to Pakistan, and there the Unionist Ministry had steered clear of any communal passion. Their emphasis was on their provincial unity, and as a result, the Punjab was probably the most prosperous and developed province in India. In the 1937 election the Muslim League had gained only two out of the eighty-six Muslim seats in the Punjab legislature, while in 1946 they managed to capture seventy-nine [10] seats but was still a minority in a house of 175. So the only way for forming a ministry was to come to terms with the Sikhs and the Congress. That, however, needed, if not some

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compromise on the Pakistan issue, at least adequate assurance to the Sikhs and the Hindus. This the League leaders were unwilling to do, and relied on the Governor to come to their help by taking over the administration of the Province under section 93. The Governor, however, refused to oblige them by committing this unconstitutional act when the Unionist leader, Khizr Hyat Khan, was willing to undertake the burden of office with the support of the Congress and the Sikhs. Thus, even in 1946 a non-communal ministry was functioning in the Punjab to the chagrin of Jinnah and the League.

With the prospect of independence, the League became restive and began to recruit a kind of Storm Troopers called the Muslim League National Guards; Hindu response was to join the Rashtriya Svayam Sevak Sangha, and on January 24, 1947, Khizr's Government declared both these as unlawful organizations. The Muslim League defied the ban and a few leaders were arrested. Immediately a Muslim mass movement began, and the Punjab Government decided not to enforce the law against unlawful assemblies. However, Khizr's leniency instead of helping him ruined all chances of preserving peace in the Punjab.

After Attlee's declaration of February 20, 1947, Khizr decided to resign. His intentions were mixed; he may have genuinely felt that now, in the face of the great constitutional changes which were impending, he should make way for the Muslim League and force them to come to a compromise with the Hindus and Sikhs, but he also knew that he had failed and that disaster lay ahead.

On March 3, 1947, Khizr submitted his resignation and next day rioting broke out in Lahore and spread to other parts including Amritsar. It has to be realized that at this time, the Muslims formed the majority community in Amritsar which explains the great damage they were able to inflict on the Sikhs and the Hindus by arson and looting and while this was going on not a shot was fired by the Police who remained supinely inactive.

"Of several British officers the story was told", writes Moon, "that appealed to by panic stricken Hindus for help and protection they referred the petitioners to Gandhi, Nehru and Patel." [11] British officials after the Amritsar rioting, began to talk of the degeneration of the Sikhs. This infuriated those sturdy warriors who would take their awful revenge later. By the time Mountbatten arrived the chance

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of Muslim League-Sikh settlement was gone. The responsibility for alienating the Sikhs was Jinnah's, and possibly should be shared by the Anglo-indians. At no stage had he (Jinnah) attempted to placate the Sikhs and secure their acquiescence to Pakistan. He had held out veiled threats, but no promises. He had warned them that the division of the Punjab would be injurious to them, but he had not encouraged them to believe that Pakistan would be pleasant. "There were some British officials who considered that in this he was very wise", Moon writes and adds, "In their view the Sikhs, wherever they were, whether in India, or Pakistan would be a 'bloody nuisance'. Jinnah was well advised 'to steer clear of the....so far as he could".[12]

Thus, when Mountbatten arrived, communal riot, which had become endemic in Bengal, had also gripped the Punjab. There was no knowing when a new outbreak would start, where it would start, or when and how it would end; panic and a lust for revenge, stalked the land. The machinery for maintaining law and order was crumbling to pieces.[13]

The Congress leaders were slowly waking to the idea that a divided India was preferable to a union with a civil war on, whose end no one could foresee. So on March 8, the Working Committee passed the following resolution :

> "During the past seven months India has witnessed many horrors and tragedies which have been enacted in the attempt to gain political ends by brutal violence, murder and coercion....
>
> "The Punjab....became six weeks ago the scene of an agitation, *supported by some people in high authority* to coerce and break a popular ministry which could not be attacked by constitutional methods. A measure of success attended this, and an attempt was made to form a Ministry dominated by the group that had led the agitation. This was bitterly resented and has resulted in increased and widespread violence....
>
> "The tragic events have demonstrated that there can be no settlement of the problem in the Punjab by violence and coercion, and that no arrangement based on coercion can last. Therefore it is necessary to find a way out which involves the least amount of compulsion. *This would necessitate a division of the Punjab* into two Provinces, so that the predominantly Muslim part may be separated from the predominantly non-Muslim part".[14]

Unfortunately, Gandhiji's mind was now poisoned by his Muslim friends, who were carrying tales against the Congress leaders, particularly the Sardar. He came to see with a jaundiced eye what-

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ever the Congress did, and his suspicions were immediately aroused if the Sardar was responsible for any decision, and he refused to see the difficulties which the latter had to face. It was possibly a tactical mistake to have passed the Congress resolution of March 8, without consulting him, or even apprising him with the reasons that dictated so decisive a step.

On March 20, Gandhiji wrote to Nehru :

> "I had long intended to write to you asking you about the Working Committee resolution on the possible partition of the Punjab. I have to speak about it. I have done so in the absence of full facts with the greatest caution. Kripalani said in answer to a question in Madras that it was possible that the principle might be applied to Bengal also. I was asked by a Muslim Leaguer of note. . . .if it was applicable to the Muslim-majority Provinces, why it should not be so to Congress-majority Province like Bihar. I think I did not know the reason behind the Working Committee's resolution. Nor had I the opportunity. I could only give my own view which was against any partition based on communal grounds and the two nation theory."

To the Sardar he wrote on the same day even more premptorily :

> "Try to explain to me your Punjab resolution if you can. I cannot understand it."

The Sardar replied on March 24 :

> "It is difficult to explain to you the resolution about the Punjab. It was adopted after the deepest deliberation. Nothing has been done in a hurry or without full thought. That you have expressed your views against it, we learnt only from the papers. But you are of course entitled to say what you feel right. . . .The situation in Punjab is far worse than in Bihar. . . ."

Nehru wrote on March 25 : "About our proposal to divide Punjab, this flows naturally from our previous decisions. These were negative previously but now a time for decision has come and merely passing of resolutions giving expression to our views means little. I feel convinced and so did most of the members of the Working Committee that we must press for this immediate division so that reality might be brought into the picture. Indeed this is the only answer to partition as demanded by Jinnah. . . ." [15]

Pyarelal remarks that "such a thing would have been inconceivable in olden days. Even when he (Gandhiji) was ranging over the length and breadth of India, they did not fail to consult him before taking any vital decision".[16] But now the Congress leaders had changed their political attitude; to them the British were no longer a problem, the problem was the Muslim League. The British were going within

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about a year, but if within that period some settlement was not arrived at with the Muslim League, a major civil war would be the result. As for Gandhiji, his mild manners and measured habits of speech covered the fact that with the exception of Netaji, he was the most determined anti-British leader thrown up by the Congress movement. He passionately believed that once the British left, the Hindus and Muslims, faced with the realities of politics, would be able to solve their problem. His belief was confirmed by the I.N.A. where perfect communal harmony reigned. He did not overlook the possibility of a Hindu-Muslim civil war, or "blood bath" as he called it, after the British left, but like a true revolutionary was prepared to face it in order to reach his ideal of united India. This attitude frightened his colleagues, who left him, and the old man, in his seventy-seventh year, began to trudge a new trail in quest of Hindu-Muslim unity.

By the time Mountbatten arrived, the breach between Gandhiji and the Congress, represented by Nehru and the Sardar, was complete over the Pakistan issue.[17]

IV

Mountbatten arrived in Delhi on March 22, 1947. Next day Wavell left and Mountbatten was sworn in on March 24, and broke tradition by delivering a speech at the swearing in ceremony. In contrast to Wavell he was not only young and successful but could also talk.

From March 25, Mountbatten began his interviews beginning with Nehru, to whom he said as he was leaving. "Mr. Nehru, I want you to regard me not as the last Viceroy winding up the British Raj, but as the first to lead the way to new India."

Gandhiji saw Mountbatten on March 31 and on April 1. During the second interview Gandhiji outlined his plan for the solution of the problem. He suggested that the Interim Government be dismissed and Jinnah given the option to form a Cabinet entirely with members of his choice. If Jinnah accepted this offer, the Congress would guarantee to co-operate freely and sincerely, so long as all the measures undertaken by Jinnah's Cabinet, were in the interest of Indian people as a whole, with Mountbatten to decide in his personal capacity as to what was or was not in the interest of India as a whole ; Jinnah and

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the League would stipulate to do their utmost to preserve peace and disband the Muslim League National Guards; Jinnah would be free to persuade others to accept his scheme of Pakistan but no province, or even a part thereof would be compelled to join Pakistan. In case Jinnah rejected this offer the same offer was to be made *mutatis mutandis* to Congress.[18]

For a few days Gandhiji was under the impression that Mountbatten would accept his scheme as a basis for negotiation. But he was mistaken.

Within a fortnight Mountbatten had not only grasped the urgency of the political situation, but had also evolved his plan. Campbell-Johnson wrote on April 5, 1947 : ".....Now, at the end of the first fortnight, the main strategy of Mountbatten's plan, together with its tactical application, has already taken shape. He has had to start from scratch,but no time has been lost. His primary aim is to achieve a solution which inspires sufficient good feeling to enable the Indian parties to remain within the Commonwealth structure from the outset. He is bending every effort to keep the Cabinet Mission plan alive, but on the assumption that Jinnah's power and purpose are sustained, the facilities for Partition will have to be allowed for. He appreciates that the logic of partitioning the centre involves similar treatment for those provinces where the two communities are evenly balanced.... Mountbatten has been convinced....that the June 1948 time limit, far from being not long enough is already too remote a deadline."[19]

Thus Mountbatten had already formed the essential structure of his scheme, which in its fundamental had the support of both the Congress and the League. For, after having passed a resolution in favour of the partition of the Punjab, Congress leaders could no longger take a stand on a united India, neither did they want to. Their experience of coalition government with the League had convinced them that sharing of power with the League was impossible. And the events in the Punjab and Bengal had decided the non-Muslims in these two provinces to demand partition; for they were justly convinced of the impossibility of living under a League Government.[20] Thus Pakistan with partitioned Bengal and Punjab was the only solution acceptable to the two parties at this time and Mountbatten and his personal staff began to evolve a scheme of partition on these lines. Two questions remained: first was regarding the Indian army, and

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here Mountbatten was firmly of the opinion that the Indian Army must remain united.[21] Second was the problem of the Native States, but at this time nobody, neither the Congress leaders nor the Viceroy, was giving much thought to the States, though, as it turned out later, it was regading the Native States, that Mountbatten rendered the greatest service to India.

By April 11, a rough plan was ready and Ismay sent it to Menon "to put some flesh on it".[22] The broad basis of this plan was the demission of authority to the Provinces, or to such groups of Provinces as might decide to confederate themselves in the intervening period before the actual transfer of power. It was also provided that in the Punjab and Bengal Legislative Assemblies the representatives of the predominantly Hindu areas should meet separately, and if both sections of each of these Assemblies voted for partition then that province would be partitioned. If Bengal were partitioned, the Sylhet district of Assam, which had a Muslim majority, would have the option of joining Pakistan. An election was to be held in the N-W.F.P. to ascertain the wishes of that province.

This scheme was discussed at a Governor's Conference presided over by Mountbatten on April 15 and 16. The merit of the scheme, as explained to them by Mountbatten, was that, while it accepted the inevitable, namely, partition of India, the responsibility for partition rested with the Indians. Only opposition was raised by the representative of the Governor of Bengal, who opposed the Partition of Bengal.[23] Most of the other Governors seem to have been obsessed with the safety of the British nationals once India became free, and the compensation to be paid to the Anglo-indian officials. They however agreed that a united India was now out of the question and a quick decision was of great importance.

Soon after the Governor's Conference, Mountbatten received support for his partition scheme from Nehru who declared in a public speech on April 20 : "The Muslim League can have Pakistan if they wish to have it, but on the condition that they do not take away other parts of India which do not wish to join Pakistan".[24] Within a week Jinnah started an irredentist campaign against a "truncated, mutilated and moth-eaten Pakistan", and demanded a Muslim national home comprising Bengal, Assam, the Punjab, the N-W.F.P., Sind and Baluchistan. This drew from Rajendra Prasad, then President of the

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Constituent Assembly, the following authoritative pronouncement when the Assembly met on April 28 :

> "While we have accepted the Cabinet Mission's statement of 16th May, which contemplated a Union of the different provinces and States within the country, it may be that the Union may not comprise all the Provinces. If that unfortunately comes to pass, we shall have to be content with a constitution for a part of it. In that case, we can and should insist that one principle will apply to all parts of the country and no constitution will be forced upon any unwilling part of it. This may mean not only a division of India, but a division of some Provinces. For this we must be prepared and the Assembly may have to draw up a constitution based on such division".[24a]

This was an unequivocal statement of the Congress position, and though a few Congress leaders in Bengal fell in with the idea of a united Bengal sponsored by Suhrawardy, Rajendra Prasad's statement correctly reflected the attitude of the Hindus.

V

Ismay and Abell (later Sir George) left for London with Mountbatten's plan on May 2 and explained to the India-Burma Committee of the British Cabinet the principal features of the plan and the considerations upon which it was based. As Ismay had said, "It was a case of 'Hobson's choice'. No one in India thought that it was perfect yet nearly everyone agreed that it was the only solution which had any chance of being accepted by all political parties".[25] The British Ministers were convinced by Ismay of the necessity of partition, but they suggested certain changes, and a revised version of the plan was sent to Mountbatten for his comments.

Having sent Ismay and Abell to England, Mountbatten had gone to Simla for a much needed rest and fortunately Nehru and V.P Menon went with him. It is at this stage that Menon entered history, for though he was the Reforms Commissioner and Constitutional Adviser to the Viceroy, he had till now exerted little influence on the impending constitutional changes. Menon had realized from the beginning that the Cabinet Mission's three-tier scheme was too cumbrous to work satisfactorily. On the other hand he was convinced that Pakistan had to be conceded, for, apart from its being the irrevocable demand of Jinnah, Pakistan had "the sympathy of the most of the British element in the services".[26] Menon, therefore, accepted the

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inevitability of Pakistan, and proposed two successor States, namely India and Pakistan, to which the British might immediately transfer power on the basis of Dominion Status. Late in December 1946, or the beginning of January 1947, he discussed his plan with the Sardar, and explained to him the advantages of Dominion Status *vis-a-vis* complete independence. The Sardar grasped his point, and promised Congress support for his scheme if effect could be given to it without inordinate delay.

Menon writes that he had sent this proposal by special messenger to the Secretary of State having obtained Wavell's prior permission to correspond directly with the India Office on this issue. But though in his letter to Pethick-Lawrence he stated that he had reasons to believe that the Congress would accept his scheme, for obvious reasons he did not mention the Sardar's name, so not unnaturally nothing came of this communication except that it was shown to Mountbatten—possibly as a probable alternative—before he left for India.

Incidentally, from Menon's silence it is apparent that he did not discuss the plan with Wavell at all. Like the good civil servant that he is, Menon does not criticize his superiors, but it is obvious that he felt that Wavell would not give the plan the consideration that was its due. This confirms the rumour that Wavell was at this time completely under the influence of his brilliant Private Secretary, George Abell, the double first and triple blue of Oxford or Cambridge, who, the rumour further says, was habitually referred to by Nehru as the English Mulla.[27] Menon, incidentally, had no university education, but it was his plan which ultimately solved the Indian problem. If Wavell had only taken his Constitutional Adviser into confidence, he, and not Mountbatten, might have had the distinction of fulfilling England's mission in India.

Menon continued in his position of a poor relation even under Mountbatten, and it is evident that he was excluded from the staff conferences in which Mountbatten daily discussed and ultimately adopted a plan. After the basic plan was decided upon by Ismay, Mieville, Campbell-Johnson and the three service officers of Mountbatten's personal staff, it was, as we have seen, sent by Ismay to Menon, "to put flesh on it". He protested against the provision of the plan under which the provinces should become initially independent successor States, but his views were disregarded and Ismay and Abell took the

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plan to London.

At Simla, with the British staff absent except for Mieville, Menon had the opportunity to speak to Mountbatten about his plan, and was directed by the latter to discuss the plan with Nehru and find out his reaction, though he was not to disclose to Nehru the plan Ismay had taken to London. Nehru was impressed by Menon's plan, partly because as long ago as January 22, 1947, he had declared in the Constituent Assembly to the effect that India would be prepared to remain in the Commonwealth under certain conditions [27a]. Next day, (May 10, 1947) Mountbatten, Nehru, Mieville and Menon discussed the scheme in further details and Nehru urged for an early transfer of power on the basis of Dominion Status.

The same day (May 10) Mountbatten received from London the revised version of the plan carried by Ismay and Abell, and a press *communique* announced that the Viceroy had invited Nehru, Jinnah, Patel, Liaqat and Baldev Singh to meet him in Delhi on the morning of May 17, when he would present them the plan which His Majesty's Government had approved for the transfer of power to Indian hands. The members of the State's Negotiating Committee were also invited to meet the Viceroy the same afternoon. However, before matters proceeded any further, Mountbatten's proverbial luck intervened.

The plan taken by Ismay and Abell to London was considered by Mountbatten's British staff to be top hush-hush, and curiously enough, neither the original plan nor the amended version have yet been published. When on May 10 the amended plan reached Mountbatten, he was again counselled by his advisers to lie low, but this time he was firm. He admitted later than only a 'hunch' on his part had saved him from disaster. Without that hunch, "Dickie Mountbatten", he said, "would have been finished and could have packed his bag".[28]

So on the same night of May 10, Mountbatten following his hunch, showed the plan to Nehru who promptly rejected it.[29] Nehru's objection was the same as Menon's : the amended plan, which did not provide for any central authority would result in the Balkanization of India.

Next morning, as Menon was discussing with Nehru the merits of his plan and the demerits of the other, he was urgently summoned by Mountbatten. Mountbatten told Menon that it was lucky that

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he had shown the amended plan to Nehru otherwise the consequences might have been disastrous. The problem now was to retrieve the situation. Menon advised him to accept his (Menon's) plan, that is transfer of power to two Central Governments on the basis of Dominion Status, which by now had the support both of the Sardar and Nehru. The only question was whether Jinnah would accept a truncated Pakistan. He, however, reminded Mountbatten that he had received from Jinnah the impression that he would accept a truncated Pakistan.

In the meantime, Nehru sent a long note to Mountbatten setting forth his objections to the plan amended by the British Cabinet. Soon after they met, and in reply to Mountbatten's question as to whether the Congress would accept a plan based on Menon's proposals, Nehru warily replied that he would like to see the draft of the plan before committing himself.

So Menon repaired to his hotel, and within the few hours left to him (as Nehru was leaving Simla the same evening) had barely put the draft into shape when Mieville came and took it away. The draft satisfied Nehru who felt that its appoach was on proper lines so that it would not be unacceptable to the Congress. Menon had been keeping the Sardar posted with the goings on at Simla, and the latter was delighted at the turn of events, and assured Menon that Congress would accept the new plan.[30]

It is now necessary to add that in view of Nehru's reaction another *communique* had to be issued on May 11 announcing that, "owing to the imminence of the Parliamentary recess in London it has been found necessary to postpone H.E. the Viceroy's meeting with the Indian leaders announced to begin on Saturday the 17th May, until Monday 2nd June".

Mountbatten now sent a telegram to London stating that he had good reasons to believe that both the new States would be prepared to accept Dominion Status in the first instance, if by so doing power could be transferred at a much earlier date than June 1948. This somewhat mystified the authorities in England and Mountbatten on his return to Delhi received an invitation to proceed to London. This time Mountbatten was determined to get the consent of the Indian leaders to his new plan before submitting it to the British Cabinet.

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So at his instance Menon drafted a "Heads of Agreement" on May 16, exactly a year after the ill-fated Cabinet Mission plan, the main features of which were :

(1) That the leaders agree to the procedure laid down for ascertaining the wishes of the people whether there should be a division of India or not ;

(2) That in the event of the decision being taken that there should only be one central authority in India, power should be transferred to the existing Constituent Assembly on a Dominion Status

(3) That in the event of a decision that there should be two sovereign States in India, the central Government of each State should take over power in responsibility to their respective Constituent Assemblies, again on a Dominion Status basis ;

(4) That the transfer of power in either case should be on the basis of the Government of India Act of 1935, modified to conform to the Dominion Status position ;

(5) That the Governor-General should be common to both the Dominions and that the present Governor-General should be reappointed ;

(6) That a Commission should be appointed for the demarcation of boundaries in the event of a decision in favour of partition ;

(7) That the Governors of the provinces should be appointed on the recommendation of the respective central Governments;

(8) In the event of the two Dominions coming into being, the Armed Forces in India should be divided between them. The units would be allocated according to the territorial basis of recruitment and would be under the control of the respective Governments. In the case of mixed units, the separation and redistribution should be entrusted to a Committee consisting of Field Marshal Sir Claude Auchinleck and the Chiefs of the General Staff of the two Dominions under the supervision of a Council consisting of the Governor-General and the two Defence Ministers. This council would automatically cease to exist as soon as the process of division was completed.

Menon's draft "Heads of Agreement" has to be reckoned as one of the greatest state papers drawn by a single individual It affected

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the lives of 400 million people inhabiting a sub-continent inasmuch as the June 3 plan was based on these provisions. He succeeded where the best political and legal brains of England and India had failed. As we shall presently see, he rendered equally distinguished service to his motherland in another capacity. It is amazing that in the end he received scant recognition from his countrymen or the Government, which he had served so faithfully, and in a sense, had brought into being.

After Mountbatten had approved the draft, Menon took it to Nehru, Patel and Baldev Singh, while Mieville took it to Jinnah and Liaqat. Then Mountbatten saw them in turn, and in the light of their discussions the plan was modified and finalized. Mountbatten for obvious reasons wanted to have their agreement in writing. This Nehru readily did in a letter which made it clear that the Congress acceptance was subject to the League also accepting it as a final settlement and if the League refused to accept it they would either have to join the Constituent Assembly or leave the Interim Government. Jinnah, as usual, accepted the general principles of the plan but declined to commit himself in writing, for reasons which will be apparent presently.

Mountbatten and Menon left Delhi on May 18, arriving in London the next day. The same afternoon Mountbatten attended a meeting of the India-Burma Committee of the British Cabinet which approved Menon's plan "without the alteration of a comma". Turning to the question of Dominion Status, Mountbatten assured the Committee that the Congress would agree to it and most probably the Muslim League would do likewise, provided power was transferred at an early date. All depended on the speed with which the necessary legislation could be drafted and passed through the Parliament; Mountbatten wanted it to be done in a few weeks. The Lord Chancellor, Lord Jowitt, rose to the occasion and reported to the Committee next day that an amending Bill to the Government of India Act 1935 could be prepared within six or seven weeks provided a final decision was taken as to what was required. The next difficulty was to get the Bill passed through the current session of the Parliament. This could only be done if all the parties supported the Bill, so Attlee took the opposition leaders into his confidence, and Churchill stated on behalf of the Con-

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servatives that if the plan were acceptable to both the Congress and the League, his party would do all in their power to expedite the passage of the necessary legislation. Thus Mountbatten got all he needed, and the Cabinet agreed to his proposal that power should be transferred on August 15.[31] It was Mountbatten's lucky day, the anniversary of Japan's surrender. As Jinnah had in the meantime raised the bogey of a eight-hundred-mile long corridor to link West and East Pakistan, Mountbatten fortified himself with a letter from Churchill containing a "vital message" to Jinnah, which stated that *'it was nothing less than a matter of life and death for Jinnah to accept the Plan*".[32]

Mountbatten arrived at Delhi at midnight May 31, after a journey made extremely uncomfortable due to his insistence for speed. For, he was determined to hold the leader's conference on June 2, a date which was fixed in the May 11 *communique* without any forethought. But by a magnificent effort he was able to keep to his schedule.

So at 10 a.m. June 2 were assembled at the Viceroy's study besides Mountbatten, Ismay, and Mieville, Nehru, the Sardar and Kripalani representing the Congress, Jinnah, Liaqat, and Nishtar representing the League, and Baldev Singh representing the Sikhs. After a suitable opening speech in which he stressed the gravity of the situation, Mountbatten made a last formal attempt to resuscitate the Cabinet Mission Plan, and Jinnah having for the last time formally rejected it, Mountbatten presented his case for the partition of India, and copies of the plan, as proposed by the British Government were handed round. In the discussion that followed Mountbatten was at pains to stress the backing of the British Conservative Party for the plan, which he said was not a party issue in London.

The same evening, at Mountbatten's request, Kripalani and Baldev Singh sent their letters of acceptance of the plan on behalf of the Congress and the Sikhs, and Jinnah, after a great deal of persuasion by Mountbatten and Ismay, in which Churchill's letter must have played its part, ultimately said "yes" to the question as to whether he (Mountbatten) would be justified in advising Attlee to make the announcement to the British Parliament on June 3 as had been arranged. The Congress had stipulated that their acceptance was subject to Jinnah's acceptance of the plan in full, hence Mountbatten's parley with him. To the end Jinnah managed to have the last word.

At the resumed Conference with the leaders on the morning of

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June 3, Mountbatten said that he had received written acceptance to his proposals from the Congress and the Sikhs and a verbal assurance from the League, and turned towards Jinnah, who as arranged previously, nodded his head in token of assent. Immediately the conference was over, Mountbatten communicated to the Secretary of State, Listowel, that the plan had been accepted by the Indian leaders, and the same afternoon Attlee announced the plan in the House of Commons, wherefore it came to be known as the June 3 Plan.

Thus within sevety-three days, of his arrival Mountbatten had solved the political problem.

The administrative problems of division remained. With his characteristic foresight, Mountbatten had kept a detailed note on "The Administrative Consequences of Partition" prepared, which he presented to the leaders at the close of the June 3 meeting. Work began on the partition of India.

The fate of the Indian Army was left undecided, for under clause 16 of June 3 Plan the administrative consequences of partition on defence, finance and communication were to be settled by negotiations between the successor Governments. Azad has accused his coleagues, particularly Rajendra Prasad, for splitting the India Army,[33] which like many other allegations in this posthumous work is not correct. Rajendra Prasad indeed had said in May *in reply to Jinnah's public demand for a division of the Armed Forces* that if necessary the armed forces should be divided and sooner the better.[34] But Rajendra Prasad's pronouncement on that occasion did not have any effect on the fate of the army. The initiative for the division of the army came from Liaqat who, in the first week of April had circulated a paper on the "inadequate representation of the Muslims in the Armed forces", and a meeting of the Defence Committee practically decided to divide the Army in case of Pakistan's coming into existence.[35] After the acceptance of the June 3 Plan, Ismay did his utmost to persuade Jinnah to reconsider his decision to divide the Army on a communal basis. "But Jinnah was adamant", Ismay writes, and adds: "He would refuse to take power on 15 August, unless he had an army of appropriate strength and predominantly Muslim composition under his control".[36] So the Army had to be regrouped into Hindu and Muslim units and this was done with utmost speed and efficiency by Auchinleck. This must have been an extremely disagreeable duty to a man who had

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spent the best part of his life in the Indian Army, but Auchinleck performed his duty with a thorough efficiency which has not been sufficiently recognized.

The other matter in which Jinnah had the last word was regarding the future Viceroy for the two dominions. Menon's plan of May 16 had envisaged a common Governor-General for the two dominions, and shortly after the announcement of June 3 Plan, Nehru, on behalf of the Congress, invited Mountbatten to be the first Governor-General of India and also informed him that India would not take it amiss if he accepted the same office in Pakistan. Mountbatten replied that subject to the King's approval he would be honoured to be the Governor-General of India for a limited period. Jinnah, however, was opposed to the idea of a joint Governor-General and proposed that each Dominion should have its own Governor-General with Mountbatten as a super-Governor-General. Having acquired a taste for successful litigation, Jinnah automatically groped for an umpire rather than a stabilizing executive authority. However, to Ismay and Mieville, he managed to convey the impression, that he would invite Mountbatten to be the Governor-General of Pakistan and that he would be the Prime Minister.

Jinnah excused himself from taking any decision about the Governor-Generalship till he had a chance to scrutinize the "Indian Independence Bill". On July 2, the Bill was delivered to the Indian leaders, sitting in separate rooms at the Viceroy's House, and the same day, Jinnah advised Mountbatten that he, that is Jinnah, had selected himself to be the first Governor-General of Pakistan, but he hoped that Mountbatten would stay on as the Governor-General of India.[87]

Jinnah's bomb-shell was discussed by Mountbatten's personal staff on the night of July 2 and again on July 3. Various possibilities were considered and rejected in favour of Mountbatten's accepting the Governor-Generalship of the Indian Dominion. It was argued that if he refused the Congress offer, as Mountbatten was personally inclined to do, the Congress would be affronted and would certainly not consider any other Englishman for the honour, and the friendly Indo-British relation might suffer in consequence. Another likely effect of such a refusal would have been that the British officers of the Indian army "from the Commander-in-Chief downwards, would probably refuse to serve in India for a single moment after Mountbat-

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ten's departure". It is significant that it was taken for granted that the British officers in the Pakistan Army would not feel obliged to resign under similar conditions. Had they done so, Jinnah would never have launched his Kashmir adventure.

However, Mountbatten decided that he would agree to accept the Governor-Generalship of India, provided the King, the British Government, and the Conservative Opposition desired him to do so. As this could not be settled by telegram the indefatigable Ismay again left for London on July 5. Attlee and the India-Burma Committee agreed to the proposal as did the Conservative Party leaders but subject to the concurrence of Churchill who was convalescing at Chartwell. So to Chartwell Ismay went and, for once in his life, Churchill decided in favour of India.

VI

While all these preparations were going on, there was great jubilation at the thought that we were gaining independence on August 15. The Hindus were relieved and the Muslims triumphant ; only in Sindh, N.W.F.P. Baluchistan, the Punjab and Bengal the shadow of partition plunged the Hindus and the Sikhs in the grip of unknown terror. Gandhiji was with them.

By the end of May, partition was practically certain That evening (May 31) Gandhiji remarked :

> "My life's work seems to be over. I hope God will spare me further humiliation." .....On the following morning the 1st June, mistaking the hands of his watch, he woke up earlier than usual. As there were still half an hour before prayer, he remained lying in bed and began to muse in a low voice : "....Today I find myself all alone. Even the Sardar and Jawaharlal think that my reading of the situation is wrong and peace is sure to return if partition is agreed upon....They did not like my telling the Viceroy that even if there was to be partition, it should not be through British intervention or under the British rule....They wonder if I have not deteriorated with age. ....I shall perhaps not be alive to witness it, but should the evil I apprehend overtake India and her independence be imperilled, let posterity know what agony this old soul went through thinking of it. ***Let tt not be said that Gandhi was party to India's vivisection....***" [38]

On the morning of June 3, as he lay in his bath, Gandhiji remarked :

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"In all probability the final seal will be set on the partition plan during the day. But though I may be alone in holding this view, I repeat that the division of India can only do harm to the country's future. The slavery of 150 years is going to end, but from the look of things it does not seem as if the independence will last as long. It hurts me to think that I can see nothing but evil in the partition plan. May be that just as God blinded my vision, *so that I mistook the non-violence of the weak—which I now see is a misnomer and contradiction in terms—for true non-violence, He has again stricken me with blindness....*"[39]

References

1. King George's Diary, December 17, 1946. J. W. Wheeler-Bennett : *King George VI*, pp. 710-11.

1a. Lord Mountbatten to King Georg, VI, January 4, 1947 ; ibid, p. 711.

2. J. Connell : *Auchinleck*, pp. 864-65; italics mine. Mountbatten is said to have kept this letter a closely guarded secret, though it was known that he had obtained from His Majesty's Government a special instrument of instruction. I have been told that this allowed Mountbatten to browbeat the Anglo-indians.

3. For the text of Attlee's statement see Cmd. 7047 1947, and *Hansard*, House of Commons Debate, 1946-47. Vol, 433, Cols, 1395-99.

4. Pyarelal, I, pp. 565-66.

5. I had an interview with Lord Attlee at Parliament House on July 20, 1960. As he was conducting me to the tea-room of the House, he pointed to the House of Lords and said : "Remember Halifax in your book ; he made a great speech, possibly his last." When I asked him further, he explained that an adverse vote in the House of Lords would have created all sorts of difficulties and but for Halifax's speech the House of Lords would have passed a censure motion against the Government.

6. "India is to be subjected," Churchill said, "not merely to partition and to haphazard fragmentation....In handing over the government of India to these so-called political classes, we are handing over to men of straw of whom in a few years no trace will remain.....Many have defended Britain against her foes, none can defend her against herself....But, at last, let us not add—by shameful flight, by a premature hurried scuttle—at least, let us not add to the pangs of sorrow so many of us feel, the taint and smear of shame". The House of Lord's Debate was held on February 26, and the House of Commons Debate on March 5 and 6. Attlee's reference to Wavell on February 20 was unfortunately brusque, and when asked to explain Wavell's dismissal he said : ".....to put it colloquially, if a change of bowling is desired it is not always necessary that there should be an elaborate explanation." This typical British figure of speech satisfied the British Parliament, but to outsiders it seemed to have been a rather slighting way of referring to a Viceroy of India.

7. Wheeler-Bennet ; op. cit. p. 710.

8. It is usually held that Mountbatten had invited Lord Ismay and Sir Eric Mieville to accompany him to India. The facts are slightly otherwise. Before

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his appointment was announced, Mountbatten saw Ismay and asked his opinion about it. Ismay thought over the matter and felt that not only Mountbatten but he (Ismay) also should go to India, and offered to accompany Mountbatten. "He (Mountbatten) was kind enough to accept my (Ismay's) offer without a moments hesitation, and suggested that Sir Eric Mieville might be persuaded to come too. Would I (Ismay) sound him? Eric's reaction was immediate. Of course he would come." *Memoirs of Lord Ismay*, p. 410. It is nowhere explained as to why Mountbatten brought Ismay and Mieville, of whom Ismay at least was qualified to be a Viceroy. Only thing that strikes me is that Ismay was not only a great favourite of Churchill's (so was Mountbatten) but understood his reactions possibly as well as any living person.

9. Campbell-Johnson, p. 32.

10. The Muslim League had won seventy-five seats in the election, but soon after four members joined them.

11. P. Moon : *Divide and Quit*, p. 79

12. ibid, p. 87. I have omitted the rude word which is the most offensive abuse for an Indian.

13. For example the Police strike and subsequent "mutiny" in Bihar. See also Nehru's letter to Gandhiji, January 29, 1947. Pyarelal, II, pp. 30-31. For the incidents which reconciled the Sardar to the idea of partition, see Pyarelal, II, pp. 153-54. and Mr. Munshi's letter to the author in Appendix IX.

14. Congress Working Committee's resolution, March 8, 1947 ; italics mine ; Congress Bulletin, March 26, 1947, p. 5 ; Pyarelal II, p. 11. This resolution was passed, Pyarelal points out, without consulting Gandhiji for which he demanded an explanation from Nehru ; ibid, pp. 34-35. But Gandhiji had persistently refused to come to attend the Working Committee meeting at Delhi. Pyarelal, I, p. 567. A week before Mountbatten's arrival Wavell accepted the principle of partitioning the Punjab. Campbell-Johnson, p. 46.

15. Pyarelal, II, pp. 34-45.

16. ibid, p. 35.

17. Many persons have accused Mountbatten of creating this breach between Gandhiji and the Congress leaders; that is not correct.

18. Pyarelal, II, p. 80.

19. Campbell-Johnson, pp. 55. Mountbatten toyed with the Cabinet Mission plan for a few days more.

20. To explain the attitude of the Hindus I give below a few excerpts from General Tuker's work, who certainly did not suffer from a pro-Hindu bias : "In the last week of April, Muslim National guards at Mankachar became truculent and the Assam Rifles had to fire twenty-seven rounds into them to bring them to reason..(p. 272)." ....Mahatma Gandhi was there (Noakhali) and was using the telegraph lines to some purpose. He informed Mr. Surhawardy..that 'the case (for the Hindus) seems to be for exodus or perishing in flames of fanaticism'. Those were not words likely to smooth the creases from anxious and angry brows, but there was substance in them, for quite recently the accused in the Eastern Bengal disturbances of the previous year had been inexcusably released on bail and were prowling about breathing fire and murder against Hindus who had informed against them....Influential Muslims were boasting

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that the first slice of East Pakistan had been carved out in East Bengal. Criminal lawlessness in Noakhali and Tippera was generally assuming alarming proportions. . . .It hardly seemed that the Muslim local officials and police were much troubled to ensure that law and order were kept, provided that events did not turn against their co-religionists. Mr Suhrawardy's reply to Mr. Gandhi protested that he was in close touch with East Bengal and the conditions there were normal". (pp. 272-273).

". . . .The attempts of a Muslim ministry in Bengal to supersede Hindu civil and police officials by Muslims simply increased the bitter urgency with which Hindu party organs worked to marshal their resources. . . ."(p. 273-74).

". . . .With the Punjab Muslim police behind them Muslims were cock-a-hoop, driving their trucks through Hindu areas (of Calcutta) and insulting all and sundry. . . ."(p. 274).

"The forces of law and order were hindered by the (Muslim League) Government's habit of promptly releasing persons arrested under the Special Powers Ordinance". (p. 275). Tuker : *While Memory Serves*, pp. 272-75.

About the Punjab Moon writes :

". . . .The first outbreak took place in Lahore on March 4th (1947) immediately after Master Tara Singh's ill-timed vauntings. It was followed in the next couple of days by rioting in Multan, Rawalpindi and Amritsar and minor disturbances in other towns. The Muslim mobs after their weeks of 'non-violent' agitation, suddenly, as though on a preconcerted signal, came out in their true colors and with weapons in hands and, in some places, steel helmmets on their heads, indulged in murder, loot and arson on a scale never witnessed before in the Punjab during a hundred years of British rule. The minority communities (Sikhs and the Hindus) fought back vigorously wherever they could.

"The conflagration in Amritsar was particularly terrific. The two principal bazars were burnt to the grounds and several others partially destroyed. There were looting in practically every part of the city. So far as I have been able to ascertain not a shot was fired by the Police while the destruction was in progress. In Multan many private houses of Hindus were set on fire and the inmates had the choice of perishing in the flames or running the gauntlet of a murderous mob awaiting them below. Caught in this predicament a prominent Congress Muslim who was staying with a Hindu friend, narrowly escaped with his life by exposing his person as evidence of his religion. His host was duly done to death.

". . . .In the Rawalpindi and Attock districts many villages and small towns were raided by armed gangs of Muslims with heavy loss of life and property. . . . The Sikhs were especial tragets of attack, their houses and beards alike being set on fire. . . .

"This foretaste of the blessings of Pakistan was hardly encouraging to the minority communities in West Punjab. . . . . .

"Many people have supposed that this outburst of communal rioting in the Punjab followed as a sort of chain reaction from the disturbances in Bihar in the previous autumn which themselves had been provoked by the earlier trouble in East Bengal. This is a mistaken impression. The Punjab had long

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been brewing its own explosive mixture which had now blown up spontaneously. It required no outside fuse for its detonation...." P. Moon : *Divide and Quit*, pp. 77-79.

Mr. Moon was a member of the I.C.S. serving in the Punjab. It should be explained that Amritsar before partition had a Muslim majority and sufferers in the March riots were either Sikhs or Hindus.

21. Campbell-Johnson ; p. 58; Liaqat raised the question of inadequate representation of armed forces on April 8, 1947. This was the thin end of the wedge, to which Mountbatten reacted vigorously and said : "The mechanics won't permit it (communal division of the army) and I won't." For the effect of Liaqat's letter see Connell op. cit. pp. 873-74.
22. Ismay to Menon, April 11, 1947, Mosley, op. cit. p. 105.
23. Sir Frederic Burrows, the Governor of Bengal being ill could not attend, so he was represented by an official.
24. Menon, p. 354.
24a. Constituent Assembly Debates, III, no. 1, pp. 366-67.
25. Ismay, p. 420.
26. Menon, p. 358. For Sardar's attitude see his letter to Kanji Dwarkadas, March, 4, 1947, Pyarelal II, p. 83.
27. Mosley confirms this rumour. Mosley. op. cit. p. 47.
27a. For details of Nehru's speech see below chapter XXII.
28. Campbell-Johnson, p. 89.
29. Mosley (op. cit. p. 123) gives a vivid description of Nehru's reaction without disclosing his source of information. I asked Nehru about this and from what he told me it was apparent that Mosley's description is too exaggerated. However, Menon also writes that "Nehru turned it down most vehemently...". Menon, p. 361.
30. Menon, pp. 361-65.
31. Ismay, pp. 421-22. Mosley writes: "There is much evidence to confirm that even Mr. Attlee was shocked when the Viceroy announced, at a Press conference held in Delhi on June 4, 1947, that the transfer of power would actually be made on August 15...." Mosley p. 134. Mosley does not cite any evidence, whereas Ismay definitely states that the Cabinet agreed to Mountbatten's proposal that power was to be transferred on August 15, 1947.
32. Campbell-Johnson, p. 97 ; italics mine.
33. Azad: *India Wins Freedom*, pp. 201-02.
34. Menon, pp. 355-56.
35. Connell, op. cit., pp. 872-76.
36. Ismay, p. 428.
37. ibid, pp. 428-29 ; Campbell-Johnson, pp. 127-31.
38. Pyarelal, II, pp. 210-11; italitcs by Pyarelal.
39. ibid, p. 215; italics mine.

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CHAPTER XXI

THE END OF AN ERA

Attlee's declaration of February 20, 1947 shattered the lingering hopes in Anglo-indian breasts of continuing the British Raj on the basis of Political stalemate. So, grimly determined to die hard, they flung themselves into the open arms of the native princes. Hitherto the Political Department of the Government of India was a terror to the Princes, but now everything changed, and the Political Department developed extreme solicitude for their rights and privileges.

This policy, be it said, was not formulated by the Viceroy, but by the head of the Political Department, Sir Conrad Corfield, son of the Vicar of Finchhamstead in Berkshire. Long after his retirement, he confessed to Mosley, the author of the *Last Days of the British Raj* : "My job was to look after the interests of the Princely States. It was no part of my job to make things easier for India." By India, Corfield apparently meant the Dominion of India, for the forces of history and geography had predetermined that out of 562 States, all except a few would lay within the territory of the Indian Dominion, or would be contiguous to it, and either be Hindu, or, in a few instances, Sikh. Thus, as far as Pakistan was concerned, States were no problem, but for India their independent existence posed a danger to her safety.

The Chamber of Princes had been created by a Royal Proclamation in 1921 but it really came into life in 1944, when the Nawab of Bhopal became its Chancellor. An extremely dexterous politician, he was bent on uniting the Princes into a "third force" directed particularly against the Congress. As we shall see, he came very near success, and only the patriotism of the Maharajah of Bikaner, Maharajah of Patiala, and the Maharana of Udaipur foiled his scheme.

Besides these three princes, there were others like the Maharajah of Cochin and the Gaekwad of Baroda, whose motives and actions were highly praiseworthy. But the majority of the Princes were selfish autocrats. Almost all of them had their status and position preserved due to the presence of British arms, and now when the British were about to withdraw they began to think in terms of independence. They completely forgot the possibility, which in fact was a certainty,

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of their being driven from their *gaddi* by their own oppressed subjects, once the protecting arms of the British were removed. It was fortunate for them that the Sardar and Menon with the active help of Mountbatten prevented the revolution.

On May 22, 1946, the Cabinet Mission published a *Memorandum on States' Treaties and Paramountcy*. In this Memorandum the Mission declared that when a self-governing India came into existence the British Government would not be in a position to discharge its obligation towards the States, so that paramountcy would lapse, and all the rights surrendered by the States to the British Crown would revert to them. The void would have to be filled by the States' entering into a federal relationship with the successor government or governments in British India or by entering into "particular political arrangements."

The Memorandum whetted the appetite of the Princes and the Nawab of Bhopal asked the Viceroy, Wavell, for further clarification, and when Wavell sent him a non-committal reply on May 29, Bhopal began to whimper and addressed two pathetic letters to Wavell appealing the British not to let down their friends. Wavell referred him to Corfield.

Corfield confabulated with Bhopal in utmost secrecy ; on June 8 he addressed the Constitutional Advisory Committee of the Chamber of Princes, on June 9, the Committee of State Ministers, and on June 10 the Standing Committee of the Chamber of Princes. In these meetings, he convinced the Princes that the decision regarding the lapse of paramountcy at the end of the interim period placed the States in the best bargaining position possible. Nothing could have been a greater mistake; and, for their subsequent fate, the Princes have to thank Corfield for this most injudicious advice. As we shall see, the lapse of paramountcy, which meant the lapse of treaty rights and privileges, placed the Princes at the mercy of the Sardar and Menon. On the other hand, Corfield's advice inflated the ambition of some princes like Bilaspur, who had already been thinking in terms of fighting India to preserve his independence. Bilaspur had an area of less than 500 square miles.[1]

However, Corfield at the same time advised the Chamber of Princes to set up a Negotiating Committee to settle the terms on which the Princes would join the Constituent Assembly. The idea was collective bargaining under the aegis of Bhopal, and it was made more

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attractive by Corfield's promise, that, during the interim period, the Political Department would assist the States in every respect. These suggestions were adopted by the Standing Committee of the Chamber of Princes, which on June 10, set up a Negotiating Committee and authorized Bhopal, the Chancellor, to arrange discussions with the Constituent Assembly. However, on July 30, 1946, the Maharajah of Cochin announced that Cochin would join the Constituent Assembly and send to it popular representatives elected by the Legislative Council of the State. This was a great decision, but no other Prince followed Cochin. They stood by their Negotiating Committee.

On December 21, the Constituent Assembly appointed a Negotiating Committee to deal with the body set up by the Chamber of Princes. Before these two committees could meet, however, the Standing Committee of the Chamber of Princes on the advice of the Political Department drew up a lengthy resolution which was adopted at a Conference of Rulers in Bombay on January 29, 1947. The main burden of the resolution was that a State would be negotiating with British India on an equal footing and on the express understanding that the dynastic rule and all that it implied were sacrosanct and perpetual. In one respect, however, this august body came down to the level of a labour union, for it was resolved that negotiations could only be carried by the States' Negotiating Committee, and the results of such negotiations would be subject, first to the approval of the Constitutional Advisory Committee of the Chamber of Princes, and then to ratification by the States. Only Baroda could not agree, and on February 8, declared that Baroda was not bound by the resolution and the Dewan would negotiate directly with the Constituent Assembly.

The two Negotiating Committees met on February 8 and 9 and adjourned till March 1, after deciding that a scheme of distribution for filling up the ninety-three seats allotted to the States should be jointly worked out by the Secretaries of the Constituent Assembly and of the Chamber of Princes. In the meantime, however, Attlee made his historic declaration of February 20, during the course of which he stated :

> "As was explicitly stated by the Cabinet Mission, His Majesty's Government do not intend to hand over their powers and obligations under paramountcy to any Government of British India. It is not intended to bring paramountcy, as a system, to a conclusion earlier than the date of the final transfer of power, but it is contemplated that for the

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intervening period the relations of the Crown with individual States may be adjusted by agreement".

This announcement introduced in the negotiations an element of urgency ; Nehru's energetic intervention overcame the dilatoriness of Bhopal, and it was agreed that fifty per cent of the States' representatives should be elected and that attempts should be made to increase the elected quota as much as possible. Nehru then invited the States' representatives to join immediately so that they could serve on some of the important committees which had been set up by the Constituent Assembly, but Bhopal refused on the pretext that decision on this point could only be given by the Princes meeting at a conference.

The general conference of Princes was held on the first week of April and here the first breach occurred between Bhopal and a group of Princes led by the Maharajahs of Patiala and Bikaner. Possibly Patiala and Bikaner had already apprehended the sinister intentions behind Bhopal's policy of "wait and see". In any case, Maharajah Sir Sadul Singh of Bikaner came out with a statement of high statesmanship in which he denounced the "wait and see policy", and urged the Princes to help India in evolving a strong central government which could take over power from the British. Patiala also issued a similar statement. But as their remonstrances failed to persuade Bhopal and other Princes to change their policy, the Bikaner-Patiala group dissociated themselves from the majority, and practically left the Chamber of Princes.

The strong action of the Bikaner-Patiala group had little effect on Bhopal and his followers. A conference of the Princes and States' ministers on April 2, passed a little more reasonable resolution, but still insisted that with the lapse of paramountcy the States would be in a position to deal on equal terms with India. So Bhopal and the Standing Committee were authorized to deal with the Viceroy in his capacity as Crown Representative in regard to matters relating to the lapse of paramountcy and transfer of power, while the Negotiating Committee was authorized to negotiate as before with the Negotiating Committee of the Constituent Assembly subject to the conditions laid down by the Princes' Conference of January 29, 1947.

Bhopal now raised the issue of ratification by the Constituent Assembly of the understanding reached between the two Negotiating Committees, which Nehru properly declared to be unnecessary. Bhopal thereupon advised the Princes not to join the Constituent Assembly.

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This was too much for many princes, and Patiala and Bikaner decided to send their representatives to the Constituent Assembly in spite of the remonstrances of Bhopal.

The Political Department had not been idle. A conference of Residents and Political Officers was held in the middle of April, and it was decided to withdraw the Political Agents by the autumn and the Residents by the end of 1947, while the Political Department was to be wound up by March 1948; it was taken for granted that final transfer of power would not take place before July 1948. Apparently Corfield was not in Mountbatten's confidence.

On April 18, Nehru declared at the All-India States People's Conference that any State which did not join the Constituent Assembly would be treated as hostile. Within ten days representatives of Baroda, Bikaner, Cochin, Jaipur, Jodhpur, and Rewa took their seats in the Constituent Assembly. This was the beginning of the end of Bhopal's scheme ; other State representatives began to join one after another.

Up to the beginning of June, the attentions of the Congress leaders and Mountbatten were concentrated on finding a way out of the political impasse in British India so the States were left much to themselves. The States were also bidding their time in anticipation of worsening of the political condition in British India with the hope of a total breakdown of the central administration. With somewhat of a shock therefore they received from Mountbatten the final plan on the afternoon of June 3. A long discussion followed in which Mountbatten advised them that the creation of two new States would inevitably mean two strong central governments instead of the single loose central government envisaged before, but both these Dominions would be members of the Commonwealth, a fact which should assure the States. Many of the States representatives then urged the paramountcy to be loosened or lapsed before the date of the transfer of power, but Mountbatten firmly held to his instruction that it would lapse on the transfer of power. This was followed by a lengthy discussion in which the recalcitrant Princes failed to get any satisfaction from the Viceroy.

The same day, Bhopal resigned his Chancellorship of the Chamber of Princes and in his letter of resignation to the Viceroy stated that "Bhopal State would, *as soon as paramountcy is withdrawn, be assuming an independent status* ".[2] On June 11, Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar declared that Travancore had decided to declare its independence as soon as paramountcy lapsed; (Sir C. P. later also announced his

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intention of appointing a Trade Agent in Pakistan). Next day, the Nizam of Hyderabad also issued a similar statement.

Travancore was not only a well administered viable State, but also a maritime State, which would have enabled it to maintain free contact with the outside world. But having had no army worth the name, and literally no navy or air-force it would have been a source of great danger to the safety of India. For, Travancore had a large and powerful Communist element amongst its population, which would certainly have usurped the Government once it lost Indian protection. As we shall see, Sir C. P. came to realize this later, and changed his policy, and Travancore joined the Indian Dominion.

The case of Bhopal was different, for it was a small landlocked State, and it is difficult to imagine that the Nawab, who was an extraordinarily clever man, could have imagined any benefit accruing to him from a nominal independence. The Nawab was also an extremely ambitious politician, and the fact is that he had evolved a scheme for creating a solid block of Native States from Bhopal to Karachi. Many other Princes joined Bhopal particularly Indore, Baroda, and Jodhpur, for Jinnah had been dangling before them the carrot of a free port of Karachi. There was, however, one drawback to the scheme ; a slice of Udaipur territory cut right through this block and for Bhopal's scheme to be successful, the Maharana's permission was essential. This the old Maharana refused. "If my ancestors had joined the Mughuls", the Maharana is said to have proudly recalled, "I would have had today a much larger State than Jodhpur or Jaipur". Thus he discharged his debt, as a Hindu would put it, to his immortal ancestor, Maharana Pratap.

Bhopal however, continued to give trouble practically till the end.

II

Soon after the June 3 declaration, the Political Department began to destroy records, wind up residencies and hand over cantonment areas and Crown forces to the Princes. So on June 11, the Standing Committee of the All India States People's Conference passed a resolution demanding that either the Political Department be put under the control of the Interim Government, or the latter create a new department to discharge the functions of the former.

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THE END OF AN ERA

A momentous meeting of the Congress and the League called by Mountbatten was held on June 13, where Nehru raised the question of the Political Department and the Native States. Mountbatten reiterated his instructions, namely, that paramountcy should lapse not later than the day of the transfer of power which would automatically involve the closing down of the Political Department. This was followed by a long discussion in which Nehru and Corfield vigorously tried to maintain their different positions regarding the States. According to Nehru, the Crown Representative was concerned only with paramountcy, while all the other matters governing the relation of the States with British India came under the purview of the Government of India; and secondly, the States had no other alternative than to join Pakistan or India. Corfield controverted Nehru's contention regarding the position of the Crown Representative, and as regards the second point quoted the following from the Cabinet Mission's *Memorandum on States' Treaties and Paramountcy* : "The void (after the lapse of paramountcy) will have to be filled, either by the States' entering into a federal relationship with the successor Government or Governments in British India or failing this, entering into particular political arrangements with it or them."

While Nehru held that "particular political arrangement" did not envisage the future independence of the Native States, Corfield held that it did, and was supported by Jinnah. It is possible that the latter contention was legally correct, but the glaring fact was that Native States meant not only big States, like Kashmir, Hyderabad or Travancore, but also extremely small States as in Kathiawar where there were forty-six States with an area of two or less than two square miles each, while eight of them were just over half-a-mile in area :

> Yet as a correspondent of the *Tribune* stated in 1939: "None of these is the smallest state in Kathiawar ! That distinction goes to Vejanoness which has an area of 0·29 square mile, a population of 206 souls and an income of Rs. 500/- a year." [3]

These States, and many others, enjoyed very restricted powers under the British, but under the legalistic interpretation of Corfield, all these Princes (!) would have at least complete criminal and civil jurisdiction over their unfortunate subjects on and from August 15, 1947. Corfield had tried to merge some of these States with bigger ones like Baroda, but his attempt came too late to be effective, and it

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was these small States, which under the law had assumed the same status as the big States, that defeated Corfield.

However, this meeting after a long discussion decided to set up forthwith two States Departments (one for India and the other for Pakistan) to deal with State matters. Corfield strenuously opposed this idea, but failed to convince anybody, not even Jinnah.

This meeting led to the formation on June 25 of two States Departments, having two Ministers and two Secretaries. From the Congress side the Minister appointed was the Sardar, and he selected Menon as the Secretary, who began to function from July 5.

Menon was fully alive to the dangerous consequences of the lapse of paramountcy which he has described as as "the greatest disservice the British had done us as well as the rulers".[4] He was, however, conscious that the Labour Government was prompted to do this because neither the Conservatives nor the British public would have tolerated the transfer of the rights of the Crown under the treaties to the successor governments. But this decision with all its drawbacks had the compensation that India would be starting with a clean slate, unhampered by the obligations imposed by the treaties. Menon then drew on his long experience and modified his scheme of 1942 which Linlithgow had rejected. Under that scheme, the Native States were called upon to accede to India only on 'defence' and 'external affairs' to which Menon now added 'communications'. The merit of the scheme was that it invited the States to cede to the Central Government those powers which they were incapable of exercising. For, there was no State in India, not even Hyderabad or Kashmir, which could defend itself or conduct its affairs with foreign countries independently; communication had been built by the British on an all-India basis in which the States had surrendered many valuable rights, but now it was too late to revert to the situation of the nineteenth century. Indeed Menon had chosen his ground so well that it was impossible not to agree with him.

The next step was to implement the policy, that is induce the States to accede within August 15, in other words, within six weeks. Here again Menon correctly felt that the shortness of time might be to India's advantage; but the Princes had to be approached properly. The solution of this extremely declicate problem was the inspired idea to secure Mountbatten's co-operation.

Looking back now, it seems that Mountbatten was the only

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person for this work. Nehru's speeches in the Constituent Assembly and in the All India States People's Conference had made him very unpopular amongst the Princes, and the many gifts of the redoubtable Sardar did not include the art of persuasive speech, which Mountbatten possessed in an unusual degree. Besides this, his position as the Viceroy, royal connection, war record, as also his handsome looks and manly appearance combined to produce the desired effect on the Princes. Possibly Mountbatten also exploited the well-known weakness of the Indian Princes by flashing a breastful of medals and orders on his superb uniforms.

Menon approached Mountbatten somewhat diffidently and requested him in the Sardar's name to help him in getting the States accede on three subjects. Mountbatten was deeply touched by Menon's remark "that the wounds of partition might to some extent be healed by the States' entering into relationship with the Government of India, and that he would be earning the gratitude of generations of Indians if he could assist in achieving the basic unity of the country." He then had a frank talk with the Sardar and accepted Menon's proposal, and the Indian Cabinet formally entrusted Mountbatten with the task of negotiating accession. This was in accord with Attlee's instructions to Mountbatten: ".... You will also aid and assist the States in coming to fair and just arrangements with the leaders of British India as to their future relationships." [5] Mountbatten had kept the clauses of this extraordinary Instrument of Instruction a closely guarded secret, but this enabled him now to render signal service to India. There is, however, a difference of opinion as to whether he helped the States to arrive at a fair and just arrangement with India or helped the Sardar to absorb the States. For, though the Princes may not have realized at the time, it could not have been overlooked by Mountbatten that, by acceding on three subjects, the Princes were losing their only chance of ever regaining independent status, without any countervailing guarantee from the future Indian Government as to the perpetuation of their rule.

Corfield later characterized Mountbatten's conduct towards the Princes as "un-British" and added that a leading Dewan informed him that after an interview with His Excellency the Viceroy he knew what Dolfuss had felt like when he was sent for to see Hitler; he (the Dewan) had not expected to be spoken like that by a British officer; "After a moment's pause" Corfield added, "he (the Dewan) withdrew

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the word British."[6] It is difficult to say as to how far Corfield's prejudiced testimony and uncorroborated hearsay evidence is to be believed. For, it is also said that, a Prince once admitted that Mountbatten could "not only talk the hind leg off a donkey but also the throne from under a prince."

In one respect Mountbatten did a real service to the Princes. The Government of most Native States was bad, a fact which even Corfield had to admit ruefully. The Princes had suppressed popular movements within their territories with heavy hands, but an explosive situation existed in the Native States, which would have burst out as soon as the British protection was removed, and the Princes would have been swept away. To atone for their past neglect and misdeeds the Princes had to make a heavy sacrifice. The continued leadership of Bhopal would have been disastrous; similar was Corfield's advice which was entirely divorced from the realities of the situation. Mountbatten dragged the Princes from the rarefied atmosphere of the Political Department to the solid realities of Indian politics.

III

The States Department was inaugurated by the Sardar on July 5, 1947, with an ideal speech of conciliation. Menon took charge of the Department the same day and found that the entire staff of the Political Department with a few exceptions, had either applied for pension or had opted for service in Pakistan. This Anglo-indian move to weaken the new Department was again a blessing in disguise, for Menon was able to fill it with loyal officials.

On July 2, Mountbatten had shown to Indian and Pakistan leaders the draft bill of Indian Independence[7] which included a clause (No. 7) denouncing all treaties and agreements between the Crown and the Native Princes. This was of such a sweeping character, that the Indian leaders objected to it and it was modified to the extent that provision was made that agreements relating to custom, transit and communications, posts and telegraphs or other like matters would be abrogated if and when denounced by individual Princes. Still this left to the Princes enormous power of mischief and their accession on these matters assumed even greater urgency.

As the time to carry on negotiation with the Princes was extremely short, Menon suggested that direct contact should be established

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with them. This would also have had the additional benefit of drawing the Princes away from the Political Department which was still guiding them. Menon therefore met the Maharajah of Patiala, who, after Bhopal's resignation, had become the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes. Patiala readily agreed to Menon's suggestions, and at his instance a number of Princes and Ministers met the Sardar at his residence on July 10 ; these included the Maharajahs of Patiala and Gwalior, and Sir B. L. Mitter and K. M. Panikkar, Dewans of Baroda and Bikaner. This meeting established mutual confidence between the Princes and the Sardar and the next day the agenda for the conference of Princes were issued. The agenda included : (1) Accession of the States on 'defence,' 'external affairs' and 'communications' ; (2) Standstill Agreement on matters of common concern ; (3) Advisory Council for States Department; (4) Channels of correspondence and representation of central government in the States. Jinnah on being duly apprised of this decision, publicly announced that he would guarantee the independence of the Native States in Pakistan.

This was an inducement to the vacillating Princes to follow Bhopal. But a delegation of Princes, namely, Patiala, Gwalior, Bikaner, and Nawanagar and Ministers including Sir B. L. Mitter (Baroda), K. M. Panikkar (Bikaner), Sir A. Ramaswamy Mudaliar (Mysore), and C. S. Venkatachar (Jodhpur) met the Sardar on July 24, and assured him that a large number of Princes had forsworn Bhopal's leadership and was ready to join India.

Next day, July 25, Mountbatten met twenty-five of the major ruling Princes and seventy-four States' representatives in the Chamber of Princes. This was his first and last meeting with the Princes as the Crown Representative and one of the most crucial conferences he addressed in India. It was a stifling hot day but Mountbatten appeared in full uniform, "with an array of orders and decorations calculated to astonish even these practitioners in Princely pomp."[8] And one of the points he shrewdly made was that if the Princes accepted the Instrument of Accession, the Sardar and the Congress would not interfere with their receiving British honours and titles.[9] However, the burden of his speech that afternoon was that, the Princes could not run away from the Dominion of India which was their neighbour any more than they could from their subjects for whose welfare they were responsible, and he stressed the urgency of the situation frankly by stating: "If you are prepared to come, you must come before 15

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August." "The speech was", Menon writes, "made *extempore* and without notes and was the apogee of persuasion." [10]

Mountbatten announced at this meeting the personnel of a Negotiating Committee consisting of ten Princes and twelve ministers to consider in detail the Instrument of Accession and the Standstill Agreement. This body after interminable meetings with Menon finalized the drafts of the Instrument of Accession and the Standstill Agreement on July 31.

In the meantime Mountbatten held a reception on July 28 in honour of over fifty Princes and a hundred States' representatives.

> "The splendour of it," Campbell-Johnson noted, "seemed to strengthen the sense of unreality and pathos surrounding the princely order at this time. When unity of purpose was of overwhelming importance for them, they were to be seen uneasy and obsessed with their own problems of precedence, each anxiously watching what the other was doing—, and as a Dewan remarked of one of them 'wandering about like a letter without a stamp'.
>
> "Those of their Highnesses who had not already signified their intention of signing the Instrument of Accession were duly shepherded by the A.D.C.'s one by one for a friendly talk with Mountbatten. He in turn passed them on in the full view of the company to V. P. (Menon), who conducted them across the room to see Patel. There were Maharajas three deep in a semi-circle watching this process.
>
> "One veteran Prince was heard to remark, 'Who's H. E. getting to work on now ?' Craning forward to see, he added with relish, 'There is no need for him to work on me. I'm signing to-morrow!'....." [11]

Some rulers however wanted to follow the lead of Travancore and Hyderabad, who had declared their intention of becoming independent. The Pakistani leaders were offering them tempting concessions, particularly to Jodhpur, Jaisalmer and Bikaner, whose territories lay on the border of Pakistan. The Political Department too was instigating these Princes not to accede to India. So Menon reported to Mountbatten against Corfield and soon after the latter went on leave to England, somewhat earlier than expected, and retired.[12]

The overwhelming majority of the Princes came in but there were a few last-ditchers. Of them the most well known at the time was Travancore, whose Dewan, the brilliant Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyar, unfortunately took a parochial view and advised the Maharajah to declare his independence. The situation became critical when the State Congress decided to launch "direct action" from August 1. However, wiser counsel prevailed, and during the last week of July, Sir

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C. P. was persuaded by Menon and Mountbatten in a series of friendly conversations to change his earlier stand, and Travancore to accede to India. So Sir C. P. returned to Travancore with the draft Instrument and the Agreement, and the Maharajah conveyed his assent telegraphically. However, an incident marred this happy end ; Sir C. P. was stabbed by an unknown assailant but fortunately he escaped with a minor injury.

Far more dramatic was the accession of the late Maharajah Hanwant Singh of Jodhpur. Jinnah and the Pakistani leaders were encouraging him by all possible temptations to accede to Pakistan. At the last of his meetings with Jinnah, he had taken with him the Maharajkumar of Jaisalmere. Jinnah, overjoyed at the prospect of getting in these two border States, signed a sheet of blank paper and gave it to Jodhpur along with his own pen inviting the Princes to fill in all their conditions. Jodhpur after a discussion with Jinnah decided to join Pakistan and turning to the Maharajkumar asked him if he would follow suit. The Maharajkumar said that he would do so on condition that in case of trouble between the Hindus and Muslims, he would not side with the Muslims against the Hindus. This shook Jodhpur very badly and in spite of the persuasion of Sir Muhammad Zafrulla Khan,who was present throughout this interview, he felt unable to take a decision. So he left with the Maharajkumar, promising Jinnah to return next day.

A few days in Jodhpur brought the Maharajah into a more realistic frame of mind; nobles of this ancient Rathor State, famous in medieval history for their struggle against the Mughul Emperor Aurangzib, were decidely against joining Pakistan. The Maharajah began to hesitate, and reached Delhi in an indecisive mood. News now reached Menon that, unless he handled the Maharajah expeditiously, chances were that he might join Pakistan. So Menon went to the Hotel Imperial, where the Maharajah was staying, and told him that Mountbatten wanted to see him. This brought the Maharajah out, and Menon drove him to the Government House, and while the Maharajah waited in the visitors' room, Menon, went up and explained the situation to Mountbatten. Mountbatten then came down and spoke frankly to the Maharajah, who began to ask for impossible conditions. Menon intervened and told him that, if he wanted to sign on false hopes, he (Menon) would agree to his demands, adding that most of the demands could not be conceded. The Maharajah

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then told him about the blank papr which Jinnah had given to be filled in with all the conditions he wanted. Ultimately Menon gave him a letter conceding some of his demands, and the Maharajah signed the Instrument of Accession.

Then occurred the most melodramatic incident in the history of the transfer of power. Mountbatten left the room for a few minutes and the Maharajah whipped out a revolver, and aiming at Menon said: "I refuse to accept your dictation". With great presence of mind, Menon faced the headstrong Prince and, adomonishing him not to indulge in juvenile theatricals, pointed out that his death would not alter the situation. This calmed the Maharajah, and when Mountbatten returned and heard the episode, he turned it to a joke and they parted in an amicable mood.

The accession of Jodhpur, left the dissident group with Bhopal and Indore to lead them. Bhopal was one of Mountbatten's old friends, and had most of his negotiations through him. On some pretext or other he held out as long as possible, and as late as August 11, the Sardar was writing to Gandhiji : ". . . .There seems to be no end to the Nawab of Bhopal's intrigues. He is working day and night to cause split among the Princes and to keep them out of the Indian Union...."[13] However, at last Bhopal acceded (but at his request, the Government kept the news secret for ten days after the transfer of power) and this was followed by the accession of the few States that still held out, namely Dholpur, Bharatpur, Bilaspur and Nabha. Indore signed the Instrument of Accession and the Agreement and sent it through ordinary mail without even a covering letter. But it arrived in time and served its purpose.

Thus by August 15, almost all the States except Kashmir, Hyderabad and Junagadh acceded to India. The subsequent history of these three States proved the soundness of Mountbatten's advice to their rulers.

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References

1. Menon, *States*, p. 63.
2. ibid, p. 84; italics in the original.
3. ibid, p. 177.
4. ibid, p. 94. Menon states that though he was the Constitutional Adviser, he was not consulted when the Cabinet Mission announced the lapse of paramountcy in their Memoradum of May 12 (published on May 22).
5. Connell, op. cit. p. 865.
6. Mosley, op. cit. pp. 173-74. Was Corfield hinting at Mountbatten's German origin ? Corfield who, came from Finchhampstead, Berkshire, was of course pure British.
7. This disclosure of a Bill before it was presented to the Parliament was against all precedents.
8. Campbell-Johnson, p. 140.
9. ibid, 141; Mountbatten kept his promise and himself invested the Maharajahas of Jaipur and Bikaner with the G.C.S.I.
10. Menon, *States*, p. 108.
11. Campbell-Johnson, p. 144.
12. Menon, *States*, p. 113.
13. Pyarelal, II, p. 332.

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CHAPTER XXII

CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

The idea of a Constituent Assembly of Indians to prepare a Constitution for India seems to have been proposed for the first time by Nehru, in reply to Iqbal's assertion in 1930 that Hindus and Muslims could not live together.[1] A few years later, the Congress adopted the establishment of a Constituent Assembly as one of its objectives, when it rejected the Government of India Act, 1935. When Cripps took Nehru to Attlee in 1938, they discussed the problem and Attlee also agreed that the future Indian constitution should be framed by a Constituent Assembly of Indians.[2] Later at the Ramgarh Congress (1940), the following resolution was passed.

> "....The Congress is further of opinion that while it will always be ready, as it ever has been, to make every effort to secure communal harmony, no permanent solution is possible except through a constituent assembly, where the rights of all recognised minorities will be fully protected by agreement, as far as possible between the elected representatives of the various majority and minority groups, or by arbitration if agreement is not reached on any point....."

This resolution was passed on March 20, 1940. Four days later the Muslim League passed the Pakistan resolution at Lahore which declared :

> "Resolved that it is the considered view of this session of the All-India Muslim League that no constitutional plan would be workable in this country or acceptable to the Muslims unless it is designed on the following basic principle, viz., that geographically contiguous units are demarcated into regions which should be so constituted with such territorial readjustments as may be necessary that the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority, as in the north-western and eastern zones of India, should be grouped to constitute 'Independent States'.... This session further authorizes the Working Committee to frame a scheme of constitution in accordance with these basic principles....."

As we have seen, this basic difference in approach towards the solution of the fundamental problem persisted till the country was partitioned ; and though in a sense the aims which prompted the two resolutions were ultimately fulfilled, their consummation came about in a way which could not be satsifactory to either the League or the Congress.

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The British Government, however, seems to have taken into consideration the aspirations of both the Congress and the Muslim League, and in 1942 Cripps submitted the following proposals for their consideration :

> "....His Majesty's Government therefore make the following declaration :—
>
> (a) Immediately upon the cessation of hostilities, steps shall be taken to set up in India, in the manner described hereafter, an elected body charged with the task of framing a new constitution for India.
>
> (b) Provision shall be made, as set out below, for the participation of the Indian States in the constitution-making body.
>
> (c) His Majesty's Government undertake to accept and implement forthwith the Constitution so framed subject only to :—
>
> (1) the right of any Province of British India that is not prepared to accept the new Constitution to retain its present constitutional position, provision being made for its subsequent accession if it so decides.
>
> "With such non-acceding Provinces, should they so desire, His Majesty's Government will be prepared to agree upon a new Constitution, giving them the same full status as Indian Union, and arrived at by a procedure analogous to that here laid down..." [3]

The long term proposal of the Cripps Mission to establish a Constituent Assembly was attractive, but not enough to deviate Gandhiji's mind from the immediate problem and the Congress rejected the entire proposal in a cumbrous resolution passed by its Working Committee on April 11, 1942. The Muslim League, which, like the rest of India, had anticipated the Congress decision correctly. also rejected the proposals on the same day.

However, the British Government's commitment was unequivocal and when in July 1942 Churchill reported to King George that after the war India would have to be granted independence,[4] he may have had the promise about the Constituent Assembly in mind. For, Churchill must have realized the enormous significance of the commitment which transferred the responsibility of framing the Indian constitution from the British Parliament to an Indian assembly. Further, it committed himself personally, as well as his party, to the recognition that the Government of India Act was no longer sufficient to satisfy the legitimate ambitions of the Indians. These implications do not seem to have been noticed by Gandhiji nor by most Congressmen.

One of the basic proposals of the Cabinet Mission too was the formation of a constituent assembly to decide a new constitutional

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structure. Gandhiji. however, again linked it with the immediate problem of the formation of an interim Government, and on June 24, 1946 wrote to Crpips :

> "....In spite of the readiness....of the Working Committee to go in for the Constituent Assembly, I would not be able to advise the leap in the dark....There is nothing but a vacuum after you throw all the commitments on a scrap heap, if you really do intend to do so....The instructions to the Governors (issued by the Reforms Office), innocuous as they have proved to be, have opened up a dreadful vista. I, therefore, propose to advise the Working Committee not to accept the long term proposition without its being connected with the Interim Government. I must not act against my instinct. ..." [5]

But the next day the Working Committee decided to join the Constituent Assembly against Gandhiji's declared views [6] and thereafter the only problem that confronted the Congress was the interpretation of grouping. Here Gandhiji took a strong attitude forcing the Congress leaders to adopt various expedients none of which satisfied the Muslim League. Today it is impossible to say as to whether the Congress interpretation was correct or not. It was, however, really a political question and the solution could be arrived at by a political decision : either the Congress had to sacrifice Assam, and the whole of Bengal and the Punjab, or the Muslim League had to be satisfied without Assam and a divided Bengal and the Punjab and that too without having a sovereign Pakistan. The Congress had agreed to submit to the decision of the Federal Court, but there is hardly any doubt that Gandhiji would never have accepted an adverse decision, and would have had overwhelming mass support in his favour.[7]

Gandhiji's attitude at this time was a decisive factor in preventing the Muslim League from joining the Constituent Assembly. For, though the Constituent Assembly was created by the British Government, it was apparent that they would be unable to control its deliberations or decisions ; neither it seems it was the wish of the British Government to do so. Hence Wavell's reluctance to summon it and Attlee's last minute attempt to reconcile the Congress and the Muslim League during the abortive London talks of December followed by the Downing Street statement of December 6, 1946.[8]

It was under these circumstances that the Constituent Assembly met on December 9, 1946. For the first time in the history of India, Indians met to frame their constitution. The Muslim League members did not join.

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II

The Constituent Assembly at its first meeting on December 9 elected Dr. Sachchidananda Sinha of Bihar as the temporary Chairman. Dr. Sinha was not only the oldest member of the Constituent Assembly, but also the oldest parliamentarian present having served in the Legislative Council from 1910 to 1920, and as a Deputy Chairman of the reformed Legislative Council of 1921. Frank Anthony was elected as the temporary Deputy Chairman. On December 11, Rajendra Prasad was unanimously elected as permanent Chairman.

In his first speech as Chairman, Rajendra Prasad made the position of the Constituent Assembly clear.

> "This Constituent Assembly", he said in reply to the congratulations, "has come into being with a number of limitations, many of which we will have to bear in mind as we proceed. But, it must also be borne in mind that the Assembly is a sovereign body and is fully competent to conduct its proceedings in the manner it chooses to follow. No outside power can meddle with its proceedings. I also believe that it is competent to break the limitations attached to it at its birth. It should be our effort to get free of these limitations....." [9]

Thus Rajendra Prasad succintly stated the problem confronting the Constituent Assembly, namely, how to transform a subordinate legislative body into a sovereign assembly. It is also this part of its activities which marked the Constituent Assembly till June 3, 1947, for though serious attention was given to the framing of a Constitution, much of the work done had to be scrapped after 'partition' was decided.

III

On July 11, 1946, Nehru as the President of the Congress had appointed a Committee of experts with himself as Chairman to draft proposals for the Constituent Assembly. The members of this Committee were N. Gopalaswamy Aiyangar, K. M. Munshi, K. T. Shah, K. Santhanam, D. R. Gadgil, H. Kabir, and A. Ali. As a part of the preliminary preparations, Munshi prepared a draft of the Constitution which was to be discussed with Gopalaswamy Aiyangar, but in view of other matters of immediate importance, this was never done. But Munshi also prepared a set of rules of procedure which proved to be extremely important. For, when the Constituent Assembly met, they had

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no rules of procedure, and had to provisionally adopt the Central Legislative Assembly Rules and Standing Orders.[10] The same day (December 10) the Constituent Assembly appointed a Committee consisting of the Chairman and fifteen other members to report amongst others on :

(a) Rules of Procedure of the Constituent Assembly ;
(b) Powers of its Chairman ;
(c) Organization of the work of the Assembly including the appointment and powers of office-bearers other than the Chairman ;
(d) Procedure for the declaration and filling of vacancies in the Assembly.[11]

The important issue involved was whether the Constituent Assembly as a whole was to be the final authority for framing the rules for the Sections as well. From the Congress point of view this was necessary in order to prevent the Muslim League, if it ever came in, from running away with the Sections in which the Muslims predominated.

So in the debate that followed Suresh Chandra Bannerjee moved that the Rules should also cover the Sections, so that the resolutions instead of asking the Committee to "report on the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly" as originally proposed by J. B. Kripalani, should read "report on the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly, including Sections and Committees." Explaining the significance of this amendment, Shyamaprasad Mukherjee while supporting it said :

> "....When the Sectional Assemblies will meet each may frame its own Rules of Procedure. The question may then arise whether the Constituent Assembly as such had the authority to frame Rules of Procedure for the Sections at all. . . .If your intention is that this Rules Committee will also frame rules for the Sections, why not say specifically, 'including sections and Committees' so that there may not be any ambiguity or doubt whatsoever when Sections start doing their work."

Munshi further clarified the position by stating in support of the amendment :

> "....It should be laid down definitely by this House that the Constituent Assembly is one and indivisible, that the Sections, as already pointed out, are Sections of the Assembly, and that they do not form independent bodies which can provide for procedure inconsistently with the rules of the Constituent Assembly."

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M. R. Jayakar opposed this amendment on the ground that it would offend the Muslim League which would be in a majority in two sections; but advised by Nehru, Kripalani accepted the amendment.[12]

The debate on the amendment made the attitude of the members clear: they would try to control the activities of the sections as much as possible. As the rule making power of the Constituent Assembly was never in doubt, they were within their rights, and could cite precedent from the British Parliament.

Munshi on behalf of the Committee submitted the draft rules to the Constituent Assembly on December 21, 1946, but in the meantime interest had shifted on the Objectives Resolution moved by Nehru.

IV

The Constituent Assembly first met on December 9, and the Objectives Resolution was circulated before December 12, for Nehru was due to move it at the morning Session (11 A.M.) on that day; but due to the objection raised by some members that they had not had sufficent time to consider the resolution, its consideration was postponed till next day. However, as we have seen, even before the Constituent Assembly was due to meet, the Congress Expert Committee appointed by Nehru had drafted this all important resolution which was designed to preserve the unity of India as much as possible under the May 16 plan. Munshi writes :

> "....Panditji asked us not to worry about any draft Constitution, but to finalise the draft rules and the draft resolution on the objectives of the Constituent Assembly which he had prepared himself. In this beautifully-worded draft, Panditji cast the horoscope of our Sovereign Democratic Republic." [13]

On Friday December 13, a few minutes after 11 A.M. Nehru moved the following resolution :

> (1) This Constituent Assembly declares its firm and solemn resolve to proclaim India as an Independent Sovereign Republic and to draw up for her future governance a Constitution ;
>
> (2) WHEREIN the territories that now comprise British India, the territories that now form the Indian States, and such other parts of India as are outside British India and the States as well as such other territories as are willing to be constituted into the Independent Sovereign India, shall be a Union of them all ; and

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(3) WHEREIN the said territories, whether with their present boundaries or with such others as may be determined by the Constituent Assembly and thereafter according to the Law of the Constitution, shall possess and retain the status of autonomous Units, together with residuary powers, and exercise all powers and functions of government and administration, save and except such powers and functions as are vested in or assigned to the Union, or as are inherent or implied in the Union or resulting thereform ; and

(4) WHEREIN all power and authority of the Sovereign Independent India, its constituent parts and organs of government, are derived from the people ; and

(5) WHEREIN shall be guaranteed and secured to all the people of India justice, social, economic and political: equality of status, of opportunity, and before the law; freedom of thought, expression, belief, faith, worship, vocation, association and action, subject to law and public morality; and

(6) WHEREIN adequate safeguards shall be provided for minorities, backward and tribal areas, and depressed and other backward classes ; and

(7) WHEREBY shall be maintained the integrity of the territory of the Republic and its sovereign rights on land, sea, and air according to justice and the law of civilised nations, and

(8) this ancient land attains its rightful and honoured place in the world and make its full and willing contribution to the promotion of world peace and the welfare of mankind.

In his English speech [14] Nehru said :

"....It is a resolution and yet, it is something much more than a resolution. It is a Declaration. It is a firm resolve. It is a pledge and an undertaking and it is for all of us I hope a dedication. And I wish this House, if I may say so respectfully, should consider this Resolution not in a spirit of narrow legal wording, but rather to look at the spirit behind that Resolution. Words are magic things often enough, but even the magic of words sometimes cannot convey the magic of the human spirit and of a Nation's passion. And so, I cannot say that this Resolution at all conveys the passion that lies in the hearts and the minds of the Indian people today. It seeks very feebly to tell the world of what we have thought or dreamt of so long, and what we now hope to achieve in the near future. It is in that spirit that I venture to place this Resolution before the House and it is in that spirit that I trust the House will receive it and ultimately pass it. And may I, Sir, also with all respect, suggest to you and to the House that when the time comes for the passing of this Resolution let it be not done in the formal way by the raising of hands, but much more solemnly, by all of us standing up and thus taking this pledge anew." [15]

Regretting the absence of the Muslim League members Nehru said

"....I do feel, I do hope that they will come and this House, in its

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future stages, will have the benefit of the co-operation of all. Meanwhile, there is a duty cast upon us and that is to bear the absentees in mind, to remember always that we are here not to function for one party or one group, but always to think of India as a whole and always to think the welfare of the four hundred millions that comprise India...." [16]

At the end of his speech, Nehru gave vent to his disappointment with the Downing Street Declaration of December 6 and said :

"....We approach the world in a friendly way. We want to make friends with all countries. We want to make friends, in spite of the long history of conflict in the past, with England also. The House knows that recently I paid a visit to England. I was reluctant to go for reasons which the House knows well. But I went because of a personal request from the Prime Minister of Great Britain. I went and I met with courtesy everywhere. And yet at this psychological moment in India's history when we wanted, when we hungered for messages of cheer, friendship and co-opertion from all over the world, and more especially from England, because of the past contact and conflict between us, unfortunately, I came back without any message of cheer, but with a large measure of disappointment. I hope that the new difficulties that have arisen, as every one knows, because of the recent statements made by the British Cabinet and by others in authority there, will not come in our way and that we shall yet succeed in going ahead with the co-operation of all of us here and those who have not come. It has been a blow to me, and it has hurt me that just at the moment when we are going to stride ahead obstructions were placed in our way, new limitations were mentioned which had not been mentioned previously and new methods of procedure were suggested. I do not wish to challenge the *bona fides* of any person but I wish to say that whatever the legal aspect of the thing might be, there are moments when law is a very feeble reed to rely upon, when we have to deal with a nation which is full of the passion for freedom. Most of us here during the past many years, for a generation or more, have often taken part in the struggle for India's freedom. We have gone through the valley of the shadow. We are used to it and if necessity arises, we shall go through it again (Hear hear). Nevertheless, through all this long period, we have thought of the time when we shall have an opportunity, not merely to struggle, not merely to destroy, but to construct and create. And now, when it appeared that the time was coming for constructive effort in a free India to which we looked forward with joy, fresh difficulties are placed in our way at such a moment. It shows that, whatever force might be behind all this, people who are able and clever and very intelligent, somehow lack the imaginative daring which should accompany great offices. For, if you have to deal with any people, you have to understand them imaginatively; you should understand them emotionally; and of course, you have also to understand them intellectually. One of the unfortunate legacies of the past has been that there has been no imagination in the understanding of the Indian problem. People have often indulged in, or have presumed to give us advice, not realising that India, as she is constituted today, wants no one's advice and no one's imposition upon her. The only way to influence India is

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through friendship and co-operation and goodwill. Any attempt at imposition, the slightest trace of patronage, is resented and will be resented. (Applause). We have tried, I think honestly, in the last few months in spite of the difficulties that have faced us, to create an atmosphere of co-operation. We shall continue that endeavour. But I do very much fear that that atmosphere will be impaired if there is not sufficient and adequate response from others. Nevertheless, because we are bent on great tasks, I hope and trust that we shall continue that endeavour and I do hope that if we continue, that (Sic) we shall succeed. Where we have to deal with our own countrymen, we must continue that endeavour even though in our opinion some countrymen of ours take a wrong path. For, after all, we have to work together in this country and we have inevitably to co-operate, if not today, tomorrow or the day after. Therefore, we have to avoid in the present anything which might create a new difficulty in the creation of that future which we are working for. Therefore, so far as our own countrymen are concerned, we must try our utmost to gain their co-operation in the largest measure. But, co-operation cannot mean the giving up of the fundamental ideals on which we have stood and on which we should stand. It is not co-operation to surrender everything that has given meaning to our lives. Apart from that, as I said, we seek the co-operation of England even at this stage which is full of suspicion of each other. We feel that if that co-operation is denied, that will be injurious to India, certainly to some extent, probably more so to England, and to some extent, to the world at large. We have just come out of the World War and people talk vaguely and rather wildly of new wars to come. At such a moment this New India is taking birth—renascent, vital, fearless. Perhaps it is a suitable moment for this new birth to take place out of this turmoil in the world. But we have to be clear-eyed at this moment,—we, who have this heavy task of constitution-building. We have to think of this tremendous prospect of the present and the greater prospect of the future and not get lost in seeking small gains for this group or that. In this Constituent Assembly we are functioning on a world stage and the eyes of the world are upon us and the eyes of our entire past are upon us. Our past is witness to what we are doing here and though the future is still unborn, the future too somehow, looks at us, I think, and so, I would beg of this House to consider this Resolution in this mighty prospect of our past, of the turmoil of the present and of the great and unborn future that is going to take place

I have quoted Nehru's speech at some length because he was articulating not only the thoughts, and the aspirations, but also the doubt, fear and frustration of the Indians. For, whatever may have been its effect on the Muslim League, it found a ready response in the hearts of the rest of the Indians, who resolved as never before to stand by and if necessary, fight for upholding the sovereign rights of the Constituent Assembly. Indeed, so far as they were concerned, the Constituent Assembly was a sovereign body, and any interference by British statesmen in its working would have been taken as an encroachment on their independence.

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Nehru had appealed that the Objectives Resolution should not be considered in a narrow legalistic spirit. That, however, was not to be and M. R. Jayakar, a member of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, opposed the resolution on legal grounds. Others too opposed the resolution, notably, B. R. Ambedkar, but that was because the resolution was not revolutionary. It is, therefore, necessary only to consider Jayakar's opposition.

Jayakar, moved the following amendment :

> "This Assembly declares its firm and solemn resolve that the Constitution to be prepared by this Assembly for the future governance of India shall be for a free and democratic Sovereign State; but with a view to securing in the shaping of such a constitution, the co-operation of the Muslim League and the Indian States, and thereby intensifying the firmness of this resolve, this Assembly postpones the further consideration of this question to a later date, to enable the representatives of those two bodies to participate, if they so choose, in the deliberations of this Assembly."[18]

In his speech Jayakar explained that he had moved his amendment to postpone the further consideration of the Objectives Resolution, till the Indian States and the Muslim League members joined the Constituent Assembly.

> ". . . .I am merely pointing out," Jayakar said, "the legal difficulty in the way of this Constituent Assembly adopting this resolution at this preliminary meeting. Therefore the point I am making is that our power to transact our business at this stage of a preliminary meeting is limited. It is limited by express words and those limitations being accepted by us, this Assembly has no power at this stage to adopt any fundamentals of the Constitution. . . ."

Jayakar was a well-known lawyer and he supported his arguments by citing several references from the May 16 Plan, but Sir Alladi Krishnaswami Ayyar, the greatest lawyer present in the Constituent Assembly, demolished Jayakar's contentions in a short speech which clearly established the legal competence of the Constituent Assembly to pass the Objectives Resolution.[19] Thus Jayakar's amendment had one good result in that it provoked Sir Alladi's brilliant rejoinder.

The Constituent Assembly, however, accepted one of Jayakar's suggestions, which was eloquently supported by H. N. Kunzru, namely, that the Assembly defer the consideration of the Objectives Resolution till January 20, 1947, in the vain hope of providing the Muslim League time to join its deliberations. So on December 21, the Chairman

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Rajendra Prasad, suspended further discussion on the Bill till January 20, and called Munshi to present the report of the Rules Committee.[20]

V

An important feature of the Rules, which Munshi presented on behalf of the Rules Committee, was Rule 2, Clause (d) which altered the nomenclature of the Chairman to President. There were two reasons for this, the first being the obvious one that as there were to be a number of Chairmen, Chairmen of Sections, Chairmen of Committees, Chairmen of the Advisory Committees and so on, this change in the designation of the permanent head of the Assembly would easily distinguish him from such Chairmen. Munshi then explained :

> "The second reason is that we are functioning as an independent body. For the moment, an organisation has been lent to the Assembly by the Government of India, but immediately the Rules are passed we will have an organisation of our own and the President will naturally be the highest executive authority of the organisation. The word 'Chairman' therefore would be inappropriate in its application to our Chairman as the head of the organisation. In this connection I may perhaps refer to Rule 27, sub-para 8—
>
> " The President shall be the guardian of the privileges of the Assembly, its spokesman and representative and its highest executive authority." [21]

The next important provision, or possibly the most important, was Rule 7 which provided that,

> "The Assembly shall not be dissolved except by a resolution assented to by at least two-thirds of the whole number of members of the Assembly." [22]

This rule made it clear beyond any shadow of doubt that the Constituent Assembly was a sovereign body beyond the control of the British Parliament, or the Government which had brought it into existence. It may be questioned as to whether Rule 7 was strictly speaking legal, that is whether the Constituent Assembly was competent to pass it. But the fact is that the Constituent Assembly passed it and no one ever challenged its validity. And the Constituent Assembly became for all practical purposes a sovereign body. As to the question whether the Constituent Assembly was really a sovereign body, Munshi, who moved this resolution, said several years later that it was not.[23] Apparently Munshi was then speaking as a con-

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stitutional lawyer ; but what in fact he was doing at the time the Rules were passed was to invest the Constituent Assembly with political sovereignty.

VI

The Constituent Assembly was adjourned with a view to providing the Muslim League an opportunity to join and take part in the discussion on the objectives resolution, and to appease the League the following rule was proposed by Munshi and passed:

> "In all matters relating to the procedure of the conduct of business, the decision of the Chairman shall be final.
>
> "Provided that when a motion raises an issue which is claimed to be a major communal issue, the Chairman shall, if so requested by a majority of the representatives of either of the major communities, consult the Federal Court before giving his decision." [24]

This was the limit of concession, for had the President been obliged to accept the decision of the Federal Court, the sovereignty would have belonged to that body.

To further satisfy the Muslim League's demands the A.I.C.C. passed the following resolution on January 5, 1947.

> "....The A.I.C.C. is anxious that the Constituent Assembly should, proceed with the work of framing a Constitution for free India with the goodwill of all the parties concerned and, with a view to removing the difficulties that have arisen owing to varying interpretations, agree to advise action in accordance with the interpretation of the British Government in regard to procedure to be followed in the Sections.
>
> "It must be understood, however, that this must not involve any compulsion of a province and that the rights of the Sikhs in the Punjab should not be jeopardised. In the event of any attempt at such compulsion, a province or a part of a province has the right to take such action as may be deemed necessary in order to give effect to the wishes of the people concerned." [25]

It has been pointed out, that the last part of the resolution undid the work of the first part, but such academic criticism ignores the realities of the political situation. The activities of the League at this time and even later, was so outrageous to all sense of human values that no decent man with a shred of common sense could advise, far less force, the helpless and unwilling Hindus and Sikhs to sacrifice themselves on the altar of the League's fanaticism.

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The Sikhs, therefore, began to press for such procedural safeguards in Section B, as had been granted to the Muslims in the Constituent Assembly. They also started to think in terms of partitioning the Punjab, and a similar movement began in Bengal. Jinnah, however, was unmoved; he did nothing to assure the Hindus, and called a meeting of the League Working Committee at Karachi on January 29, that is more than a week after the Constituent Assembly was due to meet. Thus the Constituent Assembly was left with two alternatives: it could adjourn after meeting on January 21 till the League's decision was known, thereby providing Jinnah with a veto on all its future activities, or proceed with the consideration of the Objectives Resolution and other important matters regardless of the League's decision. It chose the second alternative, which under the circumstances was the correct one.

VII

The Constituent Assembly re-assembled on January 20 and the next day Jayakar withdrew his amendment, and while doing so he declared

> "....The Assembly will recall that that amendment was dictated by a few considerations, mainly, the desire to make it easier for the Muslim League and the Indian States to take part in our deliberations. In connection with the Muslim League I can say that the Assembly practically accepted the proposal which was contained in my amendment. I postponed its deliberations to the 20th of January. It has gone further and accepted the statement of His Majesty's Government of the 6th December. Though it did all this, the Muslim League has still not come in. Whether they propose to come in, nobody knows. They have held their cards up to the 29th January knowing full well that on the 20th of the month, nine days before they meet, we shall meet here. In the course of my speech I suggested as a compromise one course, namely, that if this Assembly was not willing to wait until the stage was reached according to the terms of sub-clause 6 of paragraph 19 of the Cabinet Mission's Statement after the sections had met and framed their Constitutions,—I said that if this Assembly was not prepared to wait till then because that stage would be reached at a very late date,—I suggested that we should at least wait until the date of our next session, namely, 20th January which I thought would give the Muslim League enough time to make up its mind. I, having made that suggestion, and the House having accepted it, realize that I am in honour bound not to press my amendment any further. (Cheers)I do not want however to appear as if I was backing out of the considerations which prompted my amendment, but as the House accepted the proposal I definitely made, the contract is complete. I do not therefore propose to press my amendment." [26]

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Next day (January 22), Nehru winded up the debate and in course of his speech said :

> "... We claim in this resolution to frame a free and democratic Indian Republic. A question may be asked what relation will that Republic bear to other countries of the world ? What would be its relations with England, the British Commonwealth and other countries?....It is not an easy thing to work in co-operation with England or the British Commonwealth, and yet we are prepared to do so...." [27]

This was the first indication of India's willingness to remain in the Commonwealth.

After Nehru's speech, the President, Rajendra Prasad, read the resolution and the members adopted it standing.

VIII

With the passing of the Objectives Resolution an era in India's history ended. Practically within a month Attlee made his famous declaration (February 20) in course of which he stated :

> "..... It is with great regret that His Majesty's Government find that there are still differences among Indian Parties which are preventing the Constituent Assembly from functioning as it was intended that it should. It is of the essence of the plan that the Assembly should be fully representative...." [28]

In the light of later events, Attlee's declaration of February 20 can be said to have been a prelude to partition. But he was hardly left with any other alternative than to accept the inevitable. The Muslim League had proved, if indeed any proof was necessary, that they would not co-operate with the rest of India on any terms, and at no time were the British Government prepared to force the League. The Constituent Assembly had on the other hand declared its sovereignty, and any interference at this stage would have involved the British Government with the bulk of the Indians in a major political struggle.

IX

In course of the Parliamentary debates on India in December 1946, Churchill and Simon had challenged the representative nature of the Constituent Assembly. According to Churchill it represented "only one major community in India "; Simon was more precise and

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referred to the Constituent Assembly as a "body of Hindus" and demanded to know "whether this meeting of caste Hindus at Delhi can be regarded by the (British) Government as the Constituent Assembly they meant at all."

To these allegations Rajendra Prasad gave an incontrovertible reply the day the Constituent Assembly re-assembled on January 20, 1947. After referring to Churchill's and Simon's statements he stated :

> "Both these gentlemen have held the highest offices of responsibility and have had a long and intimate connection with the aflairs of India; and whatever may be their views on current political controversies, they would not, I am sure, like to make statements which are wholly contrary to facts and lead to mischievous inferences. It is for this reason that I have considered it necessary on this occasion formally to state the facts. Out of a total of 296 Members who were to take part in the preliminary session, 210 Members attended. These 210 Members consisted of 155 Hindus out of a total of 160, 30 Scheduled Caste representatives out of a total of 33, all the 5 Sikhs, 6 Indian Christians out of a total of 7, all the 5 representatives of Backward Tribes, all 3 Anglo-Indians, all 3 Parsis and 4 Muslims out of 80. The significant absence is of coure that of the representatives of the Muslim League —an absence which we all deeply regret. But it is clear from the figures I have quoted that, with the exception of representatives of the Muslim League, every community in India, whatever the party affiliation of the persons representing that community, was represented in the Assembly; and, therefore, to describe the Assembly as representing 'only one major community in India' or as 'a body of Hindus' or as a 'meeting of Caste Hindus' is a complete travesty of facts. (Cheers)." [29]

These facts as well as the implications of the sovereignty asserted by the Constituent Assembly were well-known to the British Government. So, unwilling to get involved into any major political turmoil they gladly accepted the plan which Menon presented to Mountbatten in May.

It may be noted that after the publication of the June 3 Plan, the Muslim League members elected from the areas to be included in future India joined the Constituent Assembly with alacrity, and on July 27, their leader, Chowdhury Khaliquzzaman, went to the length of accepting the Indian flag on behalf of the Muslim League.

X

And thus the Constituent Assembly went on with its work and it reached the climax of its career at its midnight session of August 14 —15, 1947.

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"As the clock struck twelve (midnight)", writes the prosaic reporter of the Constituent Assembly Debates, "Mr. President and all the Members stood up and took the pledge as given below, Mr. President reading it out sentence by sentence and the Members repeating it after him in Hindustani and in English.

" 'At this solemn moment when the people of India, through suffering and sacrifice, have secured freedom, I,....a member of the Constituent Assembly of India, do dedicate myself in all humility to the service of India and her people to the end that this ancient land attain her rightful and honoured place in the world and make her full and willing contribution to the promotion of world peace and the welfare of mankind.'

"INTIMATION TO THE VICEROY ABOUT THE ASSUMPTION OF POWER BY THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY AND THE ASSEMBLY'S ENDORSEMENT OF LORD MOUNTBATTEN'S APPOINTMENT AS GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF INDIA.

"*Mr. President* : 'I propose that it should be intimated to the Viceroy that—

(1) the Constituent Assembly of India has assumed power for the governance of India, and

(2) the Constituent Assembly of India has endorsed the recommendation that Lord Mountbatten be Governor-General of India from the 15th August, 1947, and that this message be conveyed forthwith to Lord Mountbatten by the President and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. (Cheers) I take it the House approves it.'

The motion was adopted".[80]

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References

1. Brecher, p. 196-97.
2. Lord Attlee : *As It Happened*, p. 191.
3. Cmd. 6350 (1942) pp. 4-5. Cripps's proposals also included provision for a treaty to be concluded between the Indian Constituent Assembly and His Majesty's Government, which was incorporated in May 16 Plan (Section 22) but not considered seriously thereafter. But the provision regarding the formation of the Constituent Assembly as proposed by Cripps was later adopted with certain modifications; see May 16 Plan, Menon, pp. 466-75.
4. Wheeler-Bennett, *King George VI*, p. 703.
5. Gandhiji to Cripps. Pyarelal, I, pp. 238-39.
6. For details see above p. 230.
7. In reply to His Majesty's Government's declaration of December 6, 1946 Gandhiji wrote: "The decision of the Federal Court will go against the Congress interpretation of Grouping as far as I can make out, for the simple reason that the (British) Cabinet says it has got legal advice which upholds their decision. The Federal Court is the creation of the British. It is a packed court....No one can force Assam to do what it does not want to do." *Harijan*, December 29, 1946 p. 471, Pyarelal, I, p. 477. Gandhiji's attitude towards partitioning of Bengal was more complicated; see his letter to Sarat Chandra Bose, June 8, 1947. Pyarelal II, p. 187. By this time Gandhiji was practically reconciled to the partition of India.
8. Menon, p. 329 ; Phillips, p. 389. For Gandhiji's reaction to this statement see above, f. n. 7.
9. *Constituent Assembly Debates*, I, No. 3, p. 50. This part of Rajendra Prasad's speech was in Hindi. He followed this by a short speech in English, in which he practically repeated himself in slightly different language.
   There is however, some doubt regarding the sovereign nature of the Constituent Assembly, and K. M. Munshi who was all along connected with it later declared in a speech at Madras : "Though many of us were keen that the Constituent Assembly should be a sovereign body, it was not." K. M. Munshi *Our Sovereign Democratic Republic* ; University of Madras, the Rt. Hon. V.-S. Srinivas Sastri Lectures, Lecture I, July 14, 1955, p. 6.
10. Constituent Assembly Debates, I, No. 2 (December 10) p. 19. The Constituent Assembly also confirmed the existing organisation of the Constituent Assembly office, ibid. p. 21.
11. ibid, p. 22.
12. ibid, pp. 22-34.
13. Munshi, op. cit. p. 4.
14. *Constituent Assembly Debates*, I, No. 5, pp. 59-65. In keeping with the spirit of the time, Nehru began in Hindi, but later switched off to English. Many members in those days felt Hindi to be the patriotic language, but changed their views later, for when I heard them in the Lok Sabha, they invariably spoke in English.
15. ibid, p. 60.

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16. ibid, p. 60.
17. ibid, pp. 63-65.
18. ibid, I, No. 6, p. 73.
19. ibid, I. No. 9, pp. 140-43.
20. ibid, I, No. 10, pp. 166-67.
21. ibid, pp. 167-68.
22. ibid, note 168.
23. See above n. 9.
24. *Constituent Assembly Debates*, I, No. 10, p. 169.
25. Menon, p. 332.
26. *Constituent Assembly Debates*, II, No. 2, p. 308.
27. ibid, II, (misprinted Volume I) No. 3, p. 317.
28. Statement of Prime Minister Attlee in the House of Commons, February 20, 1947, para 6 ; Hansard, House of Commons Debates 1947, Vol. 433, columns, 1395-98.
29. *Constituent Assembly Debates*, Vol. II, No. 1, p. 267.
30. ibid, V, No. 1. For interesting details see Campbell-Johnson : *Mission with Mountbatten*, p. 157.

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APPENDIX I

DIRECTIVE ON THE USE OF SHOES

The following circular referred to above (p. 21) must have enjoyed very wide circulation for it to have been recorded in the proceedings of the Fort William College.

It is necessary to realize in this connection the contradictory systems of European and Indian polite behaviour. An Indian would normally have removed his shoes when approaching his superior (a custom not yet entirely dead), but would have considered it the height of indignity if he were asked to remove his headgear, which Europeans would normally do. The Indians tenaciously clung to their old privilege of having the headgear on, and added the new one of not having to open their shoes when approaching his superiors, at least when the latter were Europeans.

I may be allowed here to introduce a personal note, for this incident reminds me that in 1938 my maternal uncle fined one of his tenants Rs. 5/- (and collected it on the spot) because the man had the presumption to approach my uncle with his shoes on. Though I remonstrated with my uncle when I came to learn of this incident, his spirited arguments enables me to realize Mr. Laing's feelings.

Letter from the Secretary to the Government

Sir,

I am directed by His Excellency the Most Noble the Governor-General in Council to acknowledge the receipt of a letter from the Sudder Dewany Adawlut of the 12th instant, with its enclosures, relative to the orders passed by the Registrar to the Provincial Court of Appeal at Dacca for preventing Vakeels of the Court from wearing their slippers in the Court room.

2. The Governor-General in Council is of opinion that the orders issued by Mr. Laing for prohibiting a practice which had long been established, were highly objectionable and improper, and that his refusal to conform to the orders which he had received from the Provincial Court and the disrespectful language in which he has addressed himself to that Court render him still more deserving of the censure of the Government.

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3. The Court are accordingly requested to communicate the foregoing remarks to the Provincial Court at Dacca for Mr. Laing's information, and also to instruct the Provincial Court to issue the necessary orders for re-establishing the practice prohibited by Mr. Laing, in the same manner as it existed previous to such prohibition. Mr. Laing should also be informed that if he should hereafter presume to disobey any order of the Provincial Court, the Governor-General in Council will be compelled to remove him from his office.

4. The Governor-General in Council concurring in the opinion expressed in the 3rd paragraph of the Court's letter respecting the usual mode of receiving the Natives of India, desires that Mr. Laing may be prohibited from preventing the Natives from wearing their slippers at any place or on any occasion, whereby custom has already established, it has been usual to admit them in their slippers.

5. It being stated in the 3rd. paragraph of the Court's letter that the question upon which the present reference has been made is likely to recur, the Governor-General in Council requests the Sudder Dewany Adawlut will issue such orders to the other Provincial city and Zillah Courts as they may deem to be necessary for preventing the dissatisfaction which must arise from the ill judged and impolitic prohibition of any general and long established practice.*

Council Chamber
26th August, 1802.

G. DODESWELL,
Secy. to Govt.
Jud. Department.

*Proceedings of the Fort William College, Misc. Vol. No. 559, p. 107. National Archives

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APPENDIX II

OUTRAGES BY BRITISH SOLDIERS AND CIVILIANS

Lord Curzon is usually praised for the stand he took when several soldiers of the West Kent Regiment raped a Burmese woman who died as a result. But he failed to stop such outrages and it seems that the Anglo-indians forced his hands, as the following letters show. These letters also vividly describe the mentality of the contemporary Anglo-indians : army officers were conspiring to protect guilty officers, judges and magistrates were refusing to punish British offenders, but the planters were probably the worst of them. Undoubtedly Lord Curzon was shocked by the state of affairs but he not only failed to control them but actually praised the soldiers in public.

It will be seen from the letters, that British statesmen also were perturbed and alarmed at the state of affairs in India, but apparently they failed to improve the situation. The effect of the outrages mentioned in the letters are difficult to assess, for in those days news did not travel as fast as it did later. Still it can be safely assumed that these outrages developed a deep anti-British sentiment among the masses which was later exploited. It should be noted, however, that the condition of the labourer in Assam was common knowledge.

The British soldier continued to be a terror in India, though as the years advanced, the type of incidents mentioned in the following letters became rare. It is remarkable, however, that Kipling, who was glorifying Tommy Atkins, kept quiet about these outrages.

A result of these outrages was the birth of the "terrorist party", which developed from the societies for physical culture established to train young Bengalis to protect themselves against attacks by British soldiers and sometimes civilians.

1. *Lord Hamilton to Lord Elgin, May* 13, 1898 (*H.C. I, p.* 329)

"....Dr. Sircar's murder at Barrackpore is a very nasty incident. I assume that the soldiers were drunk, but an outrage of such a kind upon a respected and respectable native doctor by three privates must provoke a thoroughly bad racial feeling. I am glad that they have been committed to trial and I hope they will get a heavy sentence...."

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2. *Lord Hamilton to Lord Curzon, June* 16, 1899 (*H.C.I*)

"....I was very glad to see that you came down so promptly upon the civil and military authorities in Rangoon in connection with the disgraceful outrage which some soldiers of the West Kent Regt. there committed....But if the regiment shows a reluctance to give evidence, and a desire to shield the culprits, I hope that you and Lockhart will contrive to inflict some punishment upon them that will be a mark of your indignation and disgust at their conduct. I do not know what is the most unhealthy and unpleasant station in British India, but I should be disposed to send them to some quarter of this description, and keep them there for a considerable period...."

3. *Lord Hamilton to Lord Curzon, July* 6, 1899 (*H.C.I, p.* 213)

"You do not seem to be making much progress in bringing to justice the perpetrators of the Rangoon outrage. I am very glad to find that, in our letters which crossed, the same idea pervades both—that, if the guilty cannot be convicted for want of evidence, some punishment should be inflicted upon the regiment. I am somewhat perturbed at your remark that you believe that the number of cases of such outrages is on the increase. I have had an uneasy suspicion that such was the case, and I am afraid that, if this is the fact, it is due to the knowledge that this class of offence can be committed with comparative immunity from the extreme difficulty of obtaining a conviction from the jury. I understand that, ever since Ripon raised, by his inconceivable stupidity, racial feeling in India, it has affected the decision of the juries in cases where they have to adjudicate between Europeans and Natives, and that, previous to Ripon's advent in India, it was easier to get juries, no matter what their composition might be, to look at the question submitted to them impartially rather than from the standpoint of the colour of the defendant. The British soldier is treated with far greater consideration in India than in any other part of the world, and he is surrounded with comforts and with attendants such as he never gets elsewhere, and if, under such conditions, he misuses his power of superior strength, I quite agree that it is for you to take some notice of such improper conduct. But pray be very cautious and circumspect in anything that you propose. I admit that this class of outrage is perhaps more damaging to our rule, and creates more deep-seated resentment in the Native mind, than any class of transactions connected with our rule in India. To successfully arrest and diminish this class of offence it is necessary to carry

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with you, to a certain extent, Anglo-Indian opinion. I recollect Lytton issuing a Minute, the substance of which was indisputably correct, and in connection with a case in which a European, who had accidentally killed a Native, had been subjected to a ridiculously lenient sentence. But it created a great uproar at the time, and undoubtedly subjected Lytton to very great unpopularity, and this diminished for the future his influence with Europeans in India...."

4. *Lord Hamilton to Lord Curzon, July* 14, 1899 (*H.C. I, p.* 225)

"....On re-reading my letter of last week to you, ...I used language which might imply that I was averse to your taking any strong action for the protection of Natives against assault by soldiers. On the contrary, I most heartily concur with you, and will support you in every way. But it is necessary at the outset to proceed cautiously, so as to carry the better class of Anglo-Indian opinion with you : otherwise it is just possible that, in your attempt to improve matters you might be dragged into an inter-racial controversy...."

5. *Lord Hamilton to Lord Curzon, September* 6, 1899 (*H.C. I, p.* 306)

"....The finding in the Rangoon case is annoying, and a clear violation of what justice required...."

6. *Lord Hamilton to Lord Curzon, February* 16, 1900 (*H.C. II, p.* 47)

"...I expected you would be attacked for the strong line you have taken in connection with the Rangoon outrage. The official element, both military and civil, is so strong in India that they have a very dominant control over the English Press. We, from time to time, abuse the Native Press, and believe it to be a danger to our rule in India : I am not at all sure that the Anglo-Indian Press is not quite as mischievous, and, by its intolerance, does not greatly aggravate all racial difficulties and differences.."

7. *Enclosed in the letter from Lord Hamilton to Lord Curzon, March* 8, 1900 (*H.C. II, p.* 76)

NOTE BY SIR JOHN EDGE

"....It is unfortunately true that British soldiers who have committed criminal offences in India, are frequently and improperly acquitted by juries in India, although the clearest possible evidence of the offence having been committed by the accused is placed before the

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Jury and the Jury is properly and carefully directed as to the law and their duty by the presiding Judge....."

8. *Lord Hamilton to Lord Curzon, June*, 6, 1900 (*H.C. II, p.* 199)

"....I am very sorry to gather from your last letter that you have come to the conclusion that not even Court Martial composed of British Officers can be depended upon to do justice in deciding upon the merits of collisions between British soldiers and Natives. The stability of our rule in India will become greatly shaken if this distrust and hatred of the white soldier spreads. You are doing really laudable and noble work in summarily coming down upon those who in any way abet or connive at miscarriages of justice, which tend to shield the British soldier from the punishment he deserves...."

9. *Lord Hamilton to Lord Curzon, July* 27, 1900 (*H.C. II, p.* 260)

"....These cases, constant as they seem to be, of misconduct of certain members of the Civil service, by which collisions are provoked with Natives, are very distressing. It argues a low tone and utter absence of either a sense of duty or of that honour which we are supposed to associate with gentlemen in responsible positions. About five and twenty years ago we tapped a very bad stratum of the social world, and the Indian Civil Service is, I think, now paying the penalty. The class from which many of the candidates then came was not only socially very inferior, but the boys had no University, and many of them no public school education. They were coached in London, lived in London, and got an entirely erroneous idea of what a gentleman's conceptions and aspirations should be, and were sent out to India at the worst stage of hoble-de-hoyism...."

10. *Lord Curzon to Lord Hamilton, September* 17, 1900 (*H.C. II*)

"..I am sorry to say that, in the whole of my campaign on the subject of these accidents and collisions, I met with nothing but tacit discouragement and sublatent antagonism from the soldiers. They are banded together throughout India in a compact body, animated by the fiercest *espirit de corps*. They will wink at things done by a few soldiers, which they would denounce if committed by a civilian. The moment one is censured, all the rest are up in arms. They cannot see why the poor soldier should not be allowed to go out, and shoot and harry at his own sweet will ; and if in the course of the excursion a Native is killed, their attitude is that of a very fast bowler at cricket whom I once met, and who having killed a man by the ball jumping

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up and striking him on the temple, said to me, 'why did the d-d fool get his head in the way ?' Nothing to me since I came to India has been more surprising or more disappointing than the attitude and capacities of the leading members of the Military service....I told the Commander-in-Chief quite plainly that I had not taken up this affair in order to be defeated or baffled....

"Since I last wrote to you there has been another bad case. At Dinapur, where as you know, there has been much ill-feeling between the soldiers and the Natives, one of the Munsters has stabbed a washerman."

(Curzon then relates that in Fort William a British soldier murdered an Indian tailor against whom he had a grudge and pleaded insanity. Another soldier hit a boy without any provocation with a stave and broke his leg.)

11. *Lord Curzon to Lord Hamilton October* 17, 1900 (*H.C. II*)

"....I have discussed with you, in many letters, the difficulties that have to be encountered in this country in the endeavour to secure even justice as between Europeans and Natives in the Courts. I have shown you successively how Magistrates, District Judges, Juries and Court-Martials all fail, when it is a question of sentencing a European for an injury to a native. I am sorry now to have to report that even the High Court of Calcutta is not exempt. There occured recently in Assam, a case of the most gross and aggravated assault, by an Englishman in a tea plantation, upon one of his coolies. The District Magistrate who tried it sentenced the culprit to a fine of Rs. 50/-. The Local Government in great anger at this utterly inadequate sentence took the case to the High Court, on a motion for enhancement. The two judges who tried the case rejected the appeal on the flimsiest grounds, which could scarcely impose upon anyone. One of their number was the individual before whom was recently tried at Calcutta the soldier who successfully feigned madness in order to escape the consequences of his murderous deed...."

12. *Lord Curzon to Lord Hamilton, August* 28, 1901

"....I was talking last night with MacDonnell about the case in the Cawnpore Cotton Mill, which I mentioned to you last week. He admitted the flagrant inadequacy of the sentence imposed by the Magistrate ; but said that it is of no use to take such cases to the High Court. Such is their admitted partiality and incompetence...."

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(In this case a European Supervisor had kicked a coolie who lay insensible and unattended for three hours after which he was removed to his house where he died. The European was fincd Rs. 300/-).

13. *Lord Curzon to Lord Hamilton, July* 24, 1901 (*H.C. III*)

"....Much the same is true also of Assam. I have had three cases before me during the past weeks in which the English Magistrates, who are entirely in the hands of tea-planters, have given the most partial and unjust sentence in cases between the planters or managers of the tea gardens and their coolies. If a coolie threatens, or commits a technical assault upon an Englishman, he is given a year's rigorous imprisonment. The Englishman may thrash a coolie almost to death, or may criminally assault his daughter or wife, and he only gets a fine of Rs. 50/-. Now I learnt it is the fashion for the Magistrates, when a case of this character comes before him, to send out to the tea-planters for their opinion, and if this be unfavourable to action, a great many of the cases are burked altogether. Cotton interns himself in his office, and writes long letters and resolutions, but knows next to nothing of his officers or of his people. The administration has therefore become very feeble in his hands, and will want a good deal of bracing up when he goes...."

14. *Lord Hamilton to Lord Curzon, August* 15, 1901 (*H.C. III, p.* 358)

"....The miscarriage of justice in India in the High Courts, and the conduct of Magistrates where coolies and Europeans come in collision, cause me great concern. It seems to me a very serious reflection upon the whole basis of our rule in India, which is to secure justice between man and man...."

15. *Lord Hamilton to Lord Curzon, October* 2, 1901 (*H.C III*)

(Hamilton refers to the papers sent by Curzon on the Travancore Planters' case, in which an European Planter flogged an Indian to death.)

"...It would appear that in India, where we have established for generations a complete code of criminal law and procedure, that the European claims an immunity from punishment for murder and assault when committed upon the person of a Native that even in the wildest parts of West Coast of Africa is not given to European officials."

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16. *Lord Curzon to Lord Hamilton, January* 29, 1903 (*H.C. III*)

"....In this very week has come up another case of three soldiers who, in violation of the shooting rules, were engaged in shooting in the vicinity of a native village, and shot, though they fortunately did not kill, a native boy. They were then set upon and hustled by the villagers. The latter were tried by the District Magistrate, a young Englishman of only three years' service. He delivered one of the most partisan and monstrous judgements that I have ever read, letting the soldiers off scot-free, sentencing the villagers to savage terms of imprisonment, and inflicting ten stripes upon the wounded boy. Just before I left Delhi I had a similar case of three soldiers, who assaulted and shot a native Forest Guard down at Madras, who had come up and asked them what they were doing in the forest reserve. The three men were identified out of the whole regiment, though one of them had shaved off his moustache to escape recognition. They were proved to have been out shooting without passes on that day, they were proved to have been in the very reserve where the assault took place, and they were shown to be the only three British soldiers out shooting on that day. Nevertheless, because the Forest Guard was the only actual witness of the assault upon himself, and because he was a native his testimony was discredited and the case against the men was dismissed. There, again, the Collector delivered a judgement saturated with gross partiality. I spoke to Ampthill (Lord Ampthill, Governor of Madras) about it, and the case is now being taken by the Government for a rehearing before the High Court. None of these cases are known to the public. They are more or less successfully kept out of the newspapers, and no one, except at headquarters, where of course the soldiers never say a word about the subject, has any knowledge of the state of things that goes on from one end of India to the other and of the terrible injustice that prevails...."

17. *Lord Hamilton to Lord Curzon, June* 25, 1903 (*H.C. III*)

"Amongst other subjects, I spoke to Salisbury about the line you had taken in protecting Natives against the assault of Europeans, and insisting upon justice being done. He warmly endorsed your action, and emphatically said that, if under the modern conditions which you described in your letter Europeans were allowed to assault Natives with impunity, our rule in India would become impossible. I was surprised at the vehemence of his assertion, but I thought it would be gratifying to you ; and I see that you have secured another

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convert to your views in the Commander-in-Chief, for I think I may safely infer that the circular, which he has issued against assaults by soldiers upon Natives, was largely due to your instigation...."

18. *Lord Curzon to Lord Hamilton, August* 5, 1903 (*H.C. III*)

"....Fuller has now returned to Assam....I also propose to address him about the relations between tea-planters and their coolies in his Province, which seem to me to be entering upon a more acute and dangerous phase. The coolies are learning to combine, and very often, upon any provocation, they are apt to gather and assault the European manager of the plantation. These managers are drawn from a most inferior class of Englishmen and Scotchmen ; they do not know the language, they have a profound contempt for the Natives, and they are sometimes guilty of serious acts of lust and oppression. The planters actually allege in public meetings that they can be certain of no justice, though what they mean by this is that they regard it as the greatest of hardships if a planter is fined Rs. 100/- for an assault that terminates in the death of a coolie, while the coolie gets a term of rigorous imprisonment of from three to six years if he so much as lifts his hands against a European. In my view this unfortunate state of affairs is likely to continue, and even to develop so long as the present Labour Law remain in Assam. The Labour Law is really a penal contract, and the coolies may almost be described as slaves. They cannot run away except at the cost of being arrested and thrown into prison. As long as these conditions exist, the masters will continue to bully their slaves, and the slaves will resent the tyranny of the masters. Some day we shall abolish the penal contract altogether, and the planters will have to go to the open market for their labour. A good many concerns will smash altogether and disappear from view, but the stronger and better-managed gardens will survive, and the planters will then have to treat their coolies with humanity, because otherwise they will not be able to retain them at all."

19. *Manchester Guardian, July* 21, 1904. (*p.* 3.)

Lord Curzon was conferred the freedom of the city of London followed by a banquet at the Guildhall. In course of his speech Lord Curzon declared that he (Curzon) had taken a strong stand for the "fair treatment of our Indian fellow-subjects, and he rejoiced to say that the conduct of Englishmen in general in India towards the Indians was exemplary."

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NOTE—

This is not the only instance of Lord Curzon's equivocation in public. Lady Minto relates that in his farewell speech at the Byculla Club, Bombay in 1906, when Lord Curzon was declaring that the north-west frontier "was perfectly peaceful and satisfactory", he had actually in his pocket a telegram announcing the murder of Colonel Harnam, the Political Officer at Wano, the third Political Officer nurdered within fourteen months. In the autumn of 1905 the Foreign Department had reported to him that "an unparalleled state of terror existed on the frontier between November, 1904 and March, 1905," and Curzon himself, very shortly before he left India, noted that "the present system is a scandal and strong measures are required to remedy it." "But," Minto wrote to Morley, "it was his (Curzon's) own system." (Lady Minto : *India, Minto & Morley*, pp. 38, 188.)

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APPENDIX III

PARTITION OF BENGAL

It has usually been maintained by Lord Curzon's apologists, that the partition of Bengal had become necessary on administrative grounds, so that Lord Curzon by dividing the province into two administrative halves was in reality conferring a boon on the people of eastern India. The natural corollary to this syllogism is that the anti-Partition movement did not take into consideration the administrative benefits of the partition but was the result partly of an irrational emotional upsurge and partly of the selfish interests of the Hindu middle-class.

The quotations from the note by Sir Charles Stevens on Mr. Risley's circular will dispel the idea that the partition would have resulted in improving the administration of Bengal. If the Indian leaders of those days knew as much about the administration of their country as Sir Charles Stevens did, their agitation might have taken a different turn. The nature of Swadeshi movement and extremism in Indian nationalism can only be understood in the background of Bengal partition. Space does not permit me to give an account of partitioned Bengal, so I feel that the best thing I can do is to publish one of H.W. Nevinson's reports published in the *Manchester Guardian.*

Confidential.

A

No. 3678

From

H. H. Risley, C.I.E.
Secretary to the Government of India.

To

The Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal
Home Department — Calcutta, *the 3rd December*, 1903.

Public

Sir,

2.....The fact is sufficient that at the present time the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal is called upon to administer an area of 189,000

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square miles (151,000 British territory) with a population of 78,493,000 (74,744,000 in British territory) and a gross revenue of 1,137 lakhs (land revenue 505 lakhs).

4...Thus in the province where personal rule is perhaps most required, there is least of it, and where the officers know least of the people the Government know least of its officers....Already in 1874 the same line of reasoning led, in spite of many contemporary protests, to the severance of Assam from Bengal. The result had undoubtedly been beneficial to both parties, and the experiment has been justified. The time has now come when it should be repeated on a larger scale. No question of loss of prestige, or even of temporary sacrifice of advantage ought to stand in the way of a statesman-like and far-sighted handling of the question...

9....The only modification in this arrangement that may be required will be contingent upon the decision that may be arrived at concerning the Uriya-speaking peoples. If these are all to be concentrated, as is proposed below, in a single tract to be administrated, not by the Central Provinces but by Bengal, then (supposing geographical conditions to render this practicable) it may be desirable to exclude such Uriya-speaking elements as there are in Chutia Nagpur and to leave them with Bengal....

12. The future of Orissa will not, however, be determined, exclusively by a consideration of the points that have already been put forward. Other and wider issues, are, in the opinion of the Governor-General in Council, involved. These embrace questions of race and language, in addition to or apart from the more arbitrary distinctions of administrative or territorial partition....Under ordinary conditions the Government is unable to retain in it a superior staff who have become acquainted with the local language, and with the local customs which invariably accompany it...Nowhere are these drawbacks more conspicuous than among the Uriya-speaking peoples, distributed, as has been pointed out, between three administrations, and a source of constant anxiety to each. Hence in dealing with a question of this kind, it may be that the true criterion of territorial redistribution should be sought not in race but in language....

14. The opinions of the members of this group (Uriyas) have, on several occasion, been expressed in no uncertain sounds. They entertain, so far as is known, no particular desire for the disruption of existing ties, as compared one with the other, but they entertain the

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strongest desire for the disruption of all such ties if by these means they can purchase the much greater advantage of linguistic union. They ask not so much to be taken away from Madras, with whose administration they are not believed to have grounds for complaint, or to be added to or taken away from the Central Provinces, or to remain under or be transferred to Bengal, as to be welded by the link of their common language into a single administrative whole. The Government of India have received a petition from the peoples of Ganjam in which they speak of themselves as dissociated from their Uriya brethren of Orissa as "a limb separate from the body," and they pray not for a patchwork redistribution, but that the Government of India "will be graciously pleased to bring together the scattered divisions, inhabited by Uriya-speaking peoples, i.e. Ganjam in Madras, Sambalpur in the Central Provinces, and Orissa in Bengal, under the Government of Bengal or under any one Government and one University". To the same effect is the prayer of Raja Baikuntha Nath of Balasore that "all the districts and states sepaking the Uriya language be united together and placed under one common administration, no matter whether under Madras, Bengal, the Central Provinces, or a separate administration. The Government of India have further been informed on the best authority that even those among the people of Sambalpur who are most attached to the Central Provinces "would prefer to sever connections with the province to giving up their mother tongue." It is for unity on the basis of language, not for distribution on the basis of administrative advantage that all these memorialists plead. It is not contended that opinions may not be forthcoming on the opposite side. If they exist they will doubtless be evoked by the present discussion. So far, however, as any expression of local views has yet reached the Government of India, it coincides with the independent impression that has been formed by them.

15. On the grounds above stated the Government of India are disposed to unite the whole of the Uriya speaking peoples, both hill and plain, under one administration, Bengal....

19. The Government of India are aware that the smallness and backwardness of Assam have been appealed to as supplying a sufficient argument against any expansion at all. They are inclined to entertain precisely the opposite views. In their opinion it is to its contracted area, to its restricted opportunities, to its lack of commercial outlet, to its alien services, and the predominance in its life and administration

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of a single industrial interest depending in the main upon imported labour, that what has been described as the parochialism of Assam is due. The province requires an impulse forward in all of these direction.....

....No temporary opposition in the transferred towns or areas, no artificial agitation or interested outcry, should in their opinion be permitted to divest the efforts of Government from the main object, viz., the creation of Assam into a vigorous and self-contained administration, capable of playing the same part on the North-East Frontier of India that the Central Provinces have done in the Centre, and that the Punjab formerly did on the North-West. If this end can be attained co-incidentally with a relief to the over-burdened and congested administration of Bengal, the reform should be the more cordially recommended and the more readily approved....

B

NOTE ON THE PROPOSALS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA FOR THE RELIEF OF THE GOVERNMENT OF BENGAL, BY SIR C. C. STEVENS, K.C.S.I.

Existing defects in the Administration of Bengal, and the need of remedy.

2. It is asserted that the increase of the population of Bengal to its present number of 78½ millions has rendered the relief of the Government necessary, especially since that increase has been "accompanied by a considerable development of the material resources of the country, and a great extension of railways and other means of communication while the spread of English education and the wider diffusion of the native press tend to increase litigation, to demand more precise methods of administration, to give greater publicity to the conduct of officials, and in every way to place a heavier strain upon the head of the Government and upon all ranks of his subordinates." It will not escape notice that some of these aggravations of the burden tend also to lighten it. For example, the extension of railways and other means of communication saves the Lieutenant-Governor and his subordinates far more time and labour than it consumes ; it enables these officers to concentrate their energies on those portions of their respective charges where they are most required. There are few districts now where there are no railways, and none which are not within easy reach of railways. The Lieutenant-Governor wishes to inspect

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famine operations in North Behar, a night and a day will take him to the most distant tracts. Disturbances occur in Calcutta, and he thinks his presence there is necessary, he is at his headquarters again at once. His power of supervision is multiplied many times, a fact which indeed tends to the increase of centralization with its attendant advantages and evils.....

23....The proposals may more fittingly be described as proposals for the relief of the Central Provinces from "the difficulties in connection with the Administration of Sambalpur", of Madras from "the anxieties imposed on the administration by the great diversities of languages", and of both from "a troublesome excrescence," such difficulties and anxieties and excrescence being concentrated in Bengal. The fact, however, seems to be that the main purpose of this part of the scheme is the agglomeration of the Uriya speaking people; the convenience of the Administration concerned is merely an incidental consideration. I confess that I do not understand why the Madras and Central Provinces officers should find so much more difficulty than the Bengal Officers do in dealing with Uriyas, or than Bengal officers do in dealing with Santhals, Kols and Uraons. So far as the case presented goes, it seems scarcely to support the necessity for relieving the two Governments ; and the relief to the Central Provinces would be accompanied by the addition of new languages, so that the Chief Commissioner and his officers would lose in this respect rather than gain. It is necessary to consider the people. I have been in three of the Orissa Tributary States and over the boundary of Bamra, now belonging to the Central Provinces, and (I suppose) to be made over to Bengal. All these are in something like the same stage as the less developed parts of Chota-Nagpur ; yet "the Bengal form of administration" is considered suitable for the former, while it is "too highly developed, too legalized, and too impersonal" for the latter. The aspirations of the Uriyas to be ruled by one and the same administration are quoted with some sympathy, while the Kols and Santhals are to be divided, and the Bengalis of Eastern Bengal are to be cut off from those of the West....

24. Perhaps in few countries out of India would a territory twice as large as Ceylon, and with twice the population, be regarded as a "contracted area" with "restricted opportunities"....

25. The remedy proposed for the inconveniences of the existing arrangements is the transfer of the Chittagong Division and the

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districts of Dacca and Maimansingh from Bengal to Assam. Before the details are looked at, there are one or two general considerations common to Eastern Bengal which deserve attention. It is said that geographically Dacca and Maimansingh are separated from Bengal by the main channel of the Brahmaputra River. "If they are joined to Assam, the latter will possess a definite and intelligible Western boundary, whereas if the Chittagong Division is assigned to Assam, and Dacca and Maimansingh are left with Bengal, then the two latter districts will constitute a projection from the main body of Bengal obtruding itself into the heart of Assam, from which they will be separated by no ties either of origin, language, religion, or administration." I observe, by the way, that this objection on the ground of protrusion has been lost sight of in the Chota-Nagpur proposals. The whole of Chota-Nagpur would protrude into Bengal, and in particular the Bonai State, the nearer to Calcutta, would go to the Central Provinces, while Sambalpur and Bamra on the Central Provinces side of Bonai would be transferred to Bengal.

The special point to which I desire to call attention is the description of the main stream of a great river, meandering through alluvial soil, as a "definite and intelligible boundary" between two Provinces. It would be one only on a map—and that on so small scale as to hide considerable changes; and even then the map might become obsolete in a period much shorter than a farseeing statesman would wish to provide for. Such a river cannot be said to be liable only to change its course; it is never still....

29. I have already explained why the Brahmaputra would not form a definite and intelligible boundary, and why a great river passing through an alluvial tract is the worst possible boundary. It does not appear that the objections generally have been completely anticipated or that, where they have been anticipated, they have been fully met. It must now be evident to the Government of India that the local feeling against the transfer is much stronger in Chittagong than had been supposed; so far as I can judge it is still stronger in Dacca and Maimansingh, and it is likely to be so, especially in Dacca, which is a very advanced district, and has always contributed an almost excessive proportion of the Native officers of all grades, both judicial and executive, gazetted and ministerial as well as of the professional men of Bengal. If the Uriya speaking people desire to be united, is it not *a fortiori* natural that the greatly more numerous, more advanced

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and more important speakers of Bengali should strongly object to be divided, and a part of them to be attached to a far less developed administration ? How is it that when the local Uriya opinion is quoted with some sympathy and support, objections from Eastern Districts are, so to speak, discounted by the remark that "no temporary opposition in the transferred towns or areas, no artificial agitation or interested outcry, should be permitted to divert the efforts of Government ?"

31. Great stress is laid on the necessity for creating an independent Civil Service for Assam possessing equal attractions to the Services of other Provinces. In order to find "prizes", it is proposed to transfer two Commissionerships from Bengal which would at the same time lose the Commissionership of Chota-Nagpur. The net result to Bengal would be to lose three Commissioners together with a population of a little less than 11 millions, and to retain six Commissioners with a population of 67½ millions! And this by way of lightening the work of the Lieutenant-Governor, whose local representatives and deputies the Commissioners are !.....

32....On the whole I venture to think that the measures brought forward by the Government will fail to bring about the relief to the Government of Bengal which is stated to be the paramount consideration, that the other alleged advantages will in the main be doubtful at best, and that in several directions there will be disadvantages, besides the general inconvenience which great and sudden changes nearly always produce, at least for a time.

I have been asked to consider whether, assuming that some change must be made, it is possible to make a better division of Bengal than that which I have ventured to deprecate. I think it is possible to do this, though the arrangement which I shall propose is not only open to objection, but is open to some of those which I have raised against the suggestions of the Government. I would divide Bengal into an Eastern and a Western Administration. To the Western Administration I would assign the Patna and Chota-Nagpur divisions, the Bhagalpur division (except Malda) and perhaps the Raniganj subdivision of the Burdwan district, though this last suggestion would require to be considered from the local point of view. The rest of Bengal might be placed under the Eastern Administration, and Assam either left as at present (which would be perhaps preferred by the Government of India), or re-attached to Eastern Bengal. The areas

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and population would be as follows :—

WESTERN

	Acres (Sic) Square Miles	Population
Patna Division	23,686	15,514,987
Chota-Nagpur :—		
British Districts	26,963	4,900,429
Tributary States	16,054	1,001,429
Bhagulpore (Excluding Malda)	18,712	7,842,288
	85,415	29,259,133
Ranigunge, Subdivision of Burdwan	671	say 300,000*
	86,086	29,559,133

* I have not later figures than those of 1882, which are 284,418.

EASTERN

The Presidency Division, Burdwan, Orissa, Rajshahi, Dacca, Chittagong with Malda, and excluding Raniganj.

This would have an area of 103,000 square miles and a population of, approximately, 48,933,000.

33. I should exclude Malda from Western Bengal, because it is a distinctly Bengali district, and to avoid, as far as possible, crossing the river; the silk industry also connects it with Murshidabad. And I should be inclined, *prima facie*, to include Raniganj, so as to bring the mining interests, as far as possible, together. But this requires further consideration.

The advantages of the arrangement would be that the Hindi-speaking districts would be collected together, the Mundas and Kols, the Uraons and the Santhal would be also under one and the same administration except a few stragglers, who will probably have learned the language of the district where they are, as I have actually seen in the case of the Santhalis in Bribhum.

On the other hand, the speakers of Bengali would all be

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retained under one Government. The provinces would be compact, and well served by railways ; only in small corner would there be a river boundary. The capital of Western Bengal would be the great city of Patna, or some place close to it. There would certainly be no such hill station as every other province has, but Sir George Campbell had an excellent circuit house built at Hazaribagh, with the view of using it as a temporary residence in the rainy season, which is generally pleasant in the higher parts of Chota-Nagpur. If this were enlarged a little it would suffice for the purpose, and also be available for the Commissioner of Chota-Nagpur on tour.

C

Manchester Guardian, January 3, 1908, *p.* 4. *Henry W; Nevinson* : *Boycott and Swadeshi* : (*Written from Eastern Bengal*).

"Eastern Bengal is the stronghold of the Swadeshi movement, and the home of the boycott that has been its necessary instrument. The boycott on British goods—which here mean chiefly Liverpool salt and Manchester cotton—was directly due to the partititon of Bengal. The origin of the boycott, which I cannot discuss fully today, was the hope of drawing attention of the English people to this particular wrong. It was seen that the Government of India under Lord Curzon took no notice whatever of Indian opinion, expressed throughout the whole country by every constitutional means. The hope was that a boycott of British goods might pierce the ignorance and indifference of the English people, and then that appeal would be made to the natural sense of fairplay and liberty with which India still credits the Englishman in his own home.

"So merchants and shopkeepers and buyers alike were called upon to have no dealing with British goods. The young men of towns and villages formed themselves into associations to preach the boycott. Shops that continued the sale were surrounded by groups that implored customers for the sake of their country to go away. Boys threw themselves prostrate in supplication, as is the Indian way. This was the only form of persuasion used. I have heard of no violence, nor of any persecution for this kind of boycott. But sometimes the boycott took the further form of destroying British goods. Usually the goods were first paid for, but in some cases payment was not made, and I have examined one in which four youths destroyed some foreign

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sugar, valued at about 1s. 2d. and were sentenced to several months imprisonment and heavy fines.

"The time for that kind of boycott is now past. There is no more need to preach boycott or Swadeshi ; everyone knows the principle, even in the furthest villages. The political boycott of British goods is becoming merged in the much larger economic growth of Swadeshi for the revival of all purely Indian industries, and the methods no longer consists of appeals to shopkeepers and customers, but of a social boycott of the merchants, who still insist on dealing in any foreign rather than Indian goods. Late the other night, as I sat on the river steamer after a long day of listening to leaders of Hindu opinion, leaders of Mahometan opinion, and English officials, five or six dark forms gathered round me with gestures of secrecy. They were merchants who had large dealings in Manchester cotton, and in consequence were generally shunned. Barbers would not shave them, milkmen would not sell them milk, friends would not come to their daughters' marriage. It was distressing and inconvenient. Would I please set everything as it was before ?

"I have no doubt all they said was entirely true, except perhaps their assertion that the Mahometans insisted on having Manchester goods. The Mahometans in this province have most to gain by the Swadeshi movement, for they form the great majority of the handloom weavers, and owing to Swadeshi, that industry, for which Dacca was long famous over the world, has in the last two years not only revived but redoubled. Of how far the sale of Manchester goods has really been affected no official can give me an estimate, probably Manchester could. To the boycotted merchants what hope could I give ? They refused to throw in their lot with the Swadeshi movement, and even if they united in urging political reforms upon the Government, I doubt if the Swadeshi movement can now be ended by any political reform, since it has certain obvious economic advantages.

"I am now living in the one district of India that is 'proclaimed' under the new Seditious Meetings Act, the district in which the 'volunteers' first made themselves conspicuous, though their origin goes back to the early Congresses of the eighties. The phrase 'National Volunteers,' which so alarmed sensationalist at home, was never heard here, being the sole invention, I believe, of the Calcutta journalist who set himself to make the flesh of the India Office creep some months ago, and succeeded. The Volunteers, as they now exist, are a number of

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young men and students who hold themselves always ready for public service to their country. In towns and some villages they have a leader or "captain', who directs their work, but their organization is very loose, and I believe they do not keep lists of their names, though one Government official told me they did. I have conversed with some of their captains and many of their members, and found their duties a peculiar mixture of politics and philanthropy.

"I came across them first relieving the distress from famine and flood in Orissa, far away, but this province is their real sphere. In the 'proclaimed' town of Barisal their members in the Indian College have formed a band called 'the Little Brothers of the Poor', for nursing among the villages especially in cholera and small-pox which are commonest plagues here. At fairs and the great festival, when women go to bathe in the sacred river, they act as guards against the lower class of Mahometans. They are also ready for any sudden onslaught by these Mahometans upon Hindu houses and temples, such as was made in the spring at two or three towns of the province. They act as stewards at public meetings and organize the public processions and ceremonials. Unless driven to act in defence of their homes they go unarmed, but at Dacca and some other places they practice single-stick with the lathi, or bamboo cane, so as to be ready for emergencies. This is their worst offence."

Times May 11, 1906 *p.* 5.

"The Partition of Bengal". Allahabad, May 10

"Well-authenticated reports from Eastern Bengal show that the feeling of irritation among the Mahomedan population against the Hindu boycotting movement is growing rapidly. The Mahomedans, who form the greater part of the population transferred to the new province, do not sympathise with the political agitation against the partition of Bengal. The Mahomedans are somewhat turbulent by nature, though loyal, and the continued provocation by the agitators is likely to make the task of allaying their irritation increasingly difficult."

The Times, August 8, 1906 *p.* 3. (*Summary*)

Sir B. Fuller resigned. He left Dacca on August 7, 1906. A mass meeting of 30,000 Muslims passed a resolution deploring the resignation of Fuller, and regretted that the Government had accepted

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Fuller's resignation without regard to Mahomedan interests, and had done great injustice to His Majesty's loyal Muslim subjects who formed two thirds of the population of the province.

A large meeting of the Muslims of Netrakona adopted resolution recording their gratitude to Morley, for his assurance that the partition of Bengal was a settled fact, and their appreciation of Sir B. Fuller's service. (Reuter)

Times, August 10, 1906 *p.* 3. (*Summary*)

Muslim meetings held at Mymensingh and Noakhali have passed resolutions expressing regret for the resignation Sir B. Fuller. (Reuter)

Times, August 17, 1906 *p.* 3. (*Summary*)

More Muslim meeting in East Bengal for Fuller's resignation. (Reuter)

Times, August 24, 1906, *p.* 3.

(*From our own correspondent*) *Simla, August* 22.

"Meetings in various parts of India continue to show how deeply Mahomedan feeling has been stirred by the resignation of Sir Bamfylde Fuller. Resolutions of regret and protest are invariably passed. The feeling is quite spontaneous, indeed no such remarkable sympathy with a civil official has ever before been displayed. Bengali attempts to minimize its significance are useless as public opinion generally acknowledges the widespread effect produced among the whole Mahomedan Community."

Times, August 20, 1906, *p.* 6.

Letter of Sir Henry Cotton welcoming the resignation of Fuller. (He stigmatized Fuller's administration thus:) "....Public meetings have been forcibly dispersed, the military police have been called out, a system of espionage has been established, the racial and religious antagonism between Hindus and Mahomedans has been revived in a province where no such feelings had ever existed within my memory...."

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APPENDIX IV

HINDU-MUSLIM RELATION

The following letters are published here not with a view to fixing on a few British politicians the entire responsibility of keeping the Muslims away from the Congress. The letters, however, reveal a mental attitude which later on developed into a vacillating policy from which there was no escape, and Great Britain had to acquiesce in partitioning India at a time when a united India was found to be to her own interest.

1. *Extract from Lord Dufferin's reply to address from Anjuman-i-Islam, December* 9, 1884.

(The two extracts from Lord Dufferin's speeches given below were attached to his letter of October 29, 1888, C.C.V.)

"It pains me (Dufferin) to learn that the Musulman community of India should entertain the misgivings you have expressed in regard to their actual condition. It is both the pride and the desire of the Imperial Government to provide impartially for every class and section of Her Majesty's subjects in India, fair and equal opportunities of improving their material condition, and of multiplying their means of moral advancement. If one member of the body politic lags behind the rest, it is a misfortune for all. I am too new to the country to be able to form an opinion as to the causes of the exceptional circumstances you signalize but I have been glad to learn that of late you have been making great exertions to improve your educational system."

2. *Extract from Lord Dufferin's reply to address from Central National Mahommedan Association, 22nd January*, 1885.

"I (Dufferin) have on so many previous occasions expressed my regard and sympathy for the Mahomedan community, that it is needless for me again to reiterate such an assurance ; for although it is my supreme duty to display an absolutely impartial regard for all classes of Her Majesty's subjects, yet naturally, my loveliest sympathies will be for those who, through any circumstances over which they had no control, have fallen behind in the race of progress and of advancement, which I am happy to think, is being so sedulously run by all classes of Her Majesty's Indian subjects."

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(Dufferin more or less repeated himself in his reply to the address from Central Mahomedan National Association on 24th March, 1888, and Mahomedan Societies of Lucknow, 10th April, 1888 where he referred to the Resolution (of the Government of India) of 15th July 1885 regarding employment of Indians.)

3. *Lord Dufferin to Lord Cross, October* 11, 1886. (*C.C.I, letter no.* 10)

"....We do not yet know who commenced the riots (at Etawah and Delhi), but there is no doubt that of late years the Mahomedans are beginning to recover from the depression into which for a long time past they have been plunged. The Hindus naturally regard this change of sentiment and deportment with jealousy. We may consequently expect a good deal of trouble from time to time from this cause...."

4. *Lord Cross to Lord Dufferin, January* 14, 1887, (*C.C.I, p.* 111.)

"..the National Indian Meeting in Calcutta has probably passed over as well as you could have expected. This division of religious feeling is greatly to our advantage."

(Demi official)*

5. Dated Mission House, Sialkot, February 3, 1887. From J. W. Youngson

To : Gen. Sir Francis Norman.

"....A short time ago I (Youngson) was on my way to Chinawan, in the Gujranwala District, when news came that there had been a great disturbance in Ramnuggur in that district.

"The Ekka driver turned to me and said, 'If we only had the Sikhs in power again we should thoroughly punish the Mahomedans'."

6. *Lord Cross to Lord Reay, Governor of Bombay, May* 12, 1887 (*C.C. I, p.* 194)

"....Your report as to the views of the Mahomedans on the opening of the Civil Service confirms me entirely in the opinion which I have myself formed and which I have communicated to the Viceroy...."

7. *Lord Dufferin's reply to Farewell address at Calcutta, March* 23, 1888 (*C.C. II, p.* 5)

*This letter is included in Dufferin's letter to Cross.

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"I confess I would rather see the Europeans, Hindu and Mahomedans united in criticising the Government than that the Hindus and the Mahomedans, the Europeans and the Natives, should become estranged from each other by unworthy prejudices, or animosities of race or religion. God forbid that the British Government should ever seek to maintain its rule in India by fomenting race hatred amongst the subjects....."

8. *Lord Dufferin to Lord Cross, March* 26, 1888 (*C.C. II, p.* 5)

Dufferin refers to the large number of people who presented him a farewell address at Calcutta and voted a statue. Only opponent, he says, was the *Mirror* and adds "The Mohammedans whose goodwill I gained directly I arrived in the country have also been very friendly, and I am receiving addresses from the Mohamedan population of almost every town in India."

9. *Lord Cross to Lord Reay, Governor of Bombay, October* 4, 1888 (*C.C. II, p.* 188)

"....I am very glad that the Mahomedans have so distinctly kept aloof from the Congress. It is clearly their interest to do so. They would very soon feel the iron glove of Hindu rulers, but I quite agree with you that it would at once give force to the movement if Government were to take the course of frowning on those who attended and of favouring those who abstained from attending the Congress.... It is quite evident that there are people who are bent upon making the views of the Congress part of the programme of the Radical party here in Parliament...."

10. *Lord Dufferin to Lord Cross, October* 29, 1888 (*C.C. V, p.* 135)

"....I think I mentioned to you in a recent letter that the section of the Radical press in this country, not knowing what to do in their rage at the opposition which has been offered to the Congress by the Mahommedans and many of the higher of the Hindu classes, have resorted to the absurd device of attributing the split to my Machiavelian cunning. This calumny is hardly worth refuting, but perhaps the matter may be noticed in Parliament. Every absurd statement seems now to obtain credence there, and therefore with this in view I enclose you the accompanying extracts from the speeches I have made in India in which there occurs a reference to the Mahomedans. Of course it is needless to say that I have in no sense or degree shown

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the slightest partiality towards them, and I have steadily refused to grant them the concessions they demanded on the ground that we can make no difference in favour of the community over another in the Regulations under which persons are admitted to Government employment. The most that I have done has been to express my sympathy with their backward condition, and to exhort them, by the education of rising generation, to pull themselves up to a level with their Hindu competitors. . . ."

11. *Lord Dufferin to Lord Cross, December* 3, 1888 (*C.C. V, p.* 196)

". . . .Of course you will have been carefully watching the progress of what may be called the Home Rule movement in this country. It is neither formidable, nor—as far as most of the people who take part in it are concerned—either a disloyal or an illegitimate movement, though we must never forget that in it, and connected with it, there is a very real and bitter element of what I call 'bastard' disloyalty, represented by a small Bangalee clique in Calcutta, whose organ is the *Mirror*. I say 'bastard' disloyalty, because, though this party hates Englishmen and the English rule, and desires all it can to insure and discredit them, I do not believe that in their own secret hearts they are aiming at any special idea as a substitute. It is just possible they may be in communication with Russia, but I do not think they are. At all events, they ought to know that they would find Russia's little finger bigger than our thigh. For all that, we must regard them as our real enemies. On the other hand, the Mahommedans, the Oudh Talookdars, and even most of the responsible and sensible Bengalees, have an instinctive dislike of the Congress and of its works ; but midway between the two parties there stands a considerable mass of irresolute opinion which has been watching with wonder the immunity extended to what in its view are the insubordinate proceedings of the Congress-wallahs, such as Mr. Hume's foolish threats of insurrection, and the dissemination of the libels and calumnies contained in the Tamil Catechism and similar publications. I considered therefore that before I left it would be my duty to give some sign of the light in which I regarded such of the Congress demands and proceedings as are extravagant and reprehensible. Accordingly I took the opportunity of a Scotch dinner at Calcutta to make the speech which I am sending to you and to the members of your Council. . . ."

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12. *Lord Cross to Lord Lansdowne, April* 2, 1890 (*C.C. III.*)

"..I am now very much pleased to see the present action of the Mohammedans, Parsees etc..." (in support of the Indian Councils Bill).

13. *Lord Lansdowne to Lord Harris, Governor of Bombay, June* 7, 1892 (*C.C.*)

"....The Western notion of election is quite unsuited for the present, to any part of the Indian Empire. Somehow or other the Mahomedans should be enabled to suggest one or more of their own body for nomination. Exactly in the same way that such other bodies as you name in your letter should suggest one or more of their own bodies for nomination...."

14. *Lord Cross to Lord Lansdowne, June* 9, 1892 (*C.C.*)

"....I presume that you will find some means by which the Mohammedans will be able to suggest some of their own folk for your nomination, as perhaps the members of a corporation, or the senate of a University or a Chamber of Commerce etc. etc. and may suggest others for your nomination...."

15. *Lord Hamilton to Lord Elgin, October* 3, 1895 (*H.C. I, p.* 67)

"....Sandhurst sent me some details about the riot at Dhulia. The Mahomedans were clearly in the wrong. These outbreaks are, from an administrative point of view, regrettable, but they do seem to me to strengthen our position generally, as reminders of what was the condition of India before our authority was there established and what it would be if abolished...."

16. *Lord Hamilton to Lord Elgin, May,* 7, 1897 (*H.C. II, p.* 185)

"....I am sorry to hear of the increasing friction between Hindus and Mohammedans in the North West and the Punjab. One hardly knows what to wish for ; unity of ideas and action would be very dangerous politically, divergence of ideas and collision are administratively troublesome. Of the two the latter is the least risky, though it throws anxiety and responsibility upon those on the spot where the friction exists. I am surprised in looking through the vernacular Press to note the strong opinions expressed against the plague restrictions: though such reading is not conclusive evidence, still its practical unanimity gives one a sense of the deep seated aversion to house to house visitation and suggestion.

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"I do not think we should put very prominently forward the Queen's proclamation of 1858. As a piece of English it is fine, but 40 years' practice has shown the extreme difficulty of giving effect to the academic utterances as to equality of races...."

(ibid, p. 189)

"I have had a letter from a Missionary of Ludhiana sent me. The writer seems a sensible person, but is evidently alarmed at the attitude and (as he avers) the determination of the Mahommedans to pick a quarrel with the Hindus. This confirms what you have told me. I think the situation wants careful watching; but you know best whether it is necessary to call the attention of the Punjab to the matter or whether they are sufficiently on the alert...."

17. *Lord Hamilton to Lord Elgin, July* 30, 1897 (*H.C. II*)

"....We have, however a new element of intrigue and commotion introduced into India by the Pan Islamic Council in Constantinople and the close connection which is being established between the Sultan and Indian Mahommedans...."

18. *Lord Hamilton to Lord Elgin, August* 26, 1897 (*H.C. II, p.* 423)

"....The reports upon the Calcutta riots, so far as I have seen anything bearing upon the subject, show that the rioting was grossly exaggerated. The only really ugly feature was that though the riot ostensibly began with Mussulmans against the Hindus, towards the close both parties seemed inclined to combine against the Europeans...."

19. *Lord Hamilton to Lord Elgin, February* 4, 1898 (*H.C. III p.* 83)

"....I am much obliged to you for your letter of the 13th instant. As regards your proposals against sedition it is a great thing to have secured, as you have done apparently, the support of the educated Mohammedans. The Congress party are sure to agitate as much as they can, but I imagine they cannot move or stir the illiterate masses. If they could I have little doubt that they would try to organise riots and disturbances, for any restriction upon their power of abusing the Government is a throttle upon their breath of existence...."

(See also Appendix VI, letter nos. 13 and 15-21.)

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APPENDIX V

CONGRESS

Lord Dufferin, as stated above, (Chapter V, Section 3) had his share in the founding of the Congress, but his attitude towards it is far from clear. The following letters and those in the subsequent appendices, reveal a part of his mind, and his ambivalent position.

It is possible that Lord Dufferin was drawing lessons from his earlier experience, when even in England non conformists and Roman Catholics suffered considerable political disabilities ; a study of Indian history would confirm his fears, that a religious minority had good reasons to be suspicious of the motives of the majority, and would be deprived of the loaves and fishes of office by the latter.

1. *Lord Dufferin to Lord Cross, January* 4, 1887, (*C.C.I, Letter No.* 22)

"This week not much has occurred. An Indian Congress has met at Calcutta, and has passed some rather extravagant resolutions which I have asked Wallace to enclose to your Pt. Secretary. I saw one or two people who assisted at the Congress, and I am told that the tone of the proceedings was loyal and friendly to British rule, but that the character of the discussions was very childish, and reminded the audience rather of an Eton or Harrow Debating Society than even of Oxford or Cambridge Union.

"As soon as you are able to let me know, I shall be glad to hear what will be the nature and scope of the Parliamentary Commission which is to sit on Indian affairs. I am inclined to think that the time has come when it might be well to allow the natives who are now nominated to the Provincial and Supreme Councils to be elected, and to be somewhat increased in numbers. Practically, the principle of election does at present exist, as for some time past it has been the practice of my predecessors, and I have followed it, to consult some of the leading gentlemen of the respective Presidency towns, who, as a matter of course, are members of the various local associations, as to what persons would be most acceptable to their several communities. At all events, this is one of the subjects which might very well be referred to the consideration of the proposed Commission. If it were desired to proceed cautiously, we might introduce the arrangement first of all into the Provincial Councils with the view of seeing how it was likely to work. The elections ought not certainly to depend upon

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direct votes, but the members chosen should be the nominees of an elected college. Their number, moreover, ought never to be enlarged to a point which would enable them to embarrass or veto the Government. Perhaps you would talk over this matter with Northbrook, who is a very safe and prudent man. If I thought that it was likely to meet with the approval of the Government, I would work out a scheme for submission to you. A concession of the kind now would stop a good deal of agitation. Of course to political agitation in India we can afford to be more or less indifferent at present, though I am by no means certain that this will continue to be the case. The danger is that the extreme Radical party and the ignorant faddists in the British House of Commons may enter into an alliance with the Home Rule Party in India. It is almost by accident that I have touched upon this topic in what I am afraid in a very crude and superficial way.....

"You will have observed that the Mahomedans have abstained from taking any part in the Indian National Congress. They have done this, I understand, entirely in accordance with their own views of what is politic, and not at all under any pressure from the officials. Indeed I do not think that we could make a greater mistake than to sow the seeds of dissension, suspicion, or jealousy between any classes of Her Majesty's subjects. Such a policy would in the long run recoil upon our own heads. What the Mahomedans feel is that under a Bengalee constitution they would be more completely left out in the cold than they are at present." (Enclosed resolution passed at the 2nd Congress of 1886, and a Press Cutting from *The Mahommedan Observer* of January 1, 1887.

(From the *Mahommedan Observer* of January 1, 1887)

"The Mahommedans and the Indian National Congress."

"The following article which we publish from the *Indian Spectator*, will perhaps have a cooling effect upon the excited nerves of our Hindu contemporaries. The article, which we give below, represents the views of a cool-headed and dispassionate observer in the Southern Presidency, of passing events; and coming from one, who is neither a Hindu nor a Mahommedan, may serve to explain to the former community the attitude of the Mahommedans on the present occasion."

From Indian Spectator

'Deeply as we regret the defection, as the promoters of the National Congress will call it, of the Mahommedans of Bengal, we

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cannot say that we are surprised at it. The attitude of our Muslim friends is an outward expression of the spirit that has worked amongst them of late. But as an open rupture at the present moment it is to be more than ever regretted; and we agree that both Hindus and Mohammedans will suffer by it, and ultimately the Government too.

'What may be the cause of this non-possumus ? The Mahommedans in Bengal, most advanced of the Community in education, began to see some ten years ago that they could not keep pace with the Hindus in securing the loaves and fishes of Government employment. Pocketing their pride, therefore, which had hitherto stood in the way of their progress, they asked Government if some encouragement might not be given them. Government wisely met them half way, offering any amount of advice and sympathy and some little temporary assistance. We repeat this was wise of the Government, in all interests. For, it would be a mockery to speak of national progress in India till the two great races stood abreast in leading the van. And to this end, a little tentative concession to the backward race might be permitted with grace, if for nothing else, to preserve the harmony of our future progress. But some of our Hindu friends seem to have thought otherwise. They have, often without meaning it, grudged the smallest of small encouragement held out to the sister community. On principle they were perhaps right—whose fault it was that the Mahommedans did not keep abreast of the times? But we believe there were circumstances under which the latest reduced masters of India could not help themselves. Be that as it might, the opposition of a portion of the Hindu Press had narrowed the scope of Mahommedan sympathy, never very broad, and their present resolve to keep aloof from united national effort is a culmination of the process. The alienation is so far complete though it is to be devoutly hoped it is temporary. The Mahommedans see that they have not much to gain immediately from the success of the national programme. They are not in a hurry for political concessions. This is the upshot of it all. And without presuming to judge between the par ties, we cannot but say that the position is extremely humiliating. The party of progress must strain every nerve to extricate itself f rom the false position into which it has allowed itself to be drifted.' (End of quotation from the *Indian Spectator*; *Mahommedan Observer* continues:)

"The replies of the Mahommedan Association have apparently created among the unthinking portion of the Hindu community a con-

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siderable amount of ill feeling, and their effect has been attempted to be minimised in different ways. It has been suggested in the columns of many of the journals, devoted to the promotion of Hindu interests, that the Mussulman manifestoes were the work of a few interested Mahommedans in Calcutta, and that the bulk of the Mahommedan population all over India were heart and soul in sympathy with the Hindu Congressists. Recourse was also had to the ignoble arts for the purpose of discrediting the Mahommedan reply to the Congress. Fabricated letters were sent to philo-Hindu Journals with the distinct object of weakening the moral effect of the Mahommedan Association's replies. Before explaining the position which the Mahommedans have naturally taken up, it is necessary that we should say a few words regarding the unworthy tactics adopted by a certain portion of the Hindu press. It was stated, as we have said before, that though the Association stood aloof from joining the Congress, Mahommedans from all parts of India were flocking to express their sympathy with the objects of the Congress. The motive with which this statement was put forward was perfectly plain. It was for the purpose of placing the representative Associations in a false position towards the Mahommedan community. Now, we should like to know where are the large body of Mahommedan delegates, who, it was represented, were flocking to the Congress. With the exception of two or three junior members of the Nawab family of Dacca, two junior Mahommedan Barrister from the North-West, one gentleman from Lucknow, and another from Bombay we do not find any Mahommedan of any position taking any part, or representing any character, in this Congress. These few gentlemen, however deserving in other ways, cannot in any sense of the term be said to represent the feelings or the views of the Mahommedan community throughout the country. The leaders—men who as far as political foresight and grasp on the passing events of the time are concerned, do not yield to any of the principal representatives of the Hindu or of any other community— have, firmly, stood aloof. It may please the vanity of some who are inimical to them, to call them self-seekers, or wanting in capacity but the truth must be acknowledged that they are quite as capable of understanding the political situation of India as many of the spouters in the debating society which held its sittings in the British Indian Association rooms. So much was necessary to be said regarding the pretensions of the Congress as to having the sympathy of the Mahommedans.

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"One other matter touching to the same point deserves mention. It was said that the Central National Mahommedan Association, which has been the subject of so much vituperation, represented only a few Calcutta and Patna Mahommedans, and not the sense of the Mahommedans at large. We will not characterise this statement by the name it deserves ; but we will say that this Association with its 52 Branches spread all over India represents a national life and national vitality more thoroughly than any institution yet established in this country. It is a pity, that in spite of the distinct progress which our Hindu brethren have made in political knowledge and foresight, they do not appreciate the value of moderate language and temperate speaking. With the noble exception of the *Bengalee*, all the Hindu papers in Bengal have distinguished themselves by a conduct towards the Mahommedans utterly antagonistic to the growth of concord and harmony, which is ostensibly desired by many Hindus in common with all the best Mahommedans. These papers have indulged in language towards the people, whom they try to induce to join the Congress, which, to say the least, was unworthy of themselves. It is hardly to be expected that the Mahommedan Association, seeing the attitude which the Hindu journals persistently maintain towards the Mahommedans should join in the glorification of Hindu political progress.

"As regards the policy of abstention adopted for the present by the Mahommedan Association, it is necessary to mention that they would have been failing in their duties towards the Mahommedans, if they had,without careful consideration of the circumstances affecting the present condition of the Mahommedans, allowed themselves to be dragged into the vortex of political agitation. As representatives of the minority in the country, it was their bounden duty to protect and safeguard the interests of that minority. The Mahommedans of India have hitherto occupied a different position under the British Government. Until very recently, they were neglected by the Government with the result that, so far as political influence and power were concerned, they were absolutely excluded therefrom. After considerable agitation on the part of those, whom Mr. Hume, because they have not accepted his divinity, has been pleased to call self-seekers, the Government has been compelled, by the necessity of the situation, to acknowledge that the Mahommedans, have been, to a certain extent, wronged and that they deserved some consideration at the hands

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of the State. The Government has been forced to acknowledge that it is highly impolitic to allow one community to monopolise all the avenues to wealth and power and all the roads to political influence. It has been gradually awakening to the necessity of giving some assistance to the Mahommedans in order to help them come abreast of the Hindus. Every endeavour of the Government in this direction has been bitterly assailed by the representatives of the majority. The smallest favour or concession shown to the minority has called forth the most vehement attacks from the Hindu press. Now, English education has not made as much progress among the Mahommedans as among the Hindus. To insist upon open competition as the only mode of selection for State employment means the absolute exclusion of the Mahommedans from the public service. To ask for representative institutions, without sufficient guarantees for the representatives of the minority, means swamping of the minority by the majority. From almost every part of Bengal where Local Self-Government has been introduced comes the cry that minority is tyrannised over by the majority; from every part of Bengal comes the cry that the organization of the majority is more solid and stronger than that of the minority. Even in places, where the Mahommedans outnumber the Hindus, the representation is entirely in the hands of the latter. What guarantees have the so-called Mahommedan delegates extorted from this irresponsible Congress for the protection of Mahommedan interests ? If their political foresight had been keener they would have seen that, though the influence of the majority is predominant even at present in the Councils of the State, which shows at times too great a subserviency to their intelligence, wealth and power of combination, yet there is more hope of a fair equilibrium being maintained from the political wisdom of a neutral Government than from the generous instincts of a majority looking primarily, but naturally to the interests of its own bulk. The minority have a right to see their interests safeguarded. And we say advisedly that until our people have come abreast with the Hindus in education and political intelligence, political concessions to the majority, without sufficient guarantees for the protection of the minority, would be destructive to the latter."

2. *Lord Dufferin to Lord Cross, February* 1, 1887 (*C.C.* II)

". . . .I think on the whole, the meeting of the Indian Congress at Calcutta has had an excellent effect, though not exactly in the

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direction its promoters anticipated. In the first place, it has given us in some degree the intellectual measure of these gentlemen, and has enabled us to gauge their political capacity. I did not see enough of them or hear enough of their proceedings (for they sat with closed doors) to enable me to arrive at a very definite opinion about them, but my impression is that they are far more able and respectable in their individual capacity than as members of a rather hysterical assembly, in which the more violent and silly of their number rule the roost. On the other hand, their extravagant pretensions, as embodied in their resolutions, have aroused the opposition and indignation both of the Mahomedan community and of the conservative section of the society, which is both large and influential. Indeed, for the first time in the recent history of educated India, a conservative party has come into obvious existence. But the most remarkable change of all is in the tone of the Native Press, which ever since my speech at Poona has become extremely mild and reasonable. For the first time too since my arrival in this country, thanks to my tour and to the presence this year of so many people from different parts of the country in Calcutta, I have been able to come into personal contact with a great number of the leading natives, which has enabled me to satisfy them as to our reasons for going to war with Burmah, for discouraging Native volunteering and for doing other things to which objection had been taken.

"The appointment of the Civil Service Commission is also working in the same unexpected direction. The Baboo witnesses who appear before it are showing their hand so prematurely that all non-Baboo classes are taking the alarm, and are beginning to see that under the ideal Baboo regime they would be completely left out in the cold.

"In my letter of the 4th January I asked whether you would encourage me to submit to you a scheme for the application of the elective principle in some very mild form to the selection of the Native members of our Councils I really do not think that any danger need be apprehended from such a change if it were properly contrived, for it is obvious that if we are to have Native Members in such assemblies it is better that they should be really representative men, so far as anything like representation is possible in such a country as India. At the same time, however, that I made this concession, I would be disposed to place some restrictions on the Native Press, the license of which, though now for the moment restrained, will be sure to break out again,

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and is far more free from legal control than in England or even in America....."

3. *Lord Cross to Lord Dufferin, February* 25, 1887 (*C.C. I, p.* 142)

"....You have brought up a favourable view of the Indian Congress at Calcutta. This noisy few will no doubt always pass resolutions of the most advanced and at the same time of the most unpractical character. But the masses of the people do not want to be ruled by the Baboos, and it is our duty as well as our interest, and still more the interest of the people, that there is to be English rule and English justice and English consideration for the wants, the prejudices and the habits, religious as well as social of all classes. How can we meet such aspirations as are legitimate consistently with above policy? I mentioned this matter in my late letter and shall be very glad to have your observations as soon as they reach me. I am convinced, however, that anything like an election would be fatal. If any such appointments as you suggest are to be allowed they must be made by the English Government after consultation if you like, but by the Government by selection, not by election. I am very sorry that there is no restraint of the license of the Press, but I fear that no fresh legislation would be possible without a party fight here, and I am most desirous of keeping party politics out of all Indian questions, which are Imperial not Party matters...."

4. *Lord Cross to Lord Dufferin, February* 17, 1888 (*C.C. II, p.* 31)

"....I must I am afraid trouble you for your opinion as to these Congresses or Conferences or whatever they call themselves. Will they grow or lessen? What weight is to be attached to their declaration? Is it wise to take any action in any way? I know you have carefully studied the whole question, and that you are quite alive to all its difficulties and dangers...."

5. *Lord Cross to Lord Connemara, Governor of Madras, April* 13, 1888 (*C.C. II, p.* 62)

"....I have of course paid much attention to this matter of those conferences or congresses which are being held in India, and as to the weight and importance which ought to be attached to them. I am very glad you have come to exactly the same conclusion that I have myself arrived at as expressed in your letter of the 14th..."

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6. *Lord Cross to Lord Dufferin, September* 11, 1888 (*C.C. II, p.* 170)

". . . .I have liked your thoughts as to what is said in the so-called National Congress. The danger of all these is that men like Bradlaugh are taking these matters up as party question ; the most fatal thing for India. I should like to forestall all this and am quite ready to assist you. . . . ."

7. *Lord Dufferin to Lord Cross, September* 24, 1888 (*C.C. V, p.* 94)

"A new feature in connexion with the Congress movement has been developed, in the shape of a certain number of Government servants in various provinces acting as agents of the propaganda, and using their official position to collect money on its behalf. Several Provincial Administration have called our attention to the subject, and have asked for instructions. I am inclined to tell them in reply that they must put a stop to all such proceedings on their own responsibility, but that of course we will support their action in doing so. I think it better that the matter should be dealt with in this way, as it would be making too much of the affair for the Government of India to issue a solemn Resolution on the subject. . . ."

8. *Lord Dufferin to Lord Cross, October* 8, 1888, (*C.C. V, p.* 98)

(Lord Dufferin states that he is preparing a scheme for Indian Provincial Councils with the help of a Committee composed of Aitchison, Chesney and Westland, and adds:)

"Bye the bye I ought to mention that some months ago the Maharaja of Mysore was said to have contributed largely to the National Congress. Though what really happened did not quite amount to this, I thought it was well to send him a verbal message, the purport of which was reduced to writing in the accompanying form. Now the Nizam has sent even a larger contribution to the anti-Congress movement, so I have despatched an intimation to him in the same sense. . . ."

(Lord Dufferin then adds that Government servants are collecting money for Congress, but Lt.-Governors have been authorised to stop this.)

9. *Lord Cross to Lord Reay, Governor of Bombay, January* 23, 1890 (*C.C. III*)

". . . .Thank you for your remarks about the Congress. I quite agree with you that the permanent settlement Resolution is very serious, and the Viceroy writes to me quite in the same sense. The permanent

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settlement in Bengal was to my mind a tremendous blunder. It is, however, very satisfactory to find that the Mahomedans and the Parsees have as a body separated from the Congress...."

10. *Lord Cross to Lord Lansdowne, January* 23, 1890 (*C.C. III, p.* 235).

"....I entirely agree with you as to the danger which may arise from the Congress people agitating for a Permanent Settlement. Lord Reay writes that the Congress this year has been very tame, but that in his opinion the permanent settlement resolution is one which is very serious. I quite agree with him that this is the outcome of the 'great blunder perpetuated in giving Bengal such a settlement'. This, however, to my mind, affords an additional reason for the greatest caution in the matter of adopting in any form the elective principle. It was the election of some 86 Home Rulers which gave Mr. Gladstone's mischievous scheme such an impetus. I have your dispatch about Provincial Councils which I have sent to a special Committee. With regard to the elective principle, I am very glad at all events to find that both Lord Dufferin and yourself are entirely opposed to its being applied to the Supreme Council. I think that such a step would be fatal to our rule in India. As regards the Provincial Councils, I know from private correspondence that both Lord Reay and Lord Connemara are entirely against it, and I presume that their Councils would be of the same opinion...."

11. *Lord Cross to Lord Lansdowne, January* 30, 1891 (*C.C.*)

"....Should occasion arise, I will take care that it is made clear that my orders supposed to have reference to the presence of official at the so-called National Congress were orders against attending at political meetings generally and were not restricted against the meeting of the Congress...."

12. *Lord Hamilton to Lord Elgin, September* 9, 1896 (*H.C. I, p.* 371)

"The Maharaja of Durbhunga might, I think, have a G.C.I.E. His public spirit, and the work he has done in various capacities, fully qualify him for this distinction. How far his subscribing to the Congress counteracts against his otherwise unquestionable claim I can scarcely judge. The act of subscribing in itself is nothing; but what effect honouring by a distinction a prominent subscriber may have on future subscriptions you can estimate better that I can. My own

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instincts would be in favour of ignoring this connexion and rewarding him for his public work. . . . ."

13. *Lord Hamilton to Lord Elgin, December* 11, 1896 (*H.C. I, p.* 447)

". . . . The next meeting of the Congress does not promise to be a success, if we can judge from the appeal sent by Wedderburn and his friends to India. It is gratifying to note that Congress, as a political power, has steadily gone down during the last few years, and this is, I think, largely due to the indifference and unconcern with which the Indian Government has tolerated its proceedings. . . ."

14. *Lord Hamilton to Lord Elgin, May* 14, 1897, (*H.C. II, p.* 211)

". . . . I entirely agree with you that it is judicious to place certain Congress leaders who are men of ability and status, on the Imperial or Provincial Councils. If they are in earnest, contact with administrative difficulties and realities is certain to sober their previous speculations and, on the other hand, if they be dishonest and unreal, they are more likely to be detected and exposed. . -."

15. *Lord Hamilton to Lord Elgin, May* 21, 1897 (*H.C. II, p.* 226)

". . . . I most heartily agree with your view that it is sound policy to maintain the old families in possession of their estates, and I think the decision was a sound one not to give too wide powers to Local Governments of setting aside the owner of the family estates. Anything which would tend to conserve the older families and possessors of large properties is worthy of consideration and support. Our difficulties in the future Government of India seem to me more to arise from the changes which we have ourselves brought about in education, in establishing a free press, and in similar movements, than from the traditions and customs which we found in India. It may have been necessary to have adopted the policy of recent years, but it is the creations resulting from this policy, rather than the old traditions and customs of India, which will in the future constitute the danger to our administration. On certain occasion the old and the new elements might be assimilated and combined against us, but the occasions are rare upon which such a unity of ideas or of action occur, and it is therefore sound policy to maintain as far as we can the conservative element. . . ."

16. *Lord Hamilton to Lord Elgin, May* 27, 1897 (*H.C. II, p.* 235)

". . . . Mr. Bhownaggree I think should be included (in the

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Honours list), he has fought the violent portion of the Congress with courage and ability and seems to me an able and thoroughly loyal man . . . ."

17. *Lord Hamilton to Lord Elgin, August* 26, 1897 (*H.C. II, p.* 416)

(Lord Hamilton begins by advocating stringent Criminal Law for future use and takes advantage of the present Poona trials, (Tilak's) to pass them and adds:) "The magnitude and hopelessness of some of the problems ahead of Indian administration, and social life, the recalcitrant character of the influence of the press, education and native officialdom, which we have encouraged, make the outlook very perplexing. The increase of our unpopularity (which men like Chalmers who knew India thirty years back admits) and the increased racial feelings, which I fear Ripon so aggravated, these facts do tend to pessimistic forecast and I have little doubt that if we were to suffer a serious reverse inside or outside India, there would be not a mutiny but serious disturbances in many of our large towns, and a general weakening of authority. Foreseeing this I am anxious to utilize the present opportunity when we have a House of Commons ready to assent to anything the Government of India may demand to try and put our house in order for future troubles.

"I hear that the Congress Party in London are about to get some influential person to visit India and report upon the general state of feeling there and that the Central News will send out a special correspondent (paid for by the Congress) to report Tilak's trial. *India* also is to become a weekly newspaper and the Maharaja of Durbhanga pays for this change. . . ."

18. *Lord Hamilton to Lord Elgin, September* 16, 1897 (*H.C. II, p.* 471)

(Lord Hamilton begins by suggesting the promotion of native officers of the army to military rank as Russia does in Central Asia and adds:) "We have gone far in the Civil service in this direction and the class we bring into that branch of the service are of inferior race and reliability to the bulk of our native officers. If we can keep the affection of the fighting races and higher orders of society in India we can ignore the dislike and disaffection of the intellectual non-fighting classes, the babooes, students and pleaders. This question will shortly assume a concrete shape for Cooch Behar wants to send his son who is at Eton to Sandhurst.

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"The Tilak trial resulted in a very satisfactory verdict and punishment. The judge was judicial, judicious and temperate but strong. I was much pleased with his summing up...."

19. *Lord Hamilton to Lord Elgin, January* 21, 1898 (*H.C. III, p.* 54)

"Your strong opinion in opposition to my belief that a solidarity of antagonism is springing up against our rule is reassuring. Your eyes and ears on the spot ought to be a better guide in a speculation of this kind than theorizing here. Still I am impressed by the belief that the gulf between governed and governing is widening and I cannot see how under the conditions of education and press licence prevailing in India it can be otherwise. No doubt there is in places and between individuals and religions still much discord and friction but in the private reports which you sent me the Governors and the Lt. Governors though they differed in other details all agreed inthis that there was a rapproachement between the Mahommedans and Hindus. Sir. C. Ollivant wrote some time ago a remarkable letter to Sir J. Peile on the condition of things in Bombay. Ollivant is one of, if not the best Bombay civilians, we have and his letter is well worth reading. I sent it to Salisbury and Balfour and they were much impressed by it —I now enclose it. He again dwells on the fusion, slow it may be, of Mahommedans and Hindus. I was talking to Sir C. Crossthwaite much in this sense the other day ; he is a very capable man of wide range of experience and he combated my theories, stating that district officers would always get milk and honey etc. from villages when riding about. Two days afterwards he wrote to me saying, 'I think I must qualify my statements by adding that in riding or driving through some of the large towns I was struck by the scowling and unpleasant looks of the people, perhaps more in Allahabad than elsewhere. It is the educated, the products of our schools and villages (sic) who think that they could take our places. The worst of the case is that the native schoolmaster is the most seditious, they are mixed up in cow riots, Congress arrangements.' To show how the movement is progressing he quotes Mr. H. E. M. James. One of the best officers and men wrote to me a few months ago regarding Bombay. 'The poison of discontent is spreading rapidly and now district officers on tour are refused milk and supplies or trees under which to pitch tents. The sedition is now among the ryots.'

"The Bombay movement, as Ollivant points out, much resembles

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the Irish agitation and if it ever gets hold of the ryots, I fear trouble of the worst character...."

20. *Lord Hamilton to Lord Curzon, May* 1, 1899 (*H.C. I*)

Hamilton prescribes three remedies "to counteract" Congress activities of Wedderburn through his newspaper *India* :

1. To ascertain who amongst Princes and noblemen subscribes to the Congress fund and to let them know that the Govenment are aware of the fact.

2. To prefer for honours and distinctions those who are not Congressmen.

3. To exercise a greater control over education, its organization and text books.

21. *Lord Hamilton to Lord Curzon, October* 20, 1899 (*H.C. I, p.* 362)

"....I look upon the Congress movement as an uprising of Indian Native opinion not against British rule, but Anglo-Indian bureaucracy. It is universally admitted, owing to the increase of postal communications and other causes, that the relations between the Indian Civil Service and the Native have not improved, and that in place of old fashioned official constantly out in the open air, and constantly coming in contact with the Natives, we have substituted a bureaucratic class, who are seldom able to leave their offices, and who govern India with a code in one hand and a telegraph wire to the Governor in the other...."

22. *Lord Hamilton to Lord Curzon, January* 19, 1900 (*H.C. II, p.* 15)

"....The circular you sent me of Wedderburn to the Congress Committees is quite delicious, and it will be of great use. He has more than once denied publicly in the House of Commons that he is in any sense whatsoever responsible for *India* : and, if he annoys me in the forthcoming session, I will get him publicly to repeat his denial and then show him up....*India* does wilfully and deliberately fabricate falsehood here, and distorts everything that the Secretary of State may say and do, in order that it may hold him and British rule up to obloquy in India...."

23. *Lord Hamilton to Lord Curzon, February* 22, 1900 (*H.C. II, p.* 55)

"....I think there is little doubt that the Congress is losing its popularity and influence. It has been some years in existence, and has affected nothing. Wedderburn has been hoisting signals of

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distress here. He came to see Godley, and poured out his grievances to him. He said I evidently had some dislike to him which he thought he could remove if I would see him. I have declined. He has used his whole influence, ever since he has been in Parliament to discredit the Indian Government and bring them into disrepute. There is not a question that he puts to me that is not framed with that object. I have always told those who come to me, both in the House of Commons and outside, and talk to me about the questions in which Wedderburn is interested that the mere fact of a man taking up such an impossible attitude as Wedderburn does not only prejudice all the questions which he brings forward, but also the claims to notice of those who associate with him. Years ago Wedderburn used to boast that the manner in which Natives got recognition from the Government was by associating themselves with the Congress. I think, we have been able to upset this idea, and, as Natives are beginning to understand that attacks upon Government will not necessarily bring them honours and position, they will try some other method of achieving that object...."

24. *Lord Curzon to Lord Hamilton, November* 18, 1900 (*H.C. V*)

"Wedderburn sent me a copy of the same document that he forwarded to you and I answered in very much the same spirit. He was anxious to extract from me some pronouncement that might be regarded as favourable to the Congress. Now, I am not going to be tempted into anything of the sort. My own belief is that the Congress is tottering to its fall, and one of my greatest ambitions while in India is to assist it to a peaceful demise. I told him plainly, therefore, that I felt myself incapacitated from giving any opinion about, or offering any advice to, the Congress; but I added that, while I was myself sensible of the desirability of consulting and conciliating public opinion in India, the composition of the Congress, at any rate in recent years, had deprived them of any right to pose as the representative of more than a small section of the community. My belief is that the best men in the Congress are more and more seeing the hopelessness of their cause, and indeed many of their papers have begun to argue that they had better trust to me to give them as much as I can instead of wasting their energies in clamouring for what no Viceroy is likely to give them at all...."

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APPENDIX V

25. *Lord Hamilton to Lord Curzon, December* 13, 1900 (*H.C. V*)

"....It is clear to me that the influence of the National Congress is waning fast, and I think this is largely due to the influene which you are exercising upon and the sympathy which you have shown with, the Native communities...."

(See also Appendix IV, letters nos. 11 & 19; Appendix VI, letter no. 7.)

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APPENDIX VI

ELECTIVE PRINCIPLE

Lord Dufferin was eager to introduce elective principle in Indian legislatures and Lord Cross thought such a scheme to be impractical. Lord Dufferin's views ultimately prevailed, and, about a decade after his retirement, the Parliament passed Lord Cross's 'compromise act,' which had to be scrapped within two decades. In the meantime, however, the idea developed that the Muslims must be adequately protected against the Hindus. (See also Appendix, V, letters no. 1, 2 and 3.)

1. *Lord Dufferin to Lord Cross, April* 26, 1886 (*C.C. I, p.* 13)

Lord Dufferin begins by referring to the popular agitation and mentions the "moderate" association formed by Sir Jotindra Mohan Tagore, who have no desire to embarrass the Government and adds : "But besides them is a more violent and less respectable party, headed, as far as I can make out, by Mr. Surendranath Banerjee, who is connected with a cleverly-conducted but vicious paper called the *Mirror*.... My own inclination would be to examine carefully and seriously the demands which are the outcome of these various movements, to give quickly and with a good grace whatever it may be possible or desirable to accord, to announce that these concessions must be accepted as a final settlement of the Indian system for the next ten to fifteen years, and then to forbid incendiary speechifying at mass meetings...."

2. *Lord Cross to Lord Dufferin, February* 17, 1887 (*C.C.I,* p. 139)

"..Your letter as to the Calcutta University*, and your letter as to quasi-elective members of the Legislative Councils are both connected with the most difficult of questions :—the claims or asserted claims of the educated Natives. Of course anything like a Representation with a population of 250 millions is absurd—and it is never to be forgotten that the claims are raised by the educated few, very few in comparison with the population, but by a noisy and educated few. One thing however is certain that it is English rule and English justice which have done so much in and for India as a whole, and for the native populations. If I wanted proof of the fact (which

*See Appendix VII, letter No. 1.

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I do not) that there is no desire for the ascendancy of one race, Hindu for instance, I should find it in the anonymous circular which you forward me, as forwarded for circulation among Muslims. The greatest caution is therefore necessary and I should like to hear further from you upon the subject before in any way taking any steps whatever, although of course I am quite ready to satisfy all reasonable ambition when it can be done with due regard to the safety and well-being of the Empire and all creeds and races. . . ."

3. *Lord Cross to Rt. Hon. R. Bourke, *March* 11, 1887 (*C.C. I*, p. 150)

". . . .When you have a little leisure tell me your views about Natives and Native aspirations. I am afraid that the last Viceroy had done much harm in this respect. I do not believe myself that the people of India have the slightest wish to availing themselves of Native rulers, however educated, in place of the English rule of justice and fairness to all classes, castes and creeds. . . ."

4. *Lord Dufferin to Lord Cross, March* 20, 1887 (*C.C. I*)

Lord Dufferin urges the introduction of elective principle in legislature, through municipalities, Universities etc. and states that it is bound to come and adds : "Of course as an autocratic power, with an army of more than 2,00,000 men at our disposal we can afford for a time to ignore their demands, but it will be only for a time. Some of these days the arrangements made by Sir Charles Wood will have to be modified, but for the present there is no hurry in the matter if you are disinclined to take it up..."

(Along with this letter there is an extract of a letter to Lord Kimberley, dated March 21, 1886 which is not signed but is presumbly from Dufferin. It reports that during the last few weeks there have been mass meetings of peasants in various parts of Bengal.) "For the present of course the effect of such devices is not likely to do much harm, but I cannot help asking myself how long an autocratic Government like that of India—and a Government which everyone will admit for many a long years to come must in its main features remain autocratic—will be able to stand the strain implied by the importation *en bloc* from England, or rather from Ireland of the perfected machinery of modern autocratic agitation. . . ."

*Later Lord Connemara, Governor of Madras, 1886-1890.

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5. *Lord Cross to Lord Dufferin, April* 5, 1887 (*C.C. I*, p. 169)

"....I feel quite sure that you will not propose any 'hasty' inconsiderate, or imprudent changes in the Legislative Councils. You may feel quite sure that any matured plan you may send will receive the most careful consideration at my hands. It is a most delicate and difficult subject..."

6. *Lord Cross to Lord Dufferin, April* 14, 1887 (*C.C. I, p.* 172)

"....No I am not in the least alarmed at your suggestion as to applying the elective principle to some of your Indian Councils. The remarks were made with a view to showing you that in such a matter the greatest caution is necessary. I shall be very glad to consider any really matured plan, because I am quite alive to the present situation of affairs in India, but in any step that may be taken, the interests of the Mohammedans must be considered quite as much as the interests of the noisy Bengalee Baboo....

"I was quite sure that you would agree with me that what really secures the welfare of the Indian people is English justice and English administrative efficiency, and that the ascendancy of both these elements must under any circumstances be maintained absolute and preeminent ; but presuming that sufficient care is taken that our majority is secure, so as to enable us to legislate for the millions who are not noisy and educated or half-educated, my mind is quite open and large enough carefully and favourably to consider any well matured plan of reform.

"Party spirit ought not to enter into Indian affairs, but I am afraid that when the Vernacular Press Act was repealed, it did enter into the matter to such an extent at all events as to prevent the opportunity being taken of the repeal of that Act to ensure some wholesome control....."

7. *Lord Dufferin to Lord Cross, June* 29, 1888 (*C.C. II*)

Enclosed with this letter are a paper from General Chesney, Military Member of the Supreme Council and a letter from Sir Auckland Colvin, Lt. Governor of N.W.P. and Oudh, on the Congress. Chesney's report runs to 19 pages. He states that though men like Madhava Rao and others have joined the Congress, it is really run by a class of extremists :

"What was in 1885 only an experiment", writes Chesney and adds: "in 1887 bears the appearance of becoming, as they call it themselves

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a prominent national institution....A strong feeling of insecurity inherent in our rule has been shared by some of the ablest Indian administrators : Mounstuart Elphinstone, Lord Metcalfe, Sir Thomas Munro, have given expression to it in vivid terms—a feeling that the people at large may some day combine to make our government impossible, that a movement may arise too widespread to make head against. There is strong evidence, I believe, that the beginning of such a movement are now to be discerned, a movement directed by the agitators who are 'running', the Congress, which if not stopped will produce an outbreak, in which the sympathies of the native army might or might not be enlisted, but the great danger of which would consist in its wide extent. Hitherto, in all our struggles the people of the country, if not on our side, have not been against us. Our wars have been carried on with mercenary armies against mercenary troops, and when the enemy has been conquered in the field, the people in the country have quietly accepted our rule. What difficulties we have encountered hitherto would be nothing compared to the difficulties that would arise if the people of the whole country, or even any large part of it, were to become actively hostile to our rule. This is the result which the agents who are working the National Congress are trying, whether they mean it or not, to bring about....

"....further meetings of the Congress should be prohibited."

Sir Auckland Colvin in his letter to Lord Dufferin dated 10th June, 1888, takes a more moderate view, but deprecates Congress being invited at Government House as it gives them prestige, and advises the Government not to yield to popular demand.

8. *Lord Dufferin to Lord Cross, August* 30, 1888 (*C.C. V. p.* 69)

"....I have carefully studied the various grievances that have been set forth by the advanced Native Party both in their Congresses and in their newspapers, and none of them are very substantial. The volunteering cry is not genuine, and, in my opinion, is both absurd and inappropriate, and ought not to be listened to for a moment. The arms act is a necessary restriction, and it would be most unsafe to repeal it. I examined very carefully whether it could not be modified but, after a great deal of consideration and consultation with the highest authorities and with the local governments, we came to the conclusion that it would be better not to touch it at all. Undoubtedly it has been occasionally administered in too rigorous a spirit, but the tendency

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everywhere is to render its operation as little irksome as possible. The cry for the separation of Executive and Judicial functions is plausible enough ; but the union only exists in the lower grades of the Service, and any alteration in the desired direction would entail a great deal of additional expense, which it would be most inopportune at the present moment to incur.... "

9. *Lord Cross to Lord Reay, Governor of Bombay, September* 19, 1888 (*C.C. II, p.* 173)

"....Now that we have had what they call an Indian Association who set themselves to work to 'inform' members of Parliament about alleged Indian grievances we shall have to show what an amount of misinformation is circulated and therefore believed and we shall have to show facts to prove our case...."

10. *Lord Cross to Lord Lansdowne, November* 28, 1888 (*C.C. V*)

"....One thing, however, in Lord Dufferin's last letter I was not quite prepared for. He shadowed out a marvellous Reform Bill for India. Whatever he wrote in his private letters mattered nothing, but he has by this last mail sent a formal despatch, which I have not yet personally seen but which, I presume, proceeds on the same lines as the long private memorandum which he sent me. This is really a matter to which your attention will be required. I shall not put these papers before my Council until you have had the most ample time to consider the whole question. And indeed it is one of so grave a character that I should, after receiving your own views, feel bound to consult the Cabinet before proceeding further. But Lord Dufferin* adds that a Minute of his own is coming by the next mail...."

11. *Lord Cross to Lord Lansdowne, January* 30, 1890

(Cabinet decides not to put the Indian Councils Bill in the Queen's speech.)

12. *Lord Cross to Lord Lansdowne, May* 6, 1892.

"....The Indian Councils Bill is now for all practical purposes through Committee, and will become law without any alteration. Please consider what regulations you would like to put before me for consideration, without delay. There must be no mention of anything

*For Lord Dufferin's Minute see A. C. Banerjee : *Indian Constitutional Documents*, II, pp. 101-106.

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like 'election' in them. Recommendations if you like, but the ultimate responsibility of 'nomination' must rest with the Governor-General and the Governors absolutely.

"How specially, do you propose to get recommendations from the great Mahomedan Community? The Congress people in the debates in Committee were simply nowhere, and talked and were considered to have talked, nonsense...."

13. *Lord Cross to Lord Harris, Governor of Bombay, May* 24, 1892

"....I can very well understand that you should be puzzled with regard to electoral bodies. I am not much enamoured of that which you suggest in your letter of the 4th. A College composed of the Members of the Corporation, the Graduates of the University, the Justices, and the Members of the Chamber of Commerce and of the Port Trust would be too heterogenous. These bodies have, it seems to me, few common interests; e.g there seems to me something unnatural in the union of the University with the Port Trust, and besides this, as you have pointed out, the combination would not prevent the Hindus and Parsis from swamping the rest. It appears to me that we must face the fact that the city of Bombay is controlled by these two denominations, and that any Member representing the city under the new order of things may not have the confidence of the English and Mahommedan minorities. The corrective of this state of things is to be found in the appointment of a portion of the additional Members by direct nomination without the previous 'recommendation' of an electoral body....I am obliged for convenience to use the word 'election' and 'electoral body' but it is of course understood that the final nomination rests with the head of the Government in all cases...."

14. *Lord Lansdowne to Lord Cross, May* 31, 1892 (*C.C. VII*)

"....I wrote to you by the last mail with regard to the regulations which it will be necessary to issue under the Indian Councils Bill. When you say in your letter under reply that 'there must be no mention of anything like election in them,' you mean, I presume, that, whatever procedure be adopted, it must be made clear that the appointment rests, not with the electoral body, but with the head of the Government. I will take care that this point is not lost sight of....

"I do not see how we are to provide for the representation of the Mahommedans except by special nomination in their favour. It

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might be possible, in certain cases, to allow a Mahommedan society, or organisation, to recommend a Member...."

15. *Lord Lansdowne to Lord Cross, June* 28, 1892 (*C.C. VII*)

"....The Queen has written to me about the representation of the Mahommedans, and I shall send Her Majesty a few lines by this mail...."

16. *Lord Cross to Lord Harris, Governor of Bombay, June* 28, 1892 (*C.C. VII*)

"....I have written a good deal from time to time to Lord Lansdowne about the Indian Councils Act. I object altogether to making use of the word 'elect'. It will of course be necessary to ask certain bodies to recommend proper persons for nomination and I quite hope to find that Lord Lansdowne will be able in some way or other to ask the Mahommedans themselves through some body or association...."

17. *Lord Lansdowne to Lord Cross, July* 5, 1892 (*C.C. VII*)

"..As to minorities, and especially Mahomedan minorities, nomination pure and simple, without a previous recommendation from a constituency of any kind, will of course, be the best safeguard...."

18. *Lord Cross to Lord Harris, Governor of Bombay, July* 21, 1892 (*C.C. VII*)

"....I am very anxious that the Mahomedans should have a good position, and among you the Parsis...."

19. *Lord Cross to Lord Wenlock, Governor of Madras, July* 21, 1892 (*C.C. VII*)

"....I am very anxious to secure a due share of Representation for the Mahomedans...."

20. *Lord Cross to Lord Lansdowne, July* 21, 1892 (*C.C. VII*)

"....I heard from the Queen last night. I think from her letter that she is satisfied after hearing from you that you will duly look after the Mahomedan interest...."

21. *Lord Hamilton to Lord Elgin, April* 2, 1897 (*H.C. II*)

"I observe that in the debate on Budget one of the Native Legislative Members spoke of our Government as an alien Government. I think that this is the first time that the obnoxious expression has been used at any official gathering. The speech seemed to me to have been

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a carefully prepared one, and which, not improbably, was written out or drawn up in England.

"Mr. Naoroji and his colleagues are becoming more and more violent in their language here, and he is consequently losing whatever little influence or weight he might previously have had. I understand that he trades a good deal on the assumption that he has influence at the India office, and can act as an efficient intermediary between the Secretary of State and various interests and individuals in India. As soon as it is known that any request, memorial, or petition which passes through his hands, or with which he is in any way connected, is prejudiced from the very fact of having been associated with him, I have no doubt his influence will, even more rapidly decay and vanish. Long residence in England and association with the least reputable portion of the political world have hopelessly deteriorated whatever brains or prescience he may originally have possessed,..."

22. *Lord Hamilton to Lord Curzon April* 14, 1899 (*H.C.I*)

"....I entirely agree with what you say as to the Viceroy being too much hedged round by etiquette. We cannot give the Natives what they want : representative institutions or the diminution of the existing establishment of Europeans is impossible. That being so, it seems to me that we can only cultivate reciprocally friendly relations with them by showing interest in them personally, and by utilizing opportunities for coming in contact with representative men and representative bodies. I had a curious illustration the other day of what good an interview of this kind even here does. Romesh Dutt, who holds some post in connection with the London University as a Lecturer, and who was one of the very best of Native Civilians, wanted to see me about the Calcutta Municipal Bill. The official view was that he was not a person of sufficient importance to come and see me on such a matter ; however I saw him. He stated his case very well. I expressed no opinion upon it beyond mere generalities. I then talked to him generally, and lamented the bitterness and violence shown by the Congress Party located in London of which he is a member. He entirely agreed with me ; he said that he had done his best to moderate it, and he was looked upon as an old fossil, and not up to modern ideas. When it was known that countervailing Sugar Duties were about to be imposed in India, the Wedderburn coterie tried to get up an agitation here against our policy. Romesh Dutt

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rose to the occasion, and in an excellent letter which he wrote to the *Times* nipped in the bud this attempt at upsetting what we proposed.

"It seems to me that many, if not most of our difficulties with Native States arise from incompatibility of temperament between the Resident and the Chief to whom he is appointed...."

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APPENDIX VII

MISCELLANEOUS LETTERS

Some of the following letters have an interest apart from their political bearing, for example, the letters of Queen Victoria. She is said to have enjoyed a popularity among the masses in India which is difficult to explain, but the great majority of her Indian subjects would have hailed her reign with even greater fervour had they known of her proposal to prohibit cow-slaughter (letter no. 2). Her solicitations on behalf of Tikendrajit, the Manipur Prince (Letters Nos. 5, 6 and 7) were also in vain, but again here her advice if accepted would have soothed Indian sentiment. Tikendrajit's execution was a political blunder.

Letters no. 4 and 20 reflect the attitude of the typical Anglo-indian. Though the two letters are separated by eleven years, they should be taken together. The Indians had already captured the lower government jobs, hence some means had to be devised for keeping them out of the higher service.

Letter no. 16 has already been referred to above ; along with it one should read letter no. 9, regarding Sir Jagadish Chandra Bose, the future botanist. Eminent scientists like Sir J. C. Bose, and Sir P. C. Ray, were the pride of their country and the callous indifference with which the Anglo-indian administrators treated these brilliant young scientists added impetus to the nationalist movement. Later Sir J. C. Bose started his own experimental centre, and Sir P. C. Ray joined the Calcutta Science College (and there were others) and they imbued their students with strong nationalistic sentiments.

Letters nos. 11 and 12 refer to Lord Sandhurst, the Governor of Bombay, and have already been referred to above.

Letters nos. 17 and 18 have no political significance, but show Lord Curzon at his best. Possibly, in some strange manner he had identified himself as a successor of the Great Mughals and found it a thrilling experience to move about in the Mughal palaces. However, he restored them, and but for him, many of the palaces would have been in ruins today. His remark in his second letter that "the most lasting external effect of my term of office will be the condition in which I shall leave the priceless treasures of architecture and art that we possess in this country," is I think the fittest epitaph on his

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viceroyalty.

Incidentally the letters show that it was Lord Hamilton who had selected Sir John Marshall and not Lord Curzon as is popularly believed. One would like to know how the young John Marshall reacted when the imperious Viceroy told him that he "must learn Sanskrit at once". For, unfortunately, it is not a language which anyone can learn "at once" well enough to read the inscriptions. But Lord Curzon rightly pointed out the importance of epigraphy to Indian archaeology, and Sir John Marshall later organized it to a high level of efficiency.

1. *Lord Dufferin to Lord Cross January* 18, 1887 (*C.C. I*)

"....I have asked Mr. Wallace to send to your Private Secretary a paper about the Calcutta University. At present the Government appoints the Fellows, but in the opinion of many whom I have consulted, including Dr. Hunter, the Vice-Chancellor, Mr. Tawney, late Registrar and now Principal of the Presidency College at Calcutta, and Mr. Croft, D.P.I. in Bengal, it would not be a bad thing if we were to allow the members of the University to elect a certain number of Fellows...."

2. *Lord Cross to Lord Reay* (*Governor of Bombay*) *September* 29, 1887 *Balmoral*, (*C.C. I, p.* 294)

"....The queen is most deeply interested in everything which concerns India....She has spoken to me very frequently about infant marriages: Lady Doctors: proposal not to allow the slaughter of cows...."

3. *Lord Cross to Lord Connemara, April* 15, 1889 (*C.C. III*)

"....I know no more than you what will become of all your men with degrees who therefore think themselves fit for any place. I am not myself satisfied with the position or the results of the Indian Universities...."

4. *Lord Cross to Lord Lansdowne, June* 6, 1889 (*C.C. III*)

"....I was obliged to telegraph to you about the recommendation of the public service commission as to the raising of the age of the Examination of candidates before the Civil Service Commissioners. Though I am favourable to it myself, the large majority of my Council are against me—for two reasons—1st they think that too many natives

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will get in ; 2nd they think that it will be very hard upon parents of English boys to keep them at school so long...."

5. *Lord Cross to Lord Lansdowne, June* 19, 1891 (*C.C.*)

"....The Queen makes many communications to me as to the fate of the Princes ; she is evidently very much averse to the execution of a Prince, and would greatly prefer his banishment and internment or imprisonment for life...."

6. *Lord Cross to Lord Lansdowne, June* 26, 1891 (*C.C.*)

"....The Queen is naturally averse to hanging a Prince, but both Lord Salisbury and I have told her that if even a Prince is practically guilty of assassinating her own representative, he must suffer—all must depend upon what he actually did...."

7. *Lord Cross to Lansdowne, July* 3, 1891 (*C.C.*)

"....The Queen seems to feel the difficulty of hanging a Royal Prince...."

8. *Lord Lansdowne to Lord Cross, June* 21, 1892 (*C.C. VII*)

"....I am not quite sure that it was right to give Pratap Chander Roy a subvention of Rs. 1,000/- in consideration of his translation of the Mahabharata. His application was, I see, supported by Dr. Röst, but I am not satisfied that it was a strong one. I had occasion some time ago to make enquiries about him, and I ascertained that he was a person who made use of work done by others, and that his own merits were of a very slender kind. He knows scarcely a word of English and when he came to see my Private Secretary he had to bring an interpreter with him. This is scarcely consistent with the theory that the translation of the Mahabharata is his...."

9. *Lord Hamilton to Lord Elgin, November* 12, 1896 (*H.C. I, p.* 423)

"....There is a strong feeling here that the Government should in some way mark its appreciation of Dr. Bose's remarkable labours and researches in science. The highest scientists here express great admiration of the little man, who is undoubtedly the foremost scientific authority amongst the educational officers of the Indian Government, both European and Native. He receives, however, the native salary, only two-thirds of the salary of an European. I am sending next week, through my Private Secretary, to Babington Smith the various suggestions made in order that you may consider them. To bring

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his salary up to the European standard would be an awkward precedent but I think your ingenuity could suggest some other means of meeting his merits. I understand that he has been offered a high salary to remain and work in England. Any suggestion of the kind should emanate from India. . . ."

10. *Lord Hamilton to Lord Elgin, February* 25, 1898 (*H.C. III, p.* 139)

". . . .Again I don't want, if I can help it, to have the Berar question raised: we have these territories now, but I never liked the way we got and have kept them, and our absoprtion of the once large surplus is a blot on our dealings with the Nizam's Government. . . ."

11. *Lord Hamilton to Lord Curzon, June* 16, 1899 (*H.C. I, p.* 181)

". . . .Your experience of Sandhurst is identical with my own. I tried every method I could think of, suggestion, persuasion, direction, orders, all in vain ; I came to the conclusion that he is incorrigibly dense. That is the universal opinion entertained of him by all his brother officers in the Guards. He is conscientious, hard wroking and a thorough gentleman—his qualification for Bombay is that he is Spencer's brother-in-law. When things were really bad in Bombay some years back I had seriously to consider whether or not some change should not be made—but I came to the conclusion that the political bias I should create on the other side against myself and consequently the acts of the India Government would more than counteract for the administrative benefit I should gain, so I abandoned the idea. . . ."

12. *Lord Hamilton to Lord Curzon, August* 3, 1899 (*H.C. II, p.* 255)

". . . .I have had quite a pathetic letter from Sandhurst, imploring me to point out to him where he has failed in supplying either you or me with all necessary information, as his one desire is heartily to cooperate with the Home and Indian Governments. I understand from his old brother officers that he was looked upon as a man into whose head it was impossible to put any new idea, that he was obliged to leave his regiment because he could not, after repeated efforts, pass the examination qualifying for Captain. I can quite believe it. . . ."

13. *Lord Hamilton to Lord Curzon, September* 6, 1899 (*H.C. I, p.* 306)

". . . .Jennings seems much the sort of man that the Queen wanted for Indore. I wish there was not such a prejudice against the Indian civilian. No doubt he is at times a prig, and, being largely recruited

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from the middle classes, he lacks at times the manners and consideration that the hereditary exercise of influence so often gives to families of long predigree and power. But he is wonderfully loyal, conscientious, and hard working. The rut into which the administration of India has settled is that made by the utilitarian or Manchester school. From 1832 to 1885 the ideas, policy and precepts of this most narrow, parochial, uninteresting, political party dominated the policy of Great Britain. The school was at the height of its power when the Mutiny broke out, and the Government of India put upon a Parliamentary foundation. Competitive examination was to be the instrument by which the world was to be regenerated and political economy and abstract reasoning were to sweep away sentiment, tradition, pageantry, and aspirations. In no country could be found less appreciative elements of those ideas than in India. If you can, as you say, endow the administrative services with a novel initiative and bigger ideals, you will have done something to make personal government more palatable and less angular in India than it now is....

"The finding in the Rangoon case is annoying and a clear violation of what justice required*...."

14. *Lord Hamilton to Lord Curzon, October* 11, 1899 (*H.C. III*)

"....Sandhurst has sent me....amongst other documents....the autobiography of Damodar P.A. Chapekar, who not only assassinated Rand, but also formed the Murder Club which subsequently committed other outrages. It is painful reading. The man was a fanatic and a desperado, but he was prepared to take his life in his hands...."

15. *Lord Curzon to Lord Hamilton, October* 1, 1901 (*H.C.*)

"....The other day I saw with pleasure that you had appointed to the Indian Educational Service a young and distinguished Indian Graduate (from Cambridge I think) named Mr. Harinath De. I think this was a wise step. Our English professors and lecturers out here about whom I wrote recently to Godley, take such little interest as a rule in their pupils, and perform their duties so mechanically and with so little real enthusiasm in their work, that perhaps a Native of ability and who has received a good university training in England, may do better...."

*(This refers to the raping of a Burmese woman by British soldiers.)

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16. *Lord Hamilton to Lord Curzon, December* 12, 1901 (*H.C. III, p.* 501)

"....Your reflections upon the extraordinary blundering which led to the series of mishaps in Manipur, written on the scene of the catastrophe, bring back vividly to one's mind what an astounding series of blunders the incident connected with Quinton's expedition produced....The other day at Deal I saw a very handsome woman of a garish type of beauty, listening to the band in the Marine Barracks. I was informed it was Mrs. Miller, late Mrs. Grimwood. I imagine that all the information you have picked upon the spot goes to prove that she was the beginning and the end of the extraordinary series of mistakes that were made. All the officers were running after her. I understand they located their men as near to the residency as was possible, thus putting them in a hopelessly defenceless position, and that the expedition contained as incompetent a collection of officials, both military and civil, as India could well produce...."

17. *Lord Curzon to Lord Hamilton, April* 17, 1902 (*H.C.*)

"....I am spending a day (at Agra) in order to see La Touche and to inspect all the repairs and restorations that are being carried out under my orders in the priceless buildings at that place....Marshall, the new archaeologist whom you sent out, is to meet me at Agra and go round with me. I made his acquaintance before leaving Calcutta, and thought him rather distinguished in appearance, and quite becomingly keen. I told him he must learn Sanskrit at once, in order to be able to deal with inscriptions, one of the most important branches of Indian Archaeology...."

18. *Lord Curzon to Lord Hamilton, January* 13, 1903 (*H.C.*)

"....This letter is written on a tent on the top of wonderful hill-fortress called Rhotasgrah. We are doing splendid work in restoration and conservation now throughout India : and I really think that almost the most lasting external effect of my term of office will be the condition in which I shall leave the priceless treasures of architecture and art that we possess in this country...."

19. *Lord Hamilton to Lord Curzon, March* 8, 1900

"....Mackenzie's Calcutta Municipal Bill was an illustration of how, a vigorous Governor might push a measure, not justifiable either by argument or fact, through a Council, by using his official majority...."

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20. *Lord Hamilton to Lord Curzon, May* 17, 1900 (*H.C. II, p.* 169)

"....The large scale preponderance of Natives in appointments above a certain grade as compared with Europeans always fills me with apprehension as regards the future. The preponderance will increase rather than diminish. All the educational influences at work in India tend to widen rather than to narrow the inlets into our administrative service. One of the greatest mistakes that ever was made was the issue in the proclamation annexing India of the principle that perfect equality was to exist, so far as all appointments were concerned, between European and Native. Dufferin, who is one of my very oldest friends, is quite delightful in conversation, but he is a thorough Irishman; and I do not believe he has been in any single place of responsibility and authority in which he did not more or less purchase popularity by leaving to his successors unpleasant legacies. I attribute largely to his mismanagement and want of judgement the origin and development of the Congress Party; and he could, as you say, at that time have effected restrictions in the admission of Natives to the higher ranks of the service that at present are quite impossible...."

Note : Lord Hamilton's apprehnsions came to be true. In reply to my question, as to how he could convince the Conservatives that it was necessary to grant India independence, Lord Pethick-Lawrence told me that when he took office the proportion of Indians in the I.C.S. was about 50% and some of them were so senior, that within a few years, if not earlier, the Viceroy's Executive Council would become predominantly Indian, if not wholly so. This factor weighed very heavily with the Conservatives, particularly with Mr. R.A. Butler. who was convinced, when Lord Pethick-Lawrence pointed this to him, that under the circumstances the Labour Government's policy was right. All the Conservatives agreed with Mr. Butler except Mr. Churchill.

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APPENDIX VIII

THE ORIGIN OF SATYAGRAHA

The belief that Gandhiji derived the idea of Satyagraha from Thoreau rests on Gandhiji's testimony; there can therefore be no doubt about his having been inspired by the *Walden*. It is possible, however, that his subconscious mind retained some childhood impressions which were activated by his later readings. For the incidents which are related below read very much like some of the incidents inspired by his *satyagraha* movement. These movements were not as non-violent as Gandhiji might have wished for, but many of his own, the 'Forty-two movement for example, ended in much greater violence.

It is interesting that the earliest disturbances in Gujarat (that I could find) started with the introduction of a "new duty on salt." The last riot recorded here took place in 1860, that is within a decade of Gandhiji's birth (1869), and it is quite probable for Gandhiji to have heard tales about these happenings in his young days.

Gandhiji had a peculiar memory. He never forgot a face or a name, and years after meeting a casual visitor could begin the conversation from where it was left. But in 1934 he seriously asked Mr. K. M. Munshi : "Munshi, which Round Table Conference did I attend?" Again just before leaving for Noakhali, he told some friends that he had never read the *Isopanishad*, and a copy was sent to him. But later I found from his early writings that he had read the *Isopanishad*. It is difficult to account for these strange lapses of memory in a man who exercised almost perfect self-control, but it is apparent that Gandhiji's memory was not always as reliable as one might have wished for. It may be argued therefore that even if he had heard in his childhood the Gujarat disturbances mentioned below, he forgot all about them when he grew up. That is fairly obvious. What I have been trying to establish is that the idea lay dormant in him and was germinated by the writings of Thoreau and Tolstoy.

The Indians are poor historians, but have a long memory; the success of the Bardoli campaign may partly be accounted for by the fact that such types of movements were traditional in Gujarat. The educated Gujaratis had forgotten all about it, though it was for them to look up the Gazetteer and find out; but, the peasants responded to the call, for they remembered what their ancestors did about

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two generations earlier. It is the peasant who carries the burden of our tradition.

The rioters, it will be observed from the following accounts, were treated with a surprising indifference, and even when someone was punished, the sentence seems to us to be too lenient, that is compared to what became the standard punishment in later years. The reason seems to be that in the middle of the nineteenth century, the British Empire was secure and the officialdom had about them an aura of serenity, for the Sepoy Mutiny had proved that nothing could shake the British Raj. By the turn of the century the revolutionaries pricked the armour of self-complacency, and with the end of World War I, it was evident that Great Britain would have to fight not for conquering or maintaining her empire, but to retain it. The rigours of punishment accordingly increased.

SALT SATYAGRAHA

"Since this disturbance in Mandvi no general attempt has been made to break the public peace of the district. In the city of Surat, however, the mob has more than once resisted the introduction of disagreeable measures by riotous and disorderly conduct. Of these, the first occasion was in 1844 (August 29), in consequence of the introduction of a new duty upon salt. Early in the morning of the 29th August, placards were posted about the town calling on shop-keepers to shut their shops. An invitation to all heads of castes to come to the court-house and state their grievances to the judge were disregarded. About three o'clock in the afternnoon a large body, assembling in front of the court-house, began to pull down fences, tear tiles from the roofs of the out-houses, and attack the court house 'in a ferocious and determined manner'. About this time, when matters had gone so far that the judge had applied to the officer commanding the station for military assistance, some European gentlemen, headed by the District Magistrate, made their appearance, and the attack on the court-house ceased. The rioters, however, refused to withdraw, and, as evening was coming on, a proclamation was issued, warning them that if they did not, within one hour's time, return to their houses, the military would be called to disperse them. Upon this the people withdrew. But throughout the next day, though no disturbance took place, the excitement continued with little abatement. In case of

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any further disorder, a body of troops and some artillery were dispatched from Bombay to Surat. No further disturbance took place, and in the following month (September 14) when the Salt Act was introduced, perfect tranquility prevailed throughout the city.

"In the beginning of April 1948, an attempt was made to introduce Bengal Standard weights and measures into Surat. The proposed change met with much opposition. The shops were closed for several days, and a placard was affixed to a house in the city, stating that the people of each caste had agreed to expel any one of their number who adopted new weights, and that a sum of £5,000 (Rs. 50,000) had been subscribed to contend the point at law as far as England. No breach of the peace was committed. On the 5th April, a deputation of merchants waited on the Collector, who agreed to postpone the introduction of the measure until the people represented their case to Government. On hearing how unpopular the change was, Government (7th April 1848) decided that the attempt to introduce the new weights and measure should be abandoned. The strong feeling in Surat was supposed to have been created by certain ill-disposed persons circulating the rumour that this was a preliminary step to an increase of taxation. But on inquiry nothing more than a general dislike to change was proved.

"In 1860 (November 29), in connection with the introduction of the income-tax a slight disturbance took place in Surat. About nine in the morning of that day the residents of Burhanpur Bhagal, one of the central quarters of the city, collected to the number of about three thousand, declaring that they would not fill in the income-tax forms, and that they would close their shops until the income-tax was repealed. On the arrival of the District Magistrate and Police Superintendent with a body of mounted police, the crowd dispersed without requiring any exercise of force." (*Bombay Gazetteer*, II, Surat, pp. 156-57).

II

HARTAL

"In 1853, in consequence of an order forbidding the digging of pits for Holi fires in the high roads, the Hindu merchants in Thana closed their shops. Police guards were set over the shops and the owners were compelled to open them and the opposition ceased." (*Bombay Gazetteer*, XIII, Part 2, p. 525).

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APPENDIX VIII

III

INCOME-TAX RIOTS : (Thana)

"In 1860 the levy of the income-tax met with considerable opposition. In Thana, Kalyan, Bhiwindi, Panvel and Shahapur, the people gathered, and, going to the leading government officials, threw the income-tax forms on the ground and refused to take them. In these towns the leading men of different communities were called together, the foolishness of the people's conduct was explained to them, and they were persuaded to take their own forms and induce others to take theirs. In Bassein the opposition was more general and better organized. On the 4th December about 4000 people gathered in front of the mamlatdar's office, and threw down their notices and forms. The late Mr. Hunter of the Civil Service, the Special Income-tax Officer, reached Bassein on the next day, and received from the mamlatdar a list of the men who had taken a leading part in the disturbance. Mr. Hunter, who was staying at the traveller's bungalow, asked the mamlatdar to send him the men whose names were entered in the list. They came accompanied by a great crowd. Mr. Hunter made the crowd sit down near the bungalow and spoke to them. They listened quietly and Mr. Hunter, hoping that he had brought them to a better mind, gave the leading men another opportunity of taking the income-tax forms. One of them, by name Govardhandas, refused and behaved with such insolence that Mr. Hunter ordered him into custody. On this the people grew unruly, forced their way in the house, and made such an uproar that Mr. Hunter finding he had lost control of them, determined to retire to his boat. The house was three quarters of a mile from the pier, and on the way, egged on by Govardhandas, the mob attacked Mr. Hunter with sticks and stones, and forced him to run for his boat. He reached the boat without much injury, but when his servants tried to push off, they were prevented by showers of stones and were kept in this position for three-quarters of an hour, when Mr. Hunter's clerk persuaded the people to let him go. Govardhandas, the leader of the riot, was sentenced to a month's imprisonment and a fine of £40 (Rs. 400/-)."

(*Bombay Gazetteer*, XIII, Part 2, p. 525).

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APPENDIX IX

MUNSHI PAPERS

Mr. K. M. Munshi made records of his conversations with Lord Linlithgow, primarily for Gandhiji's use. He has kindly given me permission to reproduce them here.

The conversations, as will be apparent, were barren of results. Still they are of importance, for, (1) being a contemporary record, (2) showing a part of Linlithgow's mind, (3) throwing some light on some contemporary events which it has not been possible to deal with in the present work.

Mr. Munshi was at this time the Home Minister of Bombay, and what was more important, enjoyed the confidence of Gandhiji and the Sardar, a fact which was well known to the Government of India (see below, Appendix G, para 3 of Mr. Munshi's letter to me). Therefore, Lord Linlithgow must have realized that in speaking to Mr. Munshi, he was really sending tentative proposals to Gandhiji, and that Mr. Munshi on his part was reflecting Gandhiji's opinion, or such views which Mr. Munshi had reasons to believe would have been acceptable to Gandhiji.

The most important parts of these conversations, for our present purpose, are those which are related to federation and the communal problem. In May, 1939, Lord Linlithgow believed that the federal part of the Government of India Act would come into operation by the spring of 1941. He had realized by this time that the Muslims (that is Mr. Jinnah) did not want any federation, but ignored the obvious corollary, that the Congress and the Hindus in general wanted a united India, and it was therefore necessary to come to an understanding with them.

The genesis of Appendix B is given in Mr. Munshi's letter to me (Appendix G, para 4). It contains Gandhiji's views given to Mr. Munshi along with the draft of a resolution (Appendix B) which Gandhiji proposed to put before the A.I.C.C. which was due to meet on October 9. Mr. Munshi delivered these papers to Sir Roger Lumley, and it was presumed that the latter had forwarded it to Lord Linlithgow, but Mr. Munshi received no communication on this subject.

Appendix C is a copy of the resolution which was ultimately passed by the Provincial Legislatures before they resigned office.

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(Sitaramayya, II, p. 142.)

While Mr. Munshi was conveying Gandhiji's views to the Government, Sardar Patel, issued a circular letter to all the Provincial Ministers (Appendix D). It is significant that on September 17, Sardar Patel did not think that the resignation of the Congress Ministers from their offices was inevitable.

The next Appendix (E) is a record of Mr. Munshi's talk with Lord Linlithgow on January 12, 1940. Lord Linlithgow's statement that "possibly the war will not be over till June 1941," is an index of his mental ability. But more revealing is his statement that he had to act in deference to the views of British public whcih felt that the Hindus as a community were against British interests. This was in reply to Mr. Munshi's direct accusation that Lord Linlithgow was encouraging the Muslims "to put forward the highest demand."

Appendix F contains Mr. Munshi's views on the contemporary situation. This also evoked no response from the Government, but still I include it here as an illustration of the co-operative attitude of an influential section of the Congress. Mr. Munshi's apprehensions (para 40) proved to be correct ; and in March 1942, Sir Stafford Cripps was practically imploring the Congress to accept responsibility for governing the country more or less on the lines suggested by Mr. Munshi, who had stated that, "for the moment" the Indians must rely "not only on British military experts but on the steel frame of a British army and navy" (para 41). But after the sinking of *H.M.S. Prince of Wales* and the *Repulse* and the fall of Rangoon, most Indians changed their opinion about the British army and navy.

Appendix G is Mr. Munshi's letter to me; it is a record of certain events of which no other evidence is available now. Mr. Munshi unfortunately was not quite sure of two dates (paras 5 and 6). Incidents referred to in para 5 happened while Gandhiji was in jail ; he was arrested on the early hours of August 10, 1942 and was released on May 8, 1944. Most probably the event happened in late 1943. Mr. Munshi's conversation with Sardar Patel must have taken place between July, 1945, when the Sardar was released, to August 1946, when he assumed office as Home Member, on the assumption that the Sardar moved from the Birla House to his residence immediately after he assumed office.

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A

INTERVIEW OF SHRI K. M. MUNSHI WITH THE VICEROY, LORD LINLITHGOW, ON 26TH MAY, 1939

Linlithgow : Well, what is the position in Sholapur ?

K. M. Munshi : Since yesterday there are no casualties. The situation was under control last night.

Linlithgow : How are police carrying on in Bombay ?

K. M. Munshi : Well, I have no reason to be dissatisfied.

Linlithgow : How did this happen ?

K. M. Munshi : Mr. Jinnah and Sir Sikandar went over to Sholapur to preside over the Muslim League Conference and set fire to material which was already inflammable.

Linlithgow : On account of Hyderabad agitation ?

K. M. Munshi : Yes. Condition in some parts of Bombay have become difficult. And they will continue to be so till the Arya Samajists are given their elementary religious rights. I have repeatedly told Sir Akbar that if he gave them these rights, the matter would be settled in a minute.

Linlithgow : Have they no political motive ?

K. M. Munshi : Not that I know of. They want to have their prayer halls, meetings and the right to perform *havans*, and few such things.

Linlithgow : What is the other side of the case ? Do you know ?

K. M. Munshi : Sir Akbar says that his laws deal impartially with Hindus and Muslims. Before they exercise these rights, they must seek the permission of the Ecclesiastical Department. But the Aryas never get the permission from the Department for months. Even a preacher from outside cannot deliver a sermon without submitting a copy of his sermon in advance.

Linlithgow : But why do you think he does so ?

K. M. Munshi : In my opinion, Sir Akbar wanted to make Hyderabad the premier Muslim State in the world, and so invited Maulvis from the North

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and roused religious frenzy. Proselytizing (of the) Hindus were encouraged by the State. This naturally attracted the Arya Samaj which is the aggressive proselytizing wing of Hinduism. They generally purify and reconvert a Hindu who has gone over to Islam. The idea perhaps of imposing restriction on them was not to allow Hindus to develop the resisting mentality. In my view you should at least secure the religious freedom of the Hindus, otherwise another 10,000 men will go and get locked up in jail and tension will grow.

Linlithgow : I know there is pressure all round. But do you think that if these reliefs are given, the Aryas will stop satyagraha ?

K. M. Munshi : I have met their leaders and think they will.

Linlithgow : Will you send me a list of rights they want to secure ?

K. M. Munshi Certainly.

Linlithgow : Now about Prohibition. Do you think that you can control the three miles territorial limit ? Have you considered whether it is a provincial or Federal subject ?

K. M. Munshi : I am considering this point of law. If it is central we shall have to trouble Your Excellency.

Linlithgow : How many more police do you want to engage for Bombay city ?

K. M. Munshi About 1,000 constables and 70 officers.

Linlithgow : But if you don't transfer excise men from time to time, you may get into difficulty.

K. M. Munshi : At present it would be difficult to arrange it. But this is a new venture and we will learn as we go.

Linlithgow : Apart from the merits or demerits of Prohibition, I think you should succeed. I know of several local authorities where there is limited prohibition. The drink maniacs go out of the

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locality and return drunk. But that does not affect its general tone. (Looking at notes). Now, last time you talked to me about Rajkot. What do you think about it now ?

K. M. Munshi : Gandhiji has made your path easy. Now you can deal with the Princes as you like.

Linlithgow : A great man like him alone can do what he has. It is a great relief. Mr. Gandhi will come out of this little place to attend to bigger problems.

K. M. Munshi : Yes, but you allowed Gibson and Viravala to treat him very shabbily.

Linlithgow : Haven't I stood by him ? And you must remember that I can't go and remove all these chiefs and find substitutes to put on their Gadi. But believe me, I cannot speak about all I do. But I am not sitting idle. I am trying to bring as much pressure as I can.

K. M. Munshi : But there is one aspect I must put forward. In Limbdi and Talcher you permit gross violence to be committed on harmless people. (Limbdi's treatment and attempted assault on Sardar explained.) These things will react on British India and disorder will be the result.

Linlithgow : I am not losing sight of Talcher, you will see. You know we have not sufficient number of men to get things done as fast as you people would wish. Neither on your side nor on mine. Take some of your small provinces. You can't say that you have enough capable men to go round. (Looking at his notes.) Now the next thing I want to ask you is this. You have your prejudices against the League of Nations. Speaking frankly I think the thing has failed. But the British always love to make use of institutions that exist to create new forces. They don't like to destroy. And efforts will soon be made to revive it.

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K. M. Munshi : Personally I have held the view that the place which Montagu gave to India on the League has given her some international status which otherwise it would not have enjoyed.

Linlithgow : After thinking over it, can you give me an idea whether your people would like to be represented on the Indian delegation on the Assembly. Your representatives may not necessarily voice the Government of India's point of view. But their presence there would in my opinion help to advance the interests of India.

K. M. Munshi : It is a very delicate matter and I should like to have time to think over it. And perhaps I could not give you any idea without consulting Gandhiji and Sardar.

Linlithgow : You may do so. Now (looking at his notes) what about Federation ?

K. M. Munshi : When you hope to bring it in ?

Linlithgow : In the spring of 1941, if all goes well.

K. M. Munshi : But you know that even a certain British opinion is hardening against your plans.

Linlithgow : There are a few die-hards in England.

K. M. Munshi : No. Sir George Campbell has expressed himself yesterday. Hodson of the Round Table thinks that it should not come in your regime. (His note discussed).

Linlithgow : I am not keen on it for myself. If Federation does not come now, it will never come. And if it does not come, I honestly think India's unity will be in danger. You know the forces at work. There is the Pakistan movement ; it is absurd—but it is not quite dead. And Sir Sikandar is preparing some federal scheme of his own. The Muslims do not want the Federation. But unless Hindus and Muslims sit on one Cabinet and learn to look at India as a whole, the communities will continue to fly apart.

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K. M. Munshi : Mr. Jinnah also does not want the Federation.

Linlithgow : Muslims don't want any federation—this or any other.

K. M. Munshi : They want to have statutory predominance where Hindus are in a majority ?

Linlithgow : They are bound to dominate the country any way. It is a compact minority of 8 crores. But it will prove much more difficult to Indian unity if the Federation does not come into existence.

K. M. Munshi : As it is, I heard a story that attempts are being made to bind the Muslims of West Asia to the Axis.

Linlithgow : All these difficulties show that India should have a federation early.

K. M. Munshi : We won't have your federation as it is. Now you have established contact, why don't you discuss the matter with Gandhiji ?

Linlithgow : Speaking frankly I realise that trying to tie totalitarian and democratic units together was creating difficulties. But there was no way. And as to your people I have nothing much to offer. That is again my difficulty.

K. M. Munshi : Your difficulties will increase if he (Gandhiji) is not there to deal with you.

Linlithgow : I know, but he wants to move very fast. Even in a small matter like Rajkot, you saw that forcing the pace has led to all the reactionary forces being mobilised and consolidated. I would like very much to know what he thinks about Federation.

K. M. Munshi : Why not see him ?

Linlithgow : That time has to come. And placed as I am, seeing him at this stage would create other difficulties. Now about your Bombay A.R.P.

K. M. Munshi : Yes, we have made our position clear. If Government of India gives the money, we will start taking precautions for the civil population. But the matter about how to deal with war rests with our H.Q. and you should take it

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up with Gandhiji. Suppose a war came and we went there would be great danger.

Linlithgow : Section 93 is a nightmare. You cannot get away from me, and I cannot get away from you. The circumstances daily arising in India and the world renders that impossible.

B

GANDHIJI'S DRAFT RESOLUTION*

"This Assembly regrets that the British Government have declared India as a participant in the War between Great Britain and Germany without the consent of the Indian people and without consulting this Assembly. The Assembly considers this declaration, made in complete disregard of the opposition to Indian opinion, a contravention of the spirit of Provincial autonomy, as also further measures adopted and laws passed in England and India limiting the powers and activities of Provincial Governments.

"The British Government have stated that the War is for the preservation of democracy, but their policy in India militates against this profession. While this Assembly has the fullest sympathy for the cause of democracy and freedom and condemns the aggression of the Nazi Government on Poland, it cannot offer co-operation in the War, unless the principles of democracy are applied to India and her policy is guided by her people. The Assembly invites the British Government to make a clear declaration that they have decided to regard India as an independent nation entitled to frame her own Charter of freedom, and to accompany this declaration by suitable action, in so far as this is possible, even in the prevailing War conditions. The Assembly is further of opinion that no War measure or other activity should be undertaken in this Province except with the consent and through the medium of the Provincial Governments."

*For Gandhiji's views see above p. 151.

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RESOLUTION PASSED BY THE PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURES IN OCTOBER, 1939

"This Assembly regrets that the British Government have made India a participant in the war between Great Britain and Germany without the consent of the people of India and have further in complete disregard of Indian opinion passed laws and adopted measures curtailing the powers and activities of the Provincial Governments.

"This Assembly recommends to the Government to convey to the Government of India and through them to the British Government that in consonance with the avowed aims of the present war, it is essential in order to secure the co-operation of the Indian people that the principles of democracy with effective safeguards for the Muslim and other minorities be applied to India and her policy be guided by her people ; and that India should be regarded as an independent nation entitled to frame her own constitution and further that suitable action should be taken in so far as it is possible in the immediate present to give effect to that principle in regard to present governance of India.

"This Assembly regrets that the situation in India has not been rightly understood by His Majesty's Government when authorising the statement that has been made on their behalf in regard to India and in view of this failure of the British Government to meet India's demand this Assembly is of opinion that the Government canno associate itself with British policy. "

ALL INDIA CONGRESS PARLIAMENTARY SUB-COMMITTEE

Confidential.
Circular Letter No. 416.

Purshottam Mansion,
Opp. Opera House, Bombay.
17*th September*, 1939.

Dear Prime Minister,

I am addressing you in regard to the War situation that h arisen and which affects India and your Government vitally. Ma of the Congress Ministers have been asking as to what their attitu

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should be in dealing with this situation. It is obvious that difficult and delicate problems are arising and will arise from day to day, and it is highly desirable that a uniform policy, in consonance with Congress principles and policy, should be followed by all the Congress Provincial Governments. Some of these problems were considered at the Prime Minister's Conference held in Poona last month and a general agreement was arrived at in regard to the policy to be pursued. Those decisions and directions have to be borne in mind and followed now.

The policy of the Congress Governments must necessarily be governed by the general Congress policy at this juncture. The Working Committee has issued an important and weighty statement on the present situation. Though this statement does not decide finally about our future course of action, it clarifies the position and indicates our objectives and the alternatives before us. In the course of the next few weeks it may be possible to take a further and more definite decision which may lead to consequences involving the resignation of Congress Ministries. But to say that such resignation is inevitable would be wrong. There are other possible developments. In any event Congress Ministries must realise that there is a possibility of conflict on wider national issues and this will vitally affect their future. They have therefore to keep themselves in readiness for any eventuality.

Meanwhile Congress ministers are invited to study carefully the Working Committee's statement and to appreciate all its implications. In any conversations with the Governor or any communications with the Government of India, the background of this statement has always to be borne in mind and emphasised. They have to make it clear to their respective Governor that the Working Committee's statement is not to be treated lightly and those who do so will do so at their peril.

It is also desirable that early steps be taken to pass a resolution in the provincial Assemblies giving full support to the position taken up by the Working Committee in their statement. Where Provincial Assemblies are not in session, steps may be taken to call a special meeting at an early date for this purpose. Where this is not possible, the Government may adopt the resolution as a government. A draft of the resolution to be adopted is being sent to you herewith.

One essential fact has to be kept in mind, more especially during this intervening period before a final decision is taken by the Congress. The Provincial Ministries should not allow in practice any limitations of their powers or permit the Government of India or the Governor

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to encroach on their domain or functions directly in their province. In the so-called secondary war activities such as control of prices, profiteering, production etc. the provincial Governments should take full part and keep them under their complete contorl. In the primary war activities, such as enrolment of recruits etc., they should hold their hands and not commit themselves till a final decision is taken.

Many difficult problems will of course arise and it is not easy to enumerate them. Ministers will have to exercise their discretion or refer them to us for advice. It is clear, however, that ministers cannot agree to anything that goes against Congress principles or is likely to humilitate them.

Yours sincerely,

Encl : 1 Sd/-

Chairman.

E

SUMMARY OF AN INTERVIEW OF MR. K. M. MUNSHI DATED 12TH JANUARY 1940 (10.15 TO 10.45 A.M.) WITH LORD LINLITHGOW.

Talk about the Children's Home and the Anand Institute.*

Linlithgow : We have met under different circumstances. Let me talk to you about the general situation. I am not going to wait till the end of the war for settling the Indian problem. Possibly the war will not be over till June 1941, and we are so far away that our problems could be adjusted by us here without being concerned with a battle or two in France.

There is another fact in which you are as much interested as I am. England is making a colossal effort to win the war and at the end of the war, as on the last occasion, it will be exhausted. At that time there will be a tendency to liberalise the institutions of the

*Children's Home at Bombay and the Anand Agricultural Institute founded by Mr. Munshi.

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Empire. India should not then be found unprepared and disunited.

You must have seen my recent statement. Between Dominion Status of the West Minister variety and Independence there is only a difference in name. It will take time to develop India's capacity, even for the work which will be cut out for you.

Take the Act of 1935. The word 'Federation' has become like a dried fish which stinks in everybody's nose. But take the main objections to it.

First there is Defence. You will admit that the military machine is now no longer the concern of one country. Its training and organisation as at present must be under common control, and India must be prepared to wait to be able to take over charge. Second, Foreign affairs. They are in the same position. Third, the Commercial safeguards, which you call discriminations. They could be adjusted. But as the world goes today, India cannot afford to have free trade party. But I would not despair of coming to an agreed formula on the point. Fourth, there is the question of direct elections to the Assembly.

K. M. Munshi I am not sure whether Gandhiji is very particular about direct elections to the Assembly.

Linlithgow : Then the next question is that of the State. You can't have Dominion Status unless the States are brought in some manner. If a proper effort is made I would not despair of settling their questions in some way unless you pitch your claim very high.

The next question is that of the Central Assembly. I won't like to argue when people claim something as a moral right. But given goodwill on both sides ways and means could

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be found to have a body which would serve the purpose.

K. M. Munshi : Gandhiji has already stated that he would be satisfied with an agreed equivalent. Perhaps a convention of all the legislatures might be a good substitute.

Linlithgow : That leaves the question of minorities. I will concede that the minorities have no right to block the progress.

K. M. Munshi : But by speaking in the way you do you give them an instrument to put forward the highest demand. That makes our task difficult. That has been our past experience of the British statesmen. They gave the minorities such an undue importance that they were led to make extravagant claims. In 1914 Congress agreed to Jinnah's demands thinking that they would have communal peace thereafter. The Lucknow Pact was ripped open. The MacDonald Award came. Against Hindu opinion, Gandhiji got the Congress not to reject the communal award but to work it. And still when you call Gandhiji you must needs call Jinnah and fifty other gentlemen as a counterweight. And now in your speeches you throw the burden of settling with him upon us. How are we expected to do that.

Linlithgow : I have to do so. I have not merely to speak to a public in India, I have also a public in England. That public is an important factor both from your and my point of view. And it has a feeling that Hindus as a community are against British interests.

K. M. Munshi : But you see the result. There was a cordial atmosphere in your dealings with Gandhiji about the time we left office. Now you make pronouncements which look like preparations for a case to impress the world that when we

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broke from you you were right. I see a reaction to this on our side. Gandhiji's recent statements show a tendency to occupy a politically unassailable position when mass action is started. Instead of both of you coming nearer, I feel that you are drifting apart, and no settlement is likely if both of you continue to drift away from one another.

Linlithgow : You mean we are creating fences round ourselves.

K. M. Munshi : Certainly, you hold Gandhiji in great respect. You told me at Simla that you want an alliance with Right Wing Congress. If you are serious about it why don't you help in this settlement.

Linlithgow : Am I not doing it every hour of my life ?

K. M. Munshi : Why do you then let Mr. Jinnah make things impossible. You have got the Aga Khan, you have got your friend Sir Sikandar. It is your actions, which sends up Mr. Jinnah's rates. That leads him to make absurd charges against us. You do not even reply to them. And he is so difficult now that any friendly approach to him has become impossible.

Linlithgow : I know that he has become very difficult, but that is only from a short view of things. For the present he has made himself into a rallying centre of minorities. Time alone can remove him from that position. Sikandar cannot occupy that position. But from a long view of things Jinnah cannot succeed. He would soon be found out as a stumbling block to progress.

K. M. Munshi : If that is your view why don't you set about discussing matters with Gandhiji. These 'range artillery' as Sir Maurice puts it is scarcely helpful.

Linlithgow : I am going to do it as soon as I am ready.

K. M. Munshi : But it may be too late. For instance on the 26th of January, there is bound to be

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somewhat 'war mentality' amongst us.

Linlithgow : I don't think there will be any trouble, but there would be considerable enthusiasm.

K. M. Munshi : Yes, they will follow the Congress. I feel the undercurrents amongst our ordinary Congressmen, and I wonder how long Gandhiji will be able to keep them in leash. For the moment he is exercising a strong restraining hand.

Linlithgow : Yes, he has become powerful. But do you seriously think that he will be able to carry Jawaharlal ?

K. M. Munshi : Jawaharlal is a great idealist and is therefore an idol of the masses. But the inspiration, organisation, and technique are all Gandhiji's and Jawaharlal will not part company with Gandhiji.

Linlithgow : I think it was a mistake to have left office. Perhaps there were reasons on your side which I cannot appreciate.

K. M. Munshi : Yes, we could not have continued long in office and helped you in the war unless we had obtained a share in the centre which could justify our being there. Otherwise it would have been a thankless job. For instance Subhas would have made our task very difficult.

Linlithgow : You think Subhas formidable. I do not think so.

K. M. Munshi : Not in that sense, but if we had been in power he would have got himself arrested only in order to make our position difficult. Now things are better from every point of view and things should be done early.

Linlithgow : I hope to make a move soon.

K. M. Munshi : You hold Gandhiji in great respect and Gandhiji I am sure holds you equally in great respect and if you both cannot settle the matter, nationalism will naturally have to go into wilderness.

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Linlithgow : Well, you are putting a great and flattering burden on me.

K. M. Munshi : If there is no alliance between national India and Britain it may be that we may go, may be for a long time, but then Savarkar and Jinnah will fight it out.

Linlithgow : It will be a disaster.

Khandala, 8th June 1940.

Your Excellency,

Apropos of our conversation on the 5th I am submitting my note on the present situation.

I was unable to respond to your kind invitation to participate in the war efforts you are making. But I felt that in discharge of my own duty to my country I should not, at this time, render myself so disabled as not to place my views before you—and therefore H. E. the Viceroy through you—and thus render what I conceive to be real war service at this time.

You know how the allied reverses have affected me ; how when in office, I had looked forward to Britain and India fighting the war as partners ; how anxiously I have followed the catastrophic events in Europe since May 10th ; and therefore I trust that you will forgive me the frankness with which I have dealt with the problems in the note.

The note is defective in several particulars, but I hope you will understand that it comes from a sincere friend of Britain who would, if he could, help, may be to a very insignificant extent, to save her from pursuing a policy in India, which I feel is likely to spell disaster for both the countries concerned.

I hope Lady Lumley has returned safe and is well.

With kindest regards to both of you from Mrs. Munshi and myself.

Yours sincerely,
Sd/- K. M. MUNSHI.

H.E. Sir Roger Lumley, G.C.I.E., T.D.,
BOMBAY.
Encl : 1

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(Confidential)

NOTE ON THE PRESENT SITUATION

1. The policy of British in India, so far, has been without imagination, and has consisted in maintaining the status quo and in taking the initiative only when action becomes obligatory—when they are driven into the corner. This has arisen from the following : (*a*) The self-complacency of the British official mind, which believes that the British luck would carry them through every crisis, and has, therefore, lost the capacity of taking decisive action. (*b*) Caution, which generally takes the form of fear lest any change should alter things for the worse. (*c*) The red-tape-ism, which pervades the administration so rigidly that the whole truth about the country ordinarily does not reach those who have to adjudge policies.

2. The features of the status quo policy for some years past have been the following (*a*) to distrust the Congress as an enemy of the British interests ; (*b*) to encourage Muslims to be a counter-weight to Hindus ; (*c*) to induce the Indian States to be a counterweight to British India in the federal scheme ; (*d*) to get the Europeans in India to take a greater part in public life so as to maintain the balance of power wherever they can, as in Bengal ; (*e*) to introduce the Act of 1935, which, with its checks and counter-checks, was calculated to keep India safe for Britain for a few generations. Today the whole policy has failed, and the intention to enforce the whole Act of 1935 is formally given up.

3. The distrusted Congress had to be accepted as a partner by compulsion, when it accepted office ; and when it left office the Act of 1935 was gone with them.

4. The Muslims—outside its Nationalist section,—encouraged to hope for a favoured treatment, are refractory. States like the Nizam and others in spite of their vaunted loyalty to the British are financing and influencing separatist tendencies amongst the Muslims. The principal props of British policies like Sir Zafrulla or Sir Sikandar are no longer useful. Mr. Jinnah, in spite of his cryptic utterances as regards the British rule is unfriendly ; and his two-nation theory is as much a counterblast to British imposed unity in India as to the national unity which Congress covets.

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5. The States have equally frustrated the British policy. The theory of 'sovereignty' qua British-India discovered during the Round Table Conferences have made them assertive and ambitious, making the working of Paramountcy difficult. They have also done their best to destroy the federal scheme for the sake of which they were taught to talk in terms of 'sovereignty.'

6. The Britishers in India have failed to occupy any key position. Even in Bengal where they were expected to work wonders, they have not been able to secure any proper standard of administration ; and have been laid on the shelf by the recent Huq-Bose *rapproachement.*

7. The policy was foredoomed to frustration, First, by its failure to recognise the important fact that by the very nature of things the only two sections which were interested in keeping India together were the British and the Nationalists, and Secondly, by its failure to anticipate that only the Nationalist alone when he gains the control of Government can bind his country to Britain by genuine bonds of self-interest, as in the case of Ireland and Egypt.

8. With this failure on hand, however, an entirely unexpected international situation has now come into existence. Occupation of Britain is not a possibility, but a near probability. This would involve the important result that India, like Dutch Indies may have to shift for itself as a more or less isolated fragment of the British Empire, without any substantial help from Britain in men, money or war materials.

9. The military equipment of India without help from Britain and without spontaneous efforts of Indians on a large scale may be just enough to keep internal peace. Against any European power or Japan, by itself and as at present, it is entirely inadequate.

10. At the same time the present war situation must have had great repercussions on India's neighbours. In the immediate future, their attitude will have considerable influence on the Indian situation.

11. Western diplomacy in China, even before the war, was impotent without American support ; and with war preoccupations of Britain and France, Japan is bound to dominate the Chinese situation. Indications are not lacking that Stalin may any day come to a settlement with Japan on the Chinese questions. The recent agreement to cease fighting on the Outer Mongolian-Manchuko frontier ; to continue the old fishery compact for one year ; and to open trade talks are sufficient danger signals. Stalin, if he gets other fields of activity,

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may even sell out China. International observers are discussing it as a distinct possibility.

12. Turkey is pro-British. But it had friendly relations with Germany since the Great War. Russia is bound to her by self-interest. Hanoum Halide Edib, a very shrewd observer of Turkey, observed two months ago that Turkey had to ally herself to England and France because they could retain German as well as Russian imperialistic expansion in the near East. But suppose they are not able to restrain, what then ?

13. Afghanistan can always be relied upon to be a difficult neighbour. Possibly those in authority know things more in detail. But Indian Communists have always been looking in that direction for some months and I don't imagine they have ceased to do so now. I do not know much about Iran and the Arabic kingdoms. The Saadabad Pact, however, between—Turkey, Afghanistan, Iran and Iraq may develop sinister aspects in a conceivably Asian crisis.

14. These following contingencies may conceivably occur (A) Italy may enter war and render the Arabian Sea difficult. (B) With England and France struggling for their very life Stalin may leave China to Japan and think in terms of other countries like Afghanistan and India. (C) Germany may try to convert the Near-East Muslim block into a pro-Nazi ally and that way try to penetrate into India. Any one or more of the contingencies may occur at one time. As things are at present contingency (A) by itself may not be serious ; it can only be dangerous if it is co-ordinated with (B) or (C).

15. The only way to meet these dangers is to transform the present Government of India into an Indian Government backed by the enthusiasm of the whole country which could organise its resources and strength in a few months. Then alone India can be a stabilising pro-British force in Asia.

16. In order to achieve such transformation of the present Government of India the Indian situation must be viewed with reference to :

(I) The British Supporters
  (a) Princes ; and
  (b) Dependents ;
(II) The Nationalists
(III) The Communal Muslims
(IV) The Extremists

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(V) The Turbulents.
(VI) The Helpless

I have included the Hindu Mahasabhaites, the Liberals and minorities like the Indian Christians among Nationalists, for whatever their differences with the Congress they are for a united India, for Nationalism and Democracy, and for the establishment of a popular Government at the centre.

17. The Princes of India have only one object ; dynastic ambition. They have persisted through centuries by adroit alliances with those who happen, or are likely to establish imperial power in the country. Many of them won over the Muslim invaders by accepting Islam or, by remaining Hindus and entering into matrimonial alliances, which were regarded as the depth of degradation in those days. They won over the British by huge monetary subsidies in all shapes, and recently by being helpful instruments against Nationalist India. But it must not be forgotten that when their dynastic ambitions were thought to be in jeopardy, they decided to sabotage the federal scheme.

18. The princes will help the British with money ; they may supply men ; but very soon this form of loyalty will not be ungrudging—even if it has not already reached that point. They cannot energize India. And the instinct of dynastic self preservation may at any moment destroy their will to help or resist ; *unless*, in some form or other, they are firmly held in an unyielding Indian framework.

19. As to the dependents, in which I include all those who have acquired prestige, wealth or position by an uncritical support of British rule, *viz.*, the titled, and the very small minorities. But their number is small and their influence in the country, very limited. The loss of recent British prestige all over the world during the last three years and their recent reverses have already been leading them to doubt whether the British star by which they were navigating so far is not a falling meteor soon to be extinguished.

20. The Nationalists the largest and the most highly organised group in India have only one ambition, to have a free nation-state for India. When the war started they were anxious to be taken into partnership with Britain and as partners to mobilise the resources of the country for waging the war. But ten months have been slowly bringing the conviction to some amongst them that there is little hope for a National Government till Britain is broken.

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21. The technique of organised inaction which Gandhiji has created has produced most unexpected results. (a) It has been a living testimony before the world that the British are not fighting for anything except their own power. Many American papers in U.S.A. for instance have been outspoken about it. (b) It has succeeded in confirming the impression in India that the war is not waged in Indian interests but for British interests in India. (c) It has made and will make the war effort of the Government in India ineffective. (d) It has successfully defeated Mr. Jinnah's attempt to blackmail the Congress into giving his League a predominating position in the affairs of the country. (e) It has reduced the Government in seven provinces to an irresponsible bureaucracy and reduced the provincial Governments to marking time and administering Defence of India Act. (f) It has given to the Nationalists the happy position of a spectator, thus leaving them free to form their programme in any international crisis.

22. There are some men inside the Congress and outside who have already begun to feel that there is no use making any attempt to deal with British at this stage as the country is not likely to be worse under any other regime. It is being increasingly felt that any foreign power hoping to acquire India, more likely than not, will make it its object to free India from British Imperialism, and the consequent position may not be worse.

23. The bulk of the Muslims in India—outside its nationalist section—the bulk of whom though ignorant are capable of great collective energy under the influence of a religious urge. It may express itself in (a) local disorders ; (b) attempts to overawe authority as in the case of Khaksars ; (c) refusal to resist any outside Muslim power ; or (d) a powerful movement in sympathy with Muslims of the neighbouring countries.

24. The Muslim League started with the object of securing for the community more than its legitimate share in any power which the Congress might succeed in getting for the country. The importance which the Viceroy gave Mr. Jinnah ; the latter's attack on Congress Ministers as anti-Muslim, when every Governor concerned knew that there was no truth in it ; and the proposal of coalition Ministries claimed to have emanated from the Viceroy, gave the League an impression that its object was within sight. When Gandhiji evolved organised inaction, Mr. Jinnah, frustrated in his attempt, resorted to his two-nation theory. Many think that it is a lever for extracting the desired

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objective in any settlement. But the idea is in the market, and the man who issued the script may not be able to control its circulation. From that idea to a Muslim State in some sort of standing alliance with the parties to the Saadabad Pact is but a step.

25. The Khaksars may not be left out of consideration. Armed resistance to authority by an organised Muslim party has entered practical politics. The Government of India which let it embarrass the Congress U.P. Government is now seriously alarmed at its strength. They have destroyed the influence of Governments' most important Muslim supporter, Sir Sikandar, in the Punjab itself.

26. The Muslim Communalists, therefore, are not likely to ally themselves unreservedly with the British. If they do so, it will be at such an absurd price that the Nationalists and the Hindus will have nothing left to hope for except in the disappearance of the British rule from India.

27. The extremists have their sympathy for Russia or Germany as they see in them the instruments of their freedom. The turbulent element in times of disintegration will only help to increase disorder, whatever be its nature.

28. The helpless in India are immense. Whatever the change of rule, they will resign themselves to it. But their one outstanding characteristic is their responsiveness to Gandhiji's personality. He can galvanise them into action as none, after Buddha, has been able to do in India. This is not exaggeration. One has only to see, as I have seen, men women and children travelling miles from their villages to have a *darshan* (sight) of the running train which is supposed to carry him, to be satisfied.

29. The summary of the position, therefore, is this :

(a) There are only two sections which are interested in maintaining the political integrity of India at any cost : (i) the British and (ii) the Nationalists.

(b) Any attempt to window-dress the situation in India by mobilising the British supporters in favour of the war effort may deceive a few outside countries for the moment, and perhaps its victims. But the attempt is unreal ; it will fail in the end ; and the self-deception of those who engineer it will lead to a rude and unpleasant awakening at a critical moment.

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(c) The one individual in the world today who can rally the moral enthusiasm of the world and of India and the spontaneous sacrifice from Indians is Gandhiji ; a valuable asset, which no statesman in the present crisis of the world can disregard with impunity.

30. There is a persistent attempt made by some to lay emphasis on the formula that Gandhiji and Jinnah must evolve a formula which the British will be willing to accept. This attempt is either genuine or it is not.

31. If it is genuine, it bespeaks serious error of judgment. (a) Gandhiji stands for Nationalism and Democracy ; Jinnah has forsworn both ; and even if Congress is reduced to the minority of one, Gandhiji will never agree to partition India or to abandon the principles of Democracy. (b) If any real settlement between the Hindus and the Muslims is to come it will come, not by artificial pacts made between political leaders or imposed by the British. Lucknow Pact was of the first kind ; MacDonald's Award was of the latter. Muslims were satisfied with neither.

32. A real adjustment of communal differences will come only under the following circumstances :

I.—If the British Government

(a) formally announces its objectives of the British policy to be implemented at the end of the war as free and equal partnership with Britain ;

(b) gives up any attempt to insist on a communal settlement as a *sine que non* of political progress

(c) declares itself bound only by any adjustment of communal questions arrived at by elected representatives superseding MacDonald's Award ;

(d) proceeds to a temporary transformation of the Government at the centre into a national war government and the restoration of provincial governments.

And when the country feels that so far as the British are concerned the programme is final.

II.—Both sides come to a natural adjustment after a bitter and exhausting struggle has proved the futility of trying to secure more than one's legitimate place.

33. On the other hand if the formula of communal settlement now harped upon is a mere excuse for delaying political settlement,

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then having been already so received in the country, it has deceived no one. Then it means that the Government has decided upon the course of waging the war with the help of its Supporters only, and rejected what the cautious British mind perhaps thinks the dangerous course of leaving the conduct of the war to the hands of doubtful allies.

34. If the view in para 33 prevails, the following results may be anticipated :

(a) If British Empire is emasculated with India in the hands of weak Britain, it will have to face an exasperated National India.

(b) if Britain is defeated and India is lost to it, nothing is gained.

(c) if Britain is victorious after a protracted struggle, it will lose the benefit of India's active assistance during the war ; and will have to face an exasperated India after its exhausting struggle all the same.

In no event, therefore, I venture to submit, would any policy be justified, which postpones the transformation of the Government of India into a National War Government. All petty considerations must yield place to this supreme necessity of the hour.

35. The party which associates itself with British Government at this stage is not likely to weaken its war efforts. No popular Cabinet at the present moment so far as I can see would interfere with Defence so as to make it worse ; and that is all that should count at present. In my opinion the war effort made by it would then be so enthusiastic and comprehensive as to change the face of the situation in Asia.

36. A National Government cannot be formed without the Congress. But difficulties will naturally be raised ; if the Congress is placated, the Muslim League will be exasperated ; there may be internal disorder ; and there may be repercussions in the near East. These difficulties must be carefully examined :

37. (a) So far Britain has found in the League an unconscious ally against the Congress demand for political advancement and has therefore given its policy every encouragement.

(b) The Viceroy and after him the semi-official Anglo-Indian Press, say like the *Times of India*, in search of a communal settlement, only through and with Mr. Jinnah have given to Mr. Jinnah the final veto on all questions relating to constitutional progress of the country ; a

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position which he has not been slow to exploit.

(c) In recent discussions and pronouncements the British Government both in England and in India has entirely ignored the Muslims outside the League. This is largely responsible for the eclipse of the Aga Khan, Sir Zafrulla and Sir Sikandar. The Ahrars, the Shiahs and the Nationalist Muslims simply do not exist for the British Government. The importance thus given to the League is adventitious.

The atmosphere of impending political change gave lurid importance to the League as it puts forward the highest claim; but when the changes are carried through it will naturally disappear.

38. The truth of my analysis can easily be verified if a test calculation is made on the basis that a body of 100 persons is elected by all the members of the provincial assemblies in India (wherein the Muslims already enjoy weightage) by proportional representation on the basis of a single transferable vote. The overwhelming national minded majority in such a body of representatives which will accept Gandhiji's leadership will consist of a substantial number of the Muslim members elected; and if the British Government honestly exerts itself to set up a genuine national Government, quite a good number of the other Muslims will not support the League. It is unfair, therefore, to allege, and it would be untrue to assume, that the Muslims as a whole desire the partition of the country or that a large number of their leaders do not desire a settlement except on the terms of Mr. Jinnah.

39. If the Hindu Muslim problem is isolated and is left to a body of elected representatives, no one can have a legitimate grievance. Internal disorder will have to be controlled in any event, for the stakes in question are too large to be endangered for a fear which every Police Commissioner had to face since the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms. If such a body is appointed the near-East will have one grievance more *only* if they are disposed to be anti-British, but their loyalty will in the end depend upon their self-interest. A strong India, however, will be a greater international force in favour of their adhering to the British rather than against it.

40. Suppose no solution is found and the present impasse is allowed to continue the consequences will be unhappy. The atmosphere of distrust will continue. The Congress will remain in organised inaction waiting for a psychological moment to launch an offensive.

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The Muslim League will continue to frame schemes of Pakistan and to make higher demands for guarantees. The British supporters will soon get tired of carrying the burden of the war effort in an unsympathetic atmosphere. The gigantic wave of pro-British sympathy which has come over India will subside. If the war effort unsupported by the spontaneous goodwill of the people as a whole continues to consume the resources of the country for some time, a dull resentment and then a deeper dissatisfaction will follow, paving the way for an outburst. And if a real crisis occurred on the Indian border, India will come to look upon it as a welcome disaster for the British rule.

41. I will not ignore the British die-hard attitude to such a proposal. India, according to it, will cease to be governed in purely British interests, as it has been so far ; a national Government may develop anti-British tendencies ; and the extremists may drag it outside the orbit of Allied influence. These fears are not quite groundless. But to-day the leaders in control of the Nationalist movement in India are pro-British. For the moment they must rely not only on British military experts but on the steel frame of a British army and navy to defend their newly acquired status. If they undertake to fight the war at this stage under British leadership India will have soon acquired organic solidarity with Britain. Their efforts in the allied cause—and I am afraid at this late stage it will have to be more than human—would have diverted the sympathies away from hostile directions. But above all it must not be forgotten the word 'British interests' has outgrown its pre-war meaning of British commercial and economic self-interest and the security of British services. Today it lies in maintaining and establishing self-sufficient centres of power in all parts of the world, which would, of themselves—that is, without the coercive might of the British army and navy—remain the allies of Britain for the purposes not only of war, but also of reconstruction which must follow its termination. No discontented dependency smarting at being deprived of an opportunity to gain its freedom, I fear, will now serve British interests either during or after the war.

42. In the end I may once again urge that setting up a strong National Government at the centre is today neither a matter of convenience nor of fair play as it was before 10th May 1940. It is a matter of extreme importance both for British and India ; of life and death urgency to the maintenance of the British influence in Asia and to the stabilisation of the East. It has to be achieved, if necessary,

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against the unimaginative traditions of ponderous statesmanship with which India has been familiar in the past.

43. If this is delayed, my fear is that one more lost opportunity will be added to the many which are now being charged heavily to the account of Britain.

G

Letter From Shri K. M. Munshi to the Author

Camp : Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan,
Curzon Road, New Delhi.
December 4, 1962.

My dear Ashoke,

With reference to your queries, with regard to certain events within my personal knowledge, I give you my recollections.

(1) In August 1937, we took office. After the Congress Ministers were sworn in at Poona, negotiations between the Muslim League and the Congress were held in a house which a friend had placed at my disposal. Sardar Patel and Maulana both were my guests at the time and I was present at most of the interviews.

As things were, very few Muslim members of the Legislature had been returned on the Muslim League ticket. Rest of them were independents and each one of them was anxious to join the Congress if he were appointed a minister. Intermediaries on behalf of the League also carried on negotiations mostly with Maulana. So far as I remember, Jinnah offered that the Bombay Ministry should include two of its representatives. After consultation with Sardar, Maulana sent word that the Congress would be prepared to take one or two Muslim ministers provided the ministers for the time being accepted the Congress pledge and worked harmoniously with the Congress team. Jinnah insisted that they should be taken as representatives of the League, so that there could be a coalition ministry.

At the time the Congress was more concerned with wresting power from the British Government and converting the Provincial governments into wholly responsible governments and would not welcome a divided house in cabinets.

After full consideration, Sardar and Maulana decided that the terms of the Muslim League could not be accepted, for that would subject Congress action to Muslim League veto on every occasion.

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Nuri, an independent Muslim, was then selected. Most of the other independent Muslim members thereupon joined the League.

(2) In 1938 or 1939, I was in Simla for some official conference, perhaps the Home Ministers' conference, staying with the late Sir Girija Shankar Bajpai then a Secretary to Government of India. Lord Linlithgow, then the Viceroy, gave me an interview—I sought it as a piece of courtesy—at which he asked me to convey to Gandhiji that if the Congress would help him to introduce the Federal Part of the Government of India Act, he would see that the ministry was allowed to function on a responsible basis without Viceregal interference. I remembcr his warning : "You cannot do without me and I cannot do without you. And if you let this opportunity go, Jinnah would prove very formidable and worse."

I wrote out the substane of the interview the same day and posted it on to Gandhiji. (A copy of my notes of interview is attached). I have no recollection of how Gandhiji reacted, but so far as I remember, he remained unenthused. He never could feel that the Government of India Act if accepted in a spirit of accommodation by both sides, could bring in responsible government.

(3) As regards Netaji, he was staying with Nathalal Jhaveri in 1938 for several months on the plea that he was unwell. Two or three times he called me at the time. His object was to ascertain whether I could be of any use to him. He was not really ill, and there were stories current that he met people and even went out to see people in disguise. The Government of India knew my relations with Gandhiji and Sardar, and often saw to it that confidential information reached Gandhiji through me. On one such occasion, I was shown certain secret service reports that Netaji had contacted the German Consul in Calcutta and had come to some arrangement with him, which would enable Germany to rely upon him in case there was a war. I conveyed the information to Gandhiji, who naturally felt surprised.

Later, after 1942, I think, Lala Shankerlal and another (whose name I have forgotten), who knew me well, consulted me about some strange documents. In the course of the consultation, I was shown the draft of a treaty which Netaji had entered into with Japan through Shankerlal.

(4) After the declaration of War in 1939, Sir Roger Lumley, then the Governor of Bombay, asked me to ascertain from Gandhiji as to the terms on which the Congress would remain in office and

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continue to co-operate with the war effort. I conveyed the message to Sardar, who sent me to Wardha. I brought back the terms which Gandhiji gave me, to be conveyed to Sir Roger Lumley.

(5) In ..... Gandhi was in jail. I was in close touch with my friend, Shyama Prasad Mookherjee, then the President of the Hindu Mahasabha. At the time, Jinnah invited Shyma Prasad and pressed him to agree to some kind of partition. On such an agreement, he said, he would join the Hindus in pressing for transfer of power. Shyama Prasad met me at Birla House where I was then staying, and between us, we discussed and even drew up the implications of any such proposal.

I was then carrying on a lone campaign for Akhand Hindustan. Savarkar, who was the president of the Hindu Mahasabha, invited me to explain the position to the Working Committee of the Hindu Mahasabha which had met in New Delhi.

Shyama Prasad was keen on working out some formula of compromise, but I found that the Hindu Mahasabha group was very strongly against it. The same day or the next, we met a larger group at the house of the brother of Lala Sri Ram. The general opinion was that in no event should any negotiations be carried on with Jinnah on the basis of partition.

(6) In 1947, I think, both Sardar and myself were the guests of G. D. Birla at New Delhi. Whenever Sardar was in a mood, in the course of our daily walks, he used to talk to me of some of the problems which were uppermost in his mind. One day, while talking, he began to tease me : 'Well Akhand Hindustani, we are now going to divide India.' He had come from some conference. I was naturally shocked, because he was all along very strongly opposed to partition and used to criticise Rajaji bitterly for his pro-partition views. Then he fell to convincing me that he was right.

So far as I remember, he strongly put forward two grounds : one was that the Congress being pledged to non-violence, it was not possible for it to resist partition. Resisting would mean the end of the Congress and a long struggle with the Muslim League through large-scale use of violence, with the British Government sitting tight over the country with its police and army. The second ground was that if partition were not accepted, there was bound to be a long-drawn-out communal strife in cities, in some rural areas, and even regiments and police forces would be torn by communal dissensions. If, therefore,

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such a conflict was inevitable, the Hindus, being more disorganized and less fanatic, might go under for want of a compact organization. If, on the other hand, the strife had to come, it would be best to deal with each other on the basis of organized governments, and perhaps it would be easy to come to a settlement as between two governments rather than as between two communities spread all over the country. By that time I had bitter experience of Hindu-Muslim riots, with the British officers having sympathy for the Muslims and the Hindus coming out very badly. With my knowledge of the Udaipur troops, I was doubtful whether even the armies which were maintained by the Indian rulers, had the stamina to stop the communal orgies even in their States.

I remember this conversation very well, because it made me spend some sleepless nights, but at the end of it, after I had one or more discussions with him on this point, I felt convinced that the second ground was unanswerable.

The wisdom of Sardar's view was brought home to me when I found that if there had been no partition, the Constituent Assembly, as envisaged by the Cabinet Mission Plan, would have led nowhere.

By that time I was feeling the difficulty of the Constituent Assembly running successfully if the communal manoeuvres continued to beset it. Ingenuity had to be exercised to see that the Cabinet Mission Plan did not succeed in ultimately placing millions of Hindus under Muslim rule. Even in drafting the rules of the Constituent Assembly, therefore, I had to try to see that most matters of importance came before the General Assembly, where a decision could be taken by a majority vote, rather than the zonal Councils. And when the Muslim League decided on not joining the Constituent Assembly, we felt greatly relieved—a relief to which I gave expression in a speech in the Assembly.

(7) I was in close touch with the hectic activities conducted during the time the Independence Bill was being discussed, and though placed remotely, I could see the swiftness with which Lord Mountbatten was moving. Sardar highly appreciated it. I am convinced that if he had not moved so swiftly and given both sides time to think over, the Plan could never have been put through and a communal conflict on a vast scale would have followed in the country.

On one occasion, in July 1947 I think, Sir B. N. Rau, Gopalaswami Ayyangar, Alladi and myself were called in by the Congress

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High Command to help in considering the Draft Independence Bill. The meeting was held in the Cabinet room. Gandhiji, Panditji, Sardar, Maulana, Rajen Babu and Kripalani were there. In the same way, in another room, Jinnah and his advisers had been invited to confer as regards the provisions of the Independence Bill.

At short intervals, Lord Mountbatten used to hop from one conference room to other, specifying doubts raised by the other groups and helping in their solution.

We were handed the draft of the Independence Bill, and we, the advisers, were shocked at the way the Paramountcy was to lapse on the Bill being enacted. The High Command was equally unhappy about it. Mountbatten came in. There was some talk with him about it, but he showed his helplessness to make any change in the matter.

Another point which I remember that we raised was that like the African Constitution, the Act should have a specific provision authorising the Indian Parliament if necessary to change the Constitution. Lord Mountbatten appreciated the point and said he would take instructions from White Hall. As he had kept the telephone to London running, by the time we had finished our work, he brought the news that H. M. Government had agreed to this change.

Had the two groups not been thus brought together, without meeting each other and conferred through the intermediation of Lord Mountbatten, the Independence Act would never have been agreed to by both parties so easily and in such a short time. Mountbatten's speed, in my opinion, saved the country from a catastrophe.

If I remember right, in the evening of the day, that miracle worker, Lord Ismay, forwarded to both sides a complete scheme of partition, including the division of assets. Nobody had any time to give second thoughts to the assurances they had given to Mountbatten. That saved us.

Yours sincerely,
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