

INDIA SINCE PARTITION

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Andrew Mellor

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TURNSTILE PRESS

First published in 1951 by
TURNSTILE PRESS, LIMITED
10 Great Turnstile, London, W.C.1

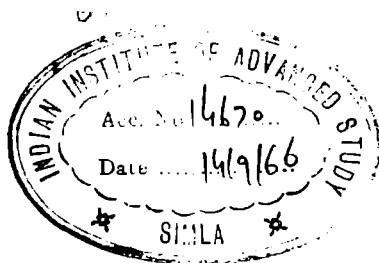
Printed in Great Britain by
A. BROWN & SONS, LIMITED



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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I SHOULD like to thank David Condon, Editor-in-Chief, British Information Services in India, A. Das Gupta, of Calcutta and Sardar Khushwant Singh, Press Attaché to the Indian High Commissioner in London, for providing a number of facts used in this book; the opinions are purely my own. Thanks are also due to Percy Cudlipp, Editor of the *Daily Herald*, on whose behalf I went to India to report the transfer of power.

In regard to Chapters IX and X a special acknowledgement is made to Rowland Owen, C.M.G., Senior U.K. Trade Commissioner and Economic Adviser to the British High Commissioner in India, and author of the March, 1949, *Economic Survey on India*, and to Eric da Costa, Editor of *The Eastern Economist*, whose valuable journal I have quoted at some length.

A. M.

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NOTE ON CURRENCY

The rupee consists of 16 annas and the anna of twelve pies.

One rupee is almost exactly equal to 1s. 6d.

After devaluation, while the Indian rupee kept its sterling exchange rate, that of Pakistan appreciated to 2s. 2d.

A lakh of rupees means 100,000 (written in India as 1,00,000) and equals £7,500.

A crore of rupees means 10,000,000 (written in India as 1,00,00,000) and equals £750,000.

I

BACKGROUND TO CHANGE

IN March, 1940, one hundred thousand members of the All-India Muslim League met in Lahore and passed a resolution which committed them to the attainment of their own land of Pakistan. No constitutional plan for India would work, they declared, unless those areas in which the Muslims were in a majority, as in the North-Western and Eastern parts of the country, were grouped into independent states of which the constituent units would be autonomous and sovereign.

This 'Lahore Resolution', backed by the majority of the leaders of British India's 80,000,000 Muslims, was an absolute indication that they would never agree to belong to a free united India which, because of the religious divisions among the population, would be predominantly Hindu in character and government.

What were the historic causes which led the Muslims to reach this decision? Broadly speaking, Muslim-Hindu rivalry dates from the first sustained Muslim invasion of the country more than 900 years ago. Before that the Hindus had been predominant in the sub-continent for thousands of years during which they had created a high but rather static standard of civilisation permeated by the social system known as caste.

There are now believed to be about 3,000 separate castes in India all of which fall into four traditional but loosening divisions: Firstly come the Brahmins, or priest class, secondly the Kshatriyas, or ruler-warrior class, thirdly the Vaishyas, or middle class, and fourthly the Sudras, or people generally. The lower range of the

Sudras merges eventually into the large mass of Untouchables or Outcastes now known as the Scheduled Castes. Professor J. H. Hutton gives some concise definitions in his book *Caste in India*. 'Each caste,' he writes, 'is a social unit in itself. The customs by which it lives are generally different in some respects from those of other castes. Persons of one caste do not marry those of another. The extent to which persons of one caste will eat or drink with those of another is strictly limited by unwritten laws.' Some castes, he adds, are derived from tribal or racial elements, some are occupational, some territorial, some religious; and he suggests that the society of India as a whole has been built up by the integration of these different units into an organic community. There is, of course, nothing to-day which compels a Brahmin to be a priest or a Kshatriya a soldier and these and other castes are found in a surprising variety of occupations.

The inter-weave of caste and religion among the whole country's 250,000,000 or so Hindus is so close that each merges into and is part of the other. To give only two plain instances the wearing of the sacred thread of the 'twice-born' is allowed only to the first three caste groups, for the Sudras may not adopt it, and the right to enter Hindu temples was, until Mr. Gandhi's enlightened anti-caste agitation, forbidden to the 50,000,000 Untouchables whose presence would contaminate the sacred buildings. Even in 1949 there were still some holy places which Untouchables might not enter.

Until the arrival of the Muslims, Hinduism had successively absorbed the various invasions to which the country had been subjected, but according to K. M. Panikkar, the Indian historian, the centuries of forced connection between Hinduism and Mohammedanism involved the creation of 'two parallel societies vertically

established on the same soil'. Islam, he writes, 'split Indian society into two sections from top to bottom and what has now come to be known in the phraseology of to-day as two separate nations came into being from the beginning'. The Muslims, who by the sword became the paramount rulers of India, refused to be assimilated and their exclusiveness was a necessary attribute of their power.

Though there have, through the years, been some conversions from Islam to Hinduism and a great many, forcible and otherwise, from Hinduism to Islam, the extreme differences between the two religions in fact made any merging of them impossible. The Hindu, with Rama as the Godhead, accepts a Pantheon of divinities, some terrible, some beneficent. God or Truth may appear in a thousand different ways and his worship is attended by a multitude of ceremonies. But the diverse habits of his worshippers, who may search for him in the form of a sublime thought or find him in the shape of a tawdry household idol, make this religion the most difficult of all to define. Against this wide creed the Muslim believes that there is but one God and that before him all believers are equal. Where the Hindu worships in temples ornately carved with the images of his deities, or follows decorated holy idols noisily through the streets, the Muslim prostrates himself with controlled reverence in the austere precincts of the mosque where no representation of any living form may appear. Each day at the prescribed hours he turns his face towards Mecca to salute the greatness of Allah and the memory of the Prophet. For him there is but a single way of worship. There are many other differences between the two religions. Modes of both dress and conduct vary considerably as does the approach to art and literature, while the numerous instances in

which each culture has borrowed from the other only help, in the end, to clarify their divergence.

With the arrival of the British in India the Muslims, till then virtually supreme, were gradually reduced to a position which put them on an equal footing with the Hindus but until after the Mutiny of 1857 both sects continued to live side by side, and with a fair measure of mutual tolerance. In the next fifty years, however, the groping progress of political thought gradually began to separate along two fixed lines; one Hindu, the other Muslim.

European archeological and historical researches had opened up to the Hindus many ancient but till then half-forgotten glories of their own past, and it is a strange commentary on events that these discoveries helped in the creation of a national spirit. These developments, and the desire ultimately to be free, led eventually to the formation of the Indian National Congress in 1885 and to the small but ever-increasing part which Indians were allowed to take in the management of their own affairs. Though the Congress has always claimed to represent every community in the country the All-India Muslim League was founded in 1906 when the Muslims began to feel more and more suspicious of Hindu political motives. Because of Muslim fears the 1909 Act, which allowed Indians certain legislative representation at the seat of the Central Government and in the provinces, also provided separate electorates for the Muslims and other minorities together with weightage; the principle of allowing them more seats than those to which they were actually entitled on the basis of their numbers. The Muslims had asked for these safeguards because they totalled only one-quarter of the population against the Hindus' two-thirds and were afraid of being swamped at the polls and over-ridden in

the assemblies. They had, too, been much slower than the Hindus to take advantage of the educational renaissance in India which contact with the West had brought about and the knowledge of their backwardness in this direction added to their apprehensions. The concessions they now obtained meant that the future democratic life of India was pre-destined by a religious franchise system which could only end by stultifying it.

In 1919, the Indians' share in their government was again increased but, while the British believed that political progress should be slow, the Indians did not, and Congress, with Gandhi as its accepted leader, increased the whole tempo of its activities. A decade of agitation was followed by the Round Table Conferences and the 1935 Act which gave the provinces a still greater measure of responsible government and aimed, but did not succeed, to set up a 'Federation of India' over both the provinces and the 584 princely states which covered almost half the country and were linked to the Crown by individual arrangements. By the beginning of the 1939-45 war Indian ministries were already functioning in the provinces but those of a Congress character resigned when the Working Committee, the movement's High Command, declared that Indians could not fight for freedom for others unless they were themselves free.

Meanwhile, the Muslim League, convinced that no united existence with the Hindus would be possible if the British Raj were to be withdrawn, came to believe in the separate nation doctrine.

Under the pressure of political agitation, heightened and embittered by the war situation, the British Government made various attempts to reach an accommodation with the country's national leaders. In August, 1940, for instance, there were abortive Indo-British talks. Then, in

1942, Sir Stafford Cripps reached the sub-continent with the offer of a post-war Indian-made constitution and immediate Indian participation in government in every sphere except Defence. These suggestions were unacceptable to the Congress executive which, on Gandhi's orders, passed the famous 'Quit India' resolution of August 8th, 1942. This resolution, with its threat that every form of 'non-violent' strength would be used to make the British leave, was followed by grave disorders causing many deaths. Three years of political sterility were to follow.

In October, 1943, Lord Wavell succeeded the Marquess of Linlithgow as Viceroy. The Burma War was at its height, Bengal was in the grip of a famine in which 1,500,000 people died, and thousands of Congress members were in gaol for anti-British agitation. Wavell coped energetically with the famine and explained that he could not release the political prisoners until 'their policy of non-co-operation and even of obstruction has been withdrawn—not in sackcloth and ashes but in recognition of their mistaken and unprofitable policy'. These blunt words not unnaturally evoked only chilly responses and the deadlock caused by the 'Quit India' resolution remained. The parties entrenched themselves behind the barriers of their political demands: that of Congress that the British must leave; that of the Muslim League for Pakistan when they did so.

It seemed at this time that the gradual movement towards self-government over something like twenty years had ceased. The shadows of mutual bitterness and suspicion spread wide across the land; they overcast and destroyed the efforts made by the Viceroy at Simla, in 1945, to reconstitute his Executive Council on an Indian basis; they permeated the administration and affected its efficiency and, though almost the first act of Britain's

new Labour Government had been to promise self-rule for India, they darkened the three months during which the Cabinet Mission looked for a solution of the constitutional issue.

When the mission reached India in February, 1946, after long-delayed elections to the Central Legislative Assembly and Provincial Legislative Assemblies had been held, it was faced with a dangerous situation. Lord Pethick-Lawrence, Secretary of State for India and one of the mission's three members, said afterwards that there were then 'Congress supporters with violent revolutionary sentiments who were determined to press vigorously and by all means towards the objective for which Congress had stood from its inception. They were suspicious of British intentions, frustrated by their long imprisonment, and supported by a mass of national feeling . . . The Muslim League, while also demanding full independence for India, was vigorously propagating the policy of Pakistan which was contrary to the fundamental beliefs of the Congress. Both within and without the Congress there was a swing to extremes and a demand for revolutionary methods . . .'

Only after the mission had gone away did its efforts produce results, for the manifest sincerity of its members had impressed many Indians. Disappointed in its attempt to get agreement on the spot it had left behind a complicated formula by which a constitution-making body could be set up. This proposed that eventually both the provinces of British India and the princely states outside it should come under an Indian Union Government which would control the three key subjects of Defence, External Affairs and Communications. But both the states and provinces alike were to have a liberal measure of autonomy in regard to other matters and the provinces,

to allow for Muslim fears of Hindu domination, were to be permitted to come together as 'groups' in regions where they wished to do so. Everything, of course, had to be done by agreement.

In September, 1946, more than two month's after the mission's departure, and after some strategic manoeuvring by the Viceroy, Congress decided to join the Interim Government which the mission had proposed should run the country until a constitution could be worked out. Representatives of the Muslim League entered this Government six weeks later. This executive union of two parties which had opposed each other for a generation was achieved during fearful and unprecedented communal riots which occurred in Bengal and Bihar during the autumn, but it proved rather an illusory step forward for the Viceroy soon found himself faced with an apparently insoluble dilemma. Though the Muslim League had joined the Government it refused to send its representatives to the Constituent Assembly which was an integral part of the Cabinet Mission's scheme. That scheme, while allowing for provincial grouping, had rejected the idea of Pakistan.

Nevertheless, a Constituent Assembly almost entirely composed of Congress members met in New Delhi on December 9th to begin, in Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's words, 'the high adventure of giving shape, in the printed and written word, to a nation's dream and aspiration'. Although nearly half the people of the whole country were unrepresented, for the princely states in addition to the Muslim League had not then decided how or when to take part, a resolution that the new India should be an 'Independent Sovereign Republic' was put forward at once. After a six-week wait, to give the Muslim League time to join the assembly if it wished, this was carried on January 22nd, 1947.

These activities coincided with a bitter quarrel between the two main parties as to which of them had or had not fully accepted the Cabinet Mission plan, and recriminations were published in the press in which Wavell was charged by each side with favouring the other; fair proof, probably, that he had inclined to neither. At last, in the first week of February, the Congress ministers headed by Nehru, the Premier, presented Britain with an ultimatum. By letter they demanded that either the Muslim League representatives should join the Constituent Assembly forthwith or the Muslim League ministers in the Interim Government should be dismissed, and they let it be known that unless one of these courses was followed they themselves would leave the Government.

But a new and dynamic factor was about to be introduced into the situation. On February 20th, Mr. Attlee made a statement in the House of Commons which altered the course of history. Power, he said, would be transferred to Indian hands 'by a date not later than June, 1948'. Lord Mountbatten was appointed to succeed Wavell as Viceroy.

The echoes of this momentous announcement reverberated throughout the sub-continent. For the first time Indians felt that the British irrevocably intended to leave and that they would very soon have to fend for themselves. This, they realised, they were in no state to do unless rapidly, and very rapidly indeed, they could arrive at some sort of agreement for the government of the country.

It was this kind of psychological reaction that the statement, by fixing a date for the end of the British Raj, had been intended to produce. But there was more to the declaration than the date factor impulse and the appointment of a new Viceroy. Britain also made it clear

that if it seemed that a constitution for the whole country could not be worked out in time by 'a fully representative assembly' then she would have to decide to whom to transfer power, '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'.

The statement was generally well received by Congress but this oblique reference to the possibility of Pakistan was not lost on the Muslim League leaders. *Dawn*, the chief League newspaper, declared 'the Government might as well have stated categorically that agreements would be entered into with the Congress for the Hindu majority areas and with the Muslim League for the Muslim majority areas'. A few days later the same paper went further: 'Whatever the shape of it may be Pakistan awaits the Muslims' taking, and take it they will.'

The shape of Pakistan envisaged at that time by those Muslims who wanted their own country comprised the provinces of Sind, the Punjab, the North-West Frontier and the Baluchistan Agency all to the North-West, and Bengal and Assam to the East. Basing their claims on the Census figures of 1941, the followers of Mr. Mohammed Ali Jinnah, the Muslim League President, had long affirmed that those Muslim majority areas at least would belong to the new land of which they dreamed. Some let their ambitions go further and foresaw the ultimate inclusion of Kashmir.

Now, in the 1946 Elections, the Muslim League, while winning every Muslim seat in the Central Legislative Assembly, had gained power provincially only in Sind and Bengal. In the Punjab a Unionist Muslim-Hindu-Sikh coalition ministry led by Khizr Hyatt Khan Tiwana had been formed, while in the North-West Frontier Province

a pro-Congress Government headed by Doctor Khan Sahib was in office. With the political future of the country in the melting pot Jinnah was extremely sensible of the effect of these anti-Pakistan ministries in the heart of what he hoped would become the largest Muslim state in the world. He determined to turn them out and early in 1947 the local Muslim League organisations began to agitate against them.

By February 20th, this agitation had been in full swing in the Punjab for twenty-seven days and was well under way in the North-West Frontier Province. Copying Congress, the League's supporters used the old 'non-violent' methods. They broke the regulations against meetings and processions, 'courted' arrest in the streets and provoked the police to use tear gas. Khizr Hyatt found himself unable to withstand the onslaught. Six days after the British Statement he gave way, opened the doors of his overcrowded gaols and decided to remove the ban on public gatherings.

The dividing line between non-violent agitation and open violence in India is indistinct . . . a chance blow from a policeman's stave, a hurled brick or a particularly vicious epithet can quickly transform the most peaceful meeting into a riot, especially when communal passions are aroused. This kind of change now took place in the Punjab. Rival demonstrations to those of the League were organised by the Hindus and by the Sikhs, whose great chief Maharaja Ranjit Singh had once ruled an empire from Lahore, and who were now spurred on by one of their leaders, Master Tara Singh. In the first days of March fierce rioting began and Khizr Hyatt resigned. Sir Evan Jenkins, the provincial Governor, then asked the local Muslim League leader to form a Government, but this only intensified the feelings of the Hindus and

Sikhs who refused to countenance 'a purely communal administration'.

The riots spread quickly. Lahore, Amritsar, Multan, Rawalpindi and many other Punjab towns and villages were seriously affected by pitched battles in which the rival communities fought with sticks, stones, knives, swords and firearms. At least 4,000 people were killed and much property destroyed by fire. Against this background of religious frenzy Jenkins at last took control himself under Section 93 of the 1935 Act. More troops were moved into the province and, while Gandhi's influence prevented serious repercussions in Calcutta, something like order was restored.

When the smoke of the burning villages had cleared away it was seen that the tenuous Congress hold on the Punjab had gone and that the Hindu and Sikh minority in the Northern and Western parts had taken a beating. Though the pro-Congress North-West Frontier Government still held out the riots had, perhaps, created the first rough frontier of a new land somewhere in the flat fields that lie between the Sikh stronghold of Amritsar and the city of Lahore.

In New Delhi, 250 miles to the South, sensations of a different kind were taking place in these last days of Wavell's rule. Since the Interim Government of India was still functioning Liaquat Ali Khan, the Muslim League General Secretary, prepared as Finance Minister what was to be the last budget of united British India and the first ever presented to the Central Legislative Assembly by an Indian national.

India's economic situation, like that of almost every other country, had shown no improvement since the war. There was considerable inflation, high prices, labour unrest, a lack of capital goods and a grave shortage of food

and cloth. Gross discrepancies of wealth and poverty were more apparent than ever. Liaquat Ali therefore decided to do something for 'the poor man'. He announced that he intended to 'reduce to the maximum possible extent the glaring discrepancies that exist to-day between the income and standards of life of the wealthy classes and the vast multitude of poverty-stricken masses'.

For years the Congress had campaigned against the hated Salt Tax and a demand for its removal had been the pivot of one of Gandhi's most spectacular agitations. The Muslim Finance Minister now removed it and was cheered by the Congress legislators. The rub came when he put a 25 per cent. tax on annual business profits of over £7,500 (Rupees one Lakh), increased the scope of super-tax, proposed a capital gains tax and announced the starting of an investigation into allegations that enormous amounts of income had escaped taxation in the past and that huge sums had been made in black market operations.

Reaction from the capitalists, many of them close Congress supporters, was immediate. In the lobbies, in the press and by every influence they sought to have the budget modified. Their main objection was to the 25 per cent. Business Profits Tax. This was attacked by the *Hindustan Times*, owned by the millionaire Congress supporter G. D. Birla, while the great industrialist S. R. Dalmia declared that the budget proposals would 'not only hamper the growth of existing industries but also crush the impetus essential for development'. Stock Exchanges, the barometers of the country's capitalist opinion, closed down in protest. Only the Left-Wing papers, some economists and the Muslim League press accepted the budget as reasonable. In the end Liaquat Ali had to compromise. But although he modified his

proposals the effect they had caused, and the selfish light in which they had exhibited many powerful Congress supporters, remained.

It was in this disturbed and indeed menacing atmosphere, ranging from outright violence through all the undercurrents of personal and political prejudice, that the Wavell regime reached its end. On March 22nd the last Viceroy reached New Delhi.

II

OPEN DIPLOMACY

FROM the moment of Mountbatten's arrival in the sub-continent the whole emphasis of events was on the need to reach some kind of constitutional solution quickly.

The guns which saluted the Viceroy's installation had scarcely ceased to fire when he began his work. He immediately invited Gandhi and Jinnah, the country's two outstanding leaders, to meet him separately in Delhi and he instituted a series of individual conversations with the heads of almost every party and community.

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was not then even a 'Four Anna' (4½d. per year) member of the Congress but for a generation he had been its mentor and ruler. It was under his guidance that the party had become the greatest national force in India and his implementation of 'non-violent' agitation had supplied it with a peculiarly suitable and effective political weapon. For years Gandhi had enjoyed a reputation abroad as something more than a saint and at home many considered him as hardly less than a God. Some of his most important political utterances were made at the simple prayer meetings which he attended each evening, others were published in *Harijan*, his little semi-religious weekly news-sheet, still others were made in a voluminous correspondence with all sorts and conditions of people, and he gave many press interviews.

The Gandhi story is fascinating. The son of a minor court official, he was born at Porbandar, a small town in Kathiawar, in 1869. In accordance with the Hindu custom he was married by the time he was 13, and this

experience made him a staunch opponent of that scourge of orthodox Hinduism, the child-marriage system. In his autobiography the Mahatma describes with close personal detail exactly how these child-marriages worked, and explains clearly how appalling they could be for both partners, morally and physically. Yet even to-day this pernicious traditional habit continues.

As a youth Gandhi went to England and was ostracised by his own caste, a sub-division of the Vaishyas, for doing so. In London the young law student first decided to 'cut a dash'. He bought stylish clothes, attempted to learn to dance and tried to master the violin. Then came a reaction against this adolescent Westernisation and he quickly began the ascetic habits which were to last until his death. Back in India he started to practice the law but in the first case he undertook he lost his nerve in court and found it impossible to speak. Within a few years millions were to wait upon his words.

Gandhi's first political venture was made in South Africa where he emigrated in 1893. There, with interludes in India and one as an Ambulance Sergeant for Britain during the Boer War, he led the agitation against the inhumanity to which the country's Indian immigrants were subjected. There, too, he started the first of the co-operative institutions which became a feature of his reformist activities. By the time he returned finally to India before the first World War he was already an important figure. Without many reverses he was soon able to mould Congress opinion to his own liking.

The Mahatma's political methods were extremely acceptable to Indian opinion. He campaigned against unpopular taxes, fought for the betterment of peasant conditions and provoked and jockeyed the exasperated British authorities into difficult positions while in his

simple and austere personal life he set an unequalled example of religious and classless tolerance. Though no one better understood the use to which the masses could be put no one was more ready to sacrifice himself for a cause, whether by conducting long and arduous speech-making tours, by embarking on dangerous and tension-raising fasts or by being sent to prison for anti-British activities. In most of his actions he was guided, he said, by an 'inner voice' and he drew strength and inspiration from long periods of thought and contemplation and the acceptance of what he judged good in all religions. On one day each week he maintained complete silence.

When Gandhi received Mountbatten's invitation he was in Bihar where for some weeks he had been walking from village to village comforting the Muslim victims of the autumn riots and using his influence with the Hindus to prevent further outbreaks. He soon set out for New Delhi.

Mohammed Ali Jinnah, who was also prepared to come to the capital, was in direct contrast to Gandhi in every way. In his youth he had been one of the most handsome men in public life and at 71 was still a striking figure, wearing Western clothes with elegance and using a monocle to effect. His English was excellent, his Urdu poor.

Jinnah was born in Karachi of a merchant family whose ancestors were converted Hindus. Like almost every other Indian politician of note he studied the law and practised for many years in Bombay. As an advocate he was brilliantly successful. A natural power of incisive logic and a high standard of forensic eloquence brought him a fortune.

His emergence into politics was slower than that of Gandhi. It commenced with a close connection with

Congress; then developed in proportion to the growing divergence of Hindus and Muslims for which he was partly responsible. Over the years Jinnah made himself the master of the Muslim League which he ruled with an iron hand and whose members regarded him with a respect hardly less than that in which Congress held the Mahatma. His later beliefs and behaviour were anathema to Congress and Nehru wrote of him that 'With all his strength and tenacity, he is a strangely negative person whose appropriate symbol might well be a "no." ' It was this ability to say 'No', to keep on saying it, and to make his followers say it, that brought Jinnah Pakistan. 'All the Muslim League leaders to whom I spoke made it absolutely clear that they desired partition,' said Mountbatten afterwards. They had been well taught by their aloof and incorruptible leader.

Apart from inherent horror at the proposed surgical dismemberment of India the Congress case against Pakistan was strong. Division of any kind would mean the end of the natural geographical and economic unit, as perfect as any in the world, which the vast Indian peninsula formed. The new Muslim state would itself be divided into two parts distant from each other by 1,000 miles. On creation, though there would be food and to spare and a huge hydro-electric potential, the new land would have only one reasonable port, Karachi, practically no coal, no mills to handle its great jute production and only minor industries compared with those of India. Communications, armed forces, the judiciary and civil service, educational establishments, ordinary business, even families would be thrown into the maelstrom of division. Shrines and places of sacred and historic importance to each new country would be left within the borders of the other. Instead of one great united nation to

show its face to the world there would be two of vastly less importance.

The main objection, however, was the obvious one that within Pakistan itself—the very demand for which presupposed that the new state would be religious in character—there would be left substantial numbers of non-Islamic communities while something like 40,000,000 Muslims would remain in India. The 1941 Census, the last to be taken and the basis on which all division projects were established, illustrates this point well in each of the provinces concerned. In the Punjab, for example, there were listed 16,217,242 Muslims against 6,301,737 Caste Hindus, 1,248,635 Scheduled Castes and 3,757,401 Sikhs besides small numbers of Indian Christians, Anglo-Indians and other minorities. Bengal had 33,005,434 Muslims, 10,784,637 Caste Hindus, 6,895,417 Hindus who stated no caste on the returns, 7,378,970 Scheduled Castes, 1,889,389 tribal people and various less numerous minorities. This intermingling of the communities, said Congress, made a mockery of the Pakistan idea since it showed clearly that far from solving the minority problem the creation of the new land would only demonstrate fresh aspects of it. Even in a truncated Pakistan (a much smaller version than that which the Muslims wanted) the same position would arise for none of the communities were grouped together in compact easily detachable sections; they were themselves geographically scattered.

The Muslim League demand, nevertheless, was so unyielding that it soon became clear that the use of force alone could hold India together; a quite suicidal solution certain to be followed by widespread and probably uncontrollable communal violence. To this extent Congress was not prepared to go. Rather than plunge the country into chaos it gave up the principle of unity which it had

cherished from its foundation for the idea of coercion was in direct contradiction to its most fervent beliefs, and its claim to represent all communities had long been shown to be fallacious.

Though a Congress Working Committee resolution of March 8th, 1947, had actually advocated division of the Punjab into its predominantly Muslim and Hindu parts, the first clear public suggestion of this fundamental change in policy was not given until towards the end of April when Nehru, speaking at Gwalior, announced that both the Punjab and Bengal would have to be divided. This speech was followed by another, twenty-four hours later, in which the Premier declared, 'The Muslim League can have Pakistan if they wish to have it but on condition that they do not take away other parts of India which do not wish to join Pakistan.' The next hint came from Doctor Rajendra Prasad, a few days later in Delhi, when, as President, he opened the third session of the Constituent Assembly. 'It may be that the union will not compromise all the provinces,' he said. 'If that unfortunately comes to pass we shall have to be content with a Constitution for a part of it.' The Assembly, he went on, must insist that no Constitution should be forced upon unwilling parts of the country, and this might mean that there would be not only a division of India but a division of some of the provinces also.

Gandhi, of course, regarded partition of any kind as appalling, while Jinnah was grimly against any division of those provinces which he envisaged as belonging to Pakistan.

As early as April 11th Gandhi had told his prayer meeting that he would leave Delhi as he had 'no desire to wait and see the end of the talks' which the leaders were having with Mountbatten; a clear indication that he

knew what was likely to happen. Accordingly, he went back to Bihar, returning to the capital at the end of the month for a special session of the Congress Working Committee. On May 6th he declared, 'Congress has accepted the Pakistan scheme . . . but I am opposed to the division of India . . . I am able to do nothing about the Congress decision as I am only an individual.' He might well have said then, as he had to later, that having realised the inevitable he had tacitly acquiesced.

To Jinnah, by this time, it was equally plain that the bigger Pakistan he had claimed would never be conceded. Despite this he continued publicly to call for it. On April 30th he described the Punjab and Bengal partition proposals as 'a sinister move'. As late as May 21st, when things were really cut and dried, he was blandly demanding that there should be a 'corridor' between East and West Pakistan.

After the Hindus and Muslims the community which would be most affected by division was that of the Sikhs. This sturdy, distinctive people, a fifteenth-century offshoot from Hinduism close-welded by oppression under the Muslim Emperor Aurangzeb, numbered 5,691,447 in 1941. A majority of them lived on their fertile and traditional lands in the central Punjab. They were community minded and proud but inclined to quarrel within their own ranks. For the Muslims they professed dislike, for the Hindus a certain friendliness; but none of their leaders possessed any outstanding ability. Despite this it was the almost self-contained Sikh community that sponsored the Congress resolution which approved division of the Punjab into its predominantly Hindu and Muslim sections. What this meant for the Sikhs was summed up by Mountbatten in the words 'when I sent for the map and studied the distribution of the Sikh

population, I must say I was astounded to find that the plan which they had produced divided their community into two almost equal parts.'

With Mountbatten as advisers were Lord Ismay and Sir Eric Miéville, both experienced administrators. These three had not been in India a week before the Viceroy realised that June, 1948, was too late a date for the transfer of power. 'Communal tension and rioting had assumed proportions of which I had no conception when I left England,' he said later. 'It seemed to me that a decision had to be taken at the earliest possible moment unless there was to be risk of a general conflagration throughout the whole sub-continent.' He was, too, quite certain that while British overlordship remained no satisfactory conclusions could be reached psychologically between the two parties.

There was no time to waste, and the immense task of finding a solution that would be acceptable to all parties but satisfying to none continued. Mountbatten used the system known as 'Open Diplomacy' by which, at each stage of the search, he took those with whom he conferred into his confidence. At first, to get to know them, he talked of their early days: 'Gandhi went right through his history in South Africa—Jinnah told me the tale of his life at the Bar in London.' Among those whom he met were leaders of the princes.

The Viceroy of India traditionally performed two precise functions: That of Governor-General responsible for the government of British India and that of Crown Representative, appointed to deal with the independent rulers whose lands covered more than 700,000 miles out of a total for the sub-continent of 1,600,000 and ranged in individual size from under one square mile to 84,000. In the Cabinet Mission Plan representatives from the princely

states were supposed to join the Constituent Assembly at a certain stage in its proceedings, but what that stage was to be had never been fully agreed. The British Statement of February 20th, 1947, was mainly concerned with British India; that is to say with the Governors' provinces. All the huge area ruled by the princes with the advice of British Residents was outside the scope of any agreement reached by the time it was proposed that the British should transfer power; for the statement made it clear that when power was transferred the paramountcy exercised over the states by the British Crown would cease and the princes would be left completely sovereign.

But the states were so inextricably mixed with the provinces, some even consisting of several small islands of territory surrounded by provincial land, and there was already so much co-ordinated administration that the whole sub-continent existed as an economic entity. Thus any idea of the states remaining completely sovereign and independent after the British had gone would have been not only politically ridiculous but an open invitation to extensive fragmentation.

It has been pointed out that under the Cabinet Mission Plan the states were to cede Defence, External Affairs and Communications to the proposed Central Government while retaining autonomy in other subjects, and though Britain had now bound herself to leave the rulers free it was obvious that the Governments that would take over British India would have to reach agreements with them. Most of the princes saw the logic of this view, but a few were to prove recalcitrant.

Division of the country into two would leave the great majority of the states on the Indian as distinct from the Pakistan side of the frontier and several of the more important which would then be expected to reach

agreement with a predominantly Hindu Government were ruled by Muslims. Under the British all these independent rulers had felt themselves secure. The states jogged along fairly undisturbed except when it was found necessary to make an example of some particularly obnoxious prince. Most of them were feudal to a degree and though, through the States Peoples' Congress agitation, a measure of democratic government had been introduced into several, the majority and the more important were still run on the old autocratic lines. Thus, generally speaking, the Indian states were more backward than the provinces and some were little cess-pools of stagnation and neglect. In many a large proportion of the taxes found its way into the private coffers of the rulers instead of being expended for the benefit of the people. Some still retained their own armies and in a great number there was ample scope for every kind of abuse and extravagance. But it would be wrong to think that all the states were retrograde. Those ruled by enlightened or well-advised princes over a reasonable period, like Travancore and Mysore, were actually in advance of parts of British India in some respects.

It was quickly shown that the rulers had no concerted idea of what their relations with the new India should be. The Chamber of Princes, a central consultative body, represented most of them but the attitude of this organisation eventually crystallised as one of 'wait and see'.

Mountbatten had seen and he could not wait. During April rioting was still disturbing the Punjab and the North-West Frontier Province, there was some violence in Bombay, Calcutta and other cities and the Assam Government asked for troops to stop Muslim League agitation against the local Congress Government. At the Viceroy's instigation a joint Peace Appeal was issued by

Gandhi and Jinnah on April 15th, but it did not have the full desired effect.

Besides the rioting there were uneasy signs of fragmentary tendencies. Sind declared that if necessary it would become independent and Bengal's Muslim Premier, H. S. Suhrawardy, announced that his province would become a separate sovereign state when the British left; a statement strongly contested by both Congress and Muslim League.

On May 2nd, Mountbatten sent Ismay to London to give the Cabinet his immediate impressions and ideas and he himself followed on May 17th with the solution to which he had brought the parties.

Though Parliament usually takes six months or more to pass a Bill, Whitehall was seized with the sense of urgency which the Viceroy himself felt. Attlee promised to push the required legislation through within two months.

But the announcement of what was to happen was not allowed to wait until then. On June 3rd, the final decision of the British Government as to how power was to be transferred to Indian hands was published. For several days previously strict security measures against possible violent outbreaks had been taken in the larger cities. From Southern India the Fourth Indian Division was moved into the Punjab. All front-rank political leaders, including Gandhi and Jinnah, were gathered in Delhi.

III

THE PLAN OF JUNE 3RD

THE plan of June 3rd, grudgingly accepted by the leaders of every important political party in India, gave *carte blanche* for the creation of Pakistan. Though the purely formal decision was left to the people themselves, either through their elected representatives or by direct vote, any lingering doubt that the sub-continent might at the eleventh hour escape partition was removed.

From New Delhi the Viceroy, in a broadcast, explained what was involved. He said: 'For more than a hundred years 400 million of you have lived together and the country has been administered as a single entity. This has resulted in unified communications, defence, postal services and currency; an absence of tariffs and customs barriers; and the basis for an integrated political economy. My great hope was that communal differences would not destroy this.'

'My first course, in all my discussions, was therefore to urge the political leaders to accept unreservedly the Cabinet Mission Plan of May 16th, 1946. In my opinion that plan provided the best arrangements that can be devised to meet the interests of all the communities of India. To my great regret it has been impossible to obtain agreement either on the Cabinet Mission Plan, or on any other plan that would preserve the unity of India. But there can be no question of coercing any large areas in which one community has a majority to live against their will under a Government in which another community has a majority. And the only alternative to coercion is partition.'

The operative part of the plan was this:

Legislation for the transfer of power to India and Pakistan—if, as was obviously assumed, the latter was decided upon by the people—was to be introduced in the current session of the British Parliament and both new countries were to have Dominion status for as long as they wished. The inclusion of this provision was almost an afterthought. Mountbatten had taken the idea with him to London only sixteen days before the proposals as a whole were published.

For those parts of the country unwilling to join the original (Indian) Constituent Assembly a separate (Pakistan) Constituent Assembly would be started.

As the plan pointed out, the majority of the representatives of the provinces of Madras, Bombay, the United Provinces, the Central Provinces and Berar, Assam, Orissa, the North-West Frontier Province and the areas of Delhi, Ajmer-Merwara and Coorg were already at work in the original Constituent Assembly. Most of them were Congress members. But the majority of the representatives of Bengal, the Punjab, Sind and British Baluchistan were Muslim League members and so prohibited from attending the original Constituent Assembly by Jinnah's boycott.

Accordingly, the plan was concerned in its most detailed sections with the future of those particular areas which were partly or completely unrepresented in the original Constituent Assembly. Under it Bengal and the Punjab were to decide for themselves whether they would be partitioned into Muslim and non-Muslim areas and whether they or the resultant parts should belong either to India or Pakistan.

The method by which this was to be done was the same for both provinces. It was as follows: The Provincial

Legislative Assembly was to meet in two parts, one representing the Muslim majority districts and the other the rest of the province. These two parts were to vote separately on whether the province should be partitioned. A majority in favour in either part meant division and the two parts were then to go on to choose the particular Constituent Assembly to which each wished to belong. There was a proviso to cover the unlikely event of either province deciding to remain united.

Where the decision was for partition a Boundary Commission would be set up for the province concerned to fix the fairest line of division. Until the Boundary Commission finished its work provisional and previously-agreed frontiers would be used and these would be based on the 1941 Population Census.

For Sind the plan laid down simply that a special meeting of the Provincial Legislative Assembly should vote on which Constituent Assembly to join. A rather different arrangement was later made for British Baluchistan where members of various local institutions met jointly to decide their future.

The North-West Frontier Province presented a special problem. At this time it had, as we have seen, a Congress-supporting Government although the vast majority of the population was Muslim and a Muslim League anti-Government campaign was going on. The 1941 Census figures for the area were Muslims 2,788,797, Hindus 180,321, Sikhs 57,939. Two of the three representatives from the province were already taking part in the existing Constituent Assembly. Both, of course, were Congress supporters. Because of these considerations and on account of the geographical situation of the area the plan stipulated that if any part of the Punjab opted for Pakistan then there would be a referendum in the North-

West Frontier Province to decide which new country it should join.

Another referendum was fixed for Sylhet, a small district of Assam which bordered the Eastern, Muslim, part of Bengal and was predominantly Muslim. Accordingly, the plan proposed that if Bengal decided for partition a referendum would be held in Sylhet to determine whether it should belong to India or Pakistan. The final frontier line there would also be drawn by Boundary Commission.

The plan went on to provide for negotiations to start as soon as possible between all the bodies at the centre concerned in the transfer of power, and on local matters between the provincial authorities affected where a provincial split-up was decided. The assumption that there would be *two* successor Governments for Britain to deal with stood out so clearly that this whole intricate series of arrangements had a pre-determined atmosphere from the start.

Everything, as well, was again accelerated by the announcement in the plan that the time for the transfer of power would be brought forward from June, 1948, to a date in the current year of 1947. The sense of urgency originally caused by the British Statement of February 20th was thus redoubled.

After Mountbatten had explained the plan to listeners, and it had been read to them, leaders of Congress, the Muslim League and the Sikhs came in turn to the microphone to add their own impressions. None of these was enthusiastic. Nehru, with a certain quiet eloquence, told the anxious listeners: 'It is with no joy in my heart that I commend these proposals to you though I have no doubt in my mind that this is the right course. For generations we have dreamt and struggled for a free and

independent united India. The proposal to allow certain parts to secede if they so will is painful for any of us to contemplate. Nevertheless, I am convinced that our present decision is the right one even from the larger view-point. The united India that we have laboured for was not one of compulsion and coercion but a free and willing association of a free people. It may be that in this way we shall reach that united India sooner than otherwise and that she will have a stronger and more secure foundation.' He ended with a firm declaration that Indians would now seek to build anew their relations with Britain on a friendly and co-operative basis.

Jinnah, speaking next, said that the plan 'in some important respects' did not meet the Muslim League demands. 'We cannot say or feel that we are satisfied,' he declared. He appealed for cool, calm and dispassionate consideration of the proposals and pointed out that the world had 'no parallel for the most onerous and difficult task that we have to perform.'

If these two speeches had depressed their hearers the third, by Sardar Baldev Singh, the Sikh Defence Minister in the Interim Government, did nothing to restore their spirits. 'Seldom, perhaps, has a fulfilment like this been tarnished with so much fear and sorrow,' he said. '... even though the struggle was long and heavy, our common quest for freedom need never have divided and torn us asunder one from another. This has actually taken place. We have let ourselves be rent apart. We witness to-day—even on the day of our freedom—scenes of mutual conflict and all the horrors that conflict brings in so many parts of India. Neighbour has risen against neighbour. Thousands of innocent lives have been lost. Men, women and children roam from one place to another, homeless, without shelter. Untold losses, financial, cultural and spiritual,

have been inflicted in wide areas. We look as if we are a house divided against itself. The day indeed finds us an unhappy people.'

There was no doubt from these sombre messages that all the leaders viewed the immediate future with a degree of trepidation. All warned against the dangers of violence, all begged the people to try and make the plan work, though it is clear now that they themselves had hardly then appreciated its full implications.

At a big press conference on the next day, June 4th, Mountbatten revealed that the date for the transfer of power would be August 15th. The spur of speed was thus invoked for the third time. The leaders were to be given no space for the second thoughts which had so often wrecked other possible agreements in the past. At the same conference the Viceroy was asked if he foresaw any mass transfer of population from a province or district as the result of partition, *i.e.* Hindus and Sikhs moving from Pakistan into India and Muslims moving from India into Pakistan. He answered that 'a measure of transfer of population will come about in a natural way, that is to say people will just cross the boundary or the Government may take steps to transfer populations.'

That reply shows that at that time the administration was already aware that some such movement was inevitable, though obviously it had no conception of its ultimate catastrophic scope.

Most Indian newspapers, both Congress and Muslim League, gave the June 3rd Plan a bleak welcome. The influential *Times of India* wrote that 'The British Government proposals are democratic and fundamentally just. However deeply we may deplore the splitting up of India, which seems inevitable, the price is well worth paying if it brings peace to the country.' The independent

Statesman called for restraint because 'disintegration in India, administrative, economic, moral, has been so extreme that the political boat can be very easily rocked. It lies in tempestuous seas, its whole ramshackle structure appallingly brittle.' A forthright pro-Congress paper, *Indian News Chronicle*, declared, 'We hope those whose intransigence (the Muslim League leaders) has forced this plan on the people will realise before long the amount of misery and distress which the procedure of artificial dismemberment is going to cause to millions belonging not only to other communities but to their own. It is a heavy price . . . to satisfy the caprice of one man' (Jinnah). The *Hindustan Times*, managed by Gandhi's son Devadas, thought that 'The saving feature is that it will be possible to unite again once the glamour of division has passed and natural forces come into play . . . Meanwhile it will be for Mr. Jinnah to see, in the interests of things he holds dear himself, that no great harm comes to India or the Muslims by the satisfaction of his great whim.'

Dawn rather lyrically announced that 'In humble thanksgiving to Almighty Allah the hearts of a hundred million Mussulmans of India rise upwards to Heaven when throughout the world the tidings are borne of the birth of Pakistan,' but added that the Muslim nation could never reconcile itself to 'the act of vandalism that has truncated Pakistan.'

Gandhi's latest views were not known until the evening of June 4th, when he told his prayer meeting that though division of India was absolutely repugnant to him force of circumstances had compelled him to accept the inevitable. *Harijan* announced the same week that the Mahatma had given up his declared hope of living 125 years because in the India 'shaping to-day' there was no place for him. 'I have no wish to live if India is to be sub-

merged in a deluge of violence as it is threatening to do,' the old man was reported to have told friends.

While the two main political parties prepared to ratify the plan at meetings of their All-India Councils there were uneasy signs that the more extremist bodies found the proposals completely unacceptable.

Two hundred 'Sadhus', Hindu holy men who claimed to represent 200,000 others whose lives were similarly devoted to religion, collected on the banks of the Jumna river in Delhi to start a passive resistance movement against partition of the country. A number were arrested for demonstrating outside the Viceroy's House and in front of the Government buildings.

In the capital, too, had gathered several thousand 'Khaksars', 'Servants of the Earth', a semi-military Muslim clique formed in 1931 by bearded Inayatullah Mashriqi, a former North-West Frontier Province educational official. They wanted full and undivided Pakistan and made their biggest demonstration when a number armed themselves with *belchas*, sharp-bladed spades, in accordance with their custom, and rushed into the Imperial Hotel while the 450 members of the All-India Muslim League Council were preparing to vote their agreement with the plan. Some Khaksars, shouting, 'Get Jinnah', fought a pitched battle with Muslim League National Guards, the strong-arm section of the organisation, before police fired tear-gas and ended the disturbance. Several men were injured and some were later charged with attempted murder. Jinnah remained unmoved throughout the uproar. It was the second physical effort made against him by Mashriqi's followers. In Bombay, in 1943, a Khaksar had attacked him, stabbing him in the wrist.

Immeasurably more important than the action of these

two organisations was that of the Hindu Mahasabha, the Hindu 'Grand Council'. This body, formed early in the twentieth century as a counter to the awakened political conscience of the Muslims, had set itself up as the protector of the rights, privileges and traditions of the Hindus. It was opposed to Congress, which allowed other communities to join it, and detested any 'placation' of the Muslims. Its policies were based on militant Hindu orthodoxy and it was powerfully represented in many Indian towns and villages. It had certain obvious affinities with fascism, and was in every sense reactionary. We shall deal with it and its more violent satellite, the Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh (R.S.S., or 'National Organisation for the Service of the Country') in much greater detail later. For the moment, it strongly condemned Congress acceptance of the plan. A resolution passed by its executive stated that 'The cardinal principle of the Hindu Mahasabha has always been the unity and integrity of India and under no circumstances would it be a party to the vivisection of India in any shape or form' and named July 3rd as a nation-wide 'peaceful protest day'. Its president, L. B. Bhopatkar, afterwards called on Hindus not to join in the celebrations which the Congress had planned for the coming of freedom on August 15th.

Among the Sikhs one section, at least, felt most deeply about the proposed division of the country to which the community, as a whole, had agreed and which it had, indeed, to some extent suggested. This was the group led by Tara Singh whose followers, the very orthodox 'Akalis,' believed strongly that the 'Sikh' nation should be kept together and hinted at gaining 'Sikhistan', their own land. Tara Singh, a very outspoken leader, let his people know that the use of the sword might be needed if the Sikhs were to survive.

Later the Muslims charged that the Sikhs had engineered a plot to create disturbances, forcibly expel the Muslims from the East Punjab and march their own followers into it from the West. Muslim leaders demanded that the Viceroy should arrest important Sikhs whom they believed were conspiring to carry out these plans and also to murder Jinnah. The Sikhs and Hindus in turn alleged that the Muslims had long been collecting arms to drive the minorities from those areas where they held sway.

In the June 3rd Plan the position of the independent princely states was dealt with in one sentence which reaffirmed, by reference back to the Cabinet Mission Memorandum of May 12th, 1946, that when the British left, the withdrawal of paramountcy would leave the states completely sovereign.

But, as we have seen, the situation between the states and the two new countries which were to be created on August 15th could not be left as a vacuum nor did the Memorandum of May 12th, 1946, intend that it should. There had to be something to take paramountcy's place. Publication of the June 3rd Plan had led the Muslim Nawab of Bhopal to resign from the Chancellorship of the Chamber of Princes because he felt that body's usefulness had ceased and the organisation began to die a natural death. However, on July 25th, many rulers and dewans (prime ministers) anxious about the future of their states, assembled in Delhi to meet the Viceroy. Explaining the co-ordination of states and provinces which had made India an economic entity, Mountbatten declared: 'That link is now to be broken. If nothing can be put in its place only chaos can result, and that chaos, I submit, will hit the states first.'

The machinery by which the two new countries could

keep in touch with the states had meanwhile been afforded by the setting up of two States Departments. Under the Indian Independence Act, which translated the June 3rd proposals into law, it was provided that certain essential agreements between the states and undivided India should continue, if both sides wished, between the states and India and Pakistan.

Mountbatten now told the rulers that so far as their Defence, External Affairs and Communications were concerned these subjects would be best handled for them by a larger organisation. Accordingly, he had prepared a 'Draft Instrument of Accession' by which the states could accede to their appropriate dominion on the three subjects mentioned. Those states which wanted to 'come in' in this way were told that they must do so by August 15th. 'You cannot run away from the Dominion Government which is your neighbour any more than you can run away from the subjects for whose welfare you are responsible,' the Viceroy warned. His advice led many of the rulers to accede during the next few weeks and to decide to send their representatives to the Indian Constituent Assembly.

Besides the arrangements for future relations between the princes and the new dominions there was much to do before the date for the transfer of power. As was expected, Sind and British Baluchistan opted for Pakistan and the Punjab and Bengal agreed to divide themselves between the two new countries. In the North-West Frontier Province the referendum resulted in an overwhelming majority in favour of Pakistan. A strange situation then developed there for the provincial government was still controlled by the pro-Congress Khan Sahib, with his brother Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, the 'Frontier Gandhi', in the close background. Since the feeling of the

province was plainly shown by the referendum result, even though his supporters had boycotted the voting, Khan Sahib's position was ludicrous. But he gave no sign of resigning. In fact, he clung to a tenuous degree of power until after the emergence of Pakistan while his brother pressed the movement for 'Pathanistan'—the Land of the Pathans—the choice of which both had wanted to be included in the referendum. Later the Pathanistan idea received considerable verbal support from Afghanistan, which had revived old territorial claims to most of the North-West Frontier Province as a method of embarrassing her new neighbour, Pakistan.

Once Pakistan was in existence Jinnah quickly dismissed Khan Sahib, when he refused to take the prescribed oath of allegiance, and Ghaffar Khan was arrested for agitation. Both, from their early days, had been fighters for Indian freedom in the Frontier 'Red Shirt' Movement—the Khudai Khidmatgars or 'Servants of God'—which Ghaffar Khan had started. Both were close followers of Gandhi, but they, and their dwindling number of supporters, were quite unable to withstand the Islamic upsurge which local religious leaders started in support of Jinnah's policies immediately preceding and during the referendum. When the freedom for which they had struggled came to the sub-continent the Khan brothers were submerged.

The referendum in Sylhet also favoured Pakistan and, with all these preliminaries out of the way, the Boundary Commissions were able to begin their work. Each consisted of four High Court judges, two from each main religious persuasion in Bengal and two Muslims, one Hindu and one Sikh in the Punjab. Sir Cyril Radcliffe, an eminent lawyer, came from England to act as independent chairman of both the commissions.

The Commission members could not agree, so the final lines between the two countries were drawn by the Chairman himself and came to be known as the Radcliffe Award. This award was not published until two days after the transfer of power. It came when violent rioting had already commenced along the provisional Punjab frontier where a 50,000 strong Boundary Force of Muslim, Hindu and Sikh army units under a British general had been stationed as a precaution against disorder.

In the award a particular cause of anger to the Muslims was that a large part of the Muslim majority area of Gurdaspur went to the East Punjab, thus giving India an extended frontier with Kashmir.

Division, of course, did not stop with the provinces. It was carried out through every facet of the administration. Ten 'Partition Committees', controlled first by a Cabinet Committee and later by a Partition Council, had to arrange for the split-up of everything from tanks to office furniture and from the allocation of debts and revenues to moveable assets of all kinds. Where plant or fixtures could not be moved or divided cash credits were to be made instead. In addition, every Government servant had to decide in which new country he wished to serve and members of the armed forces were widely given the same option, though it was not open for a Hindu serviceman in India or a Muslim serviceman in Pakistan to elect for transfer to the other country. The Partition Committees, representing both sides, were established by June 16th. That left two months in which to complete their immense task. They achieved the miracle.

The usual basis of division was 82½ per cent. to India and 17½ per cent. to Pakistan, but this varied in certain instances. Thus the Army was divided to give India 15 infantry regiments, 12 armoured corps units, 18½ artillery

regiments and 61 engineer units. Pakistan received 8 infantry regiments, 6 armoured corps units, $8\frac{1}{2}$ artillery regiments and 34 engineer units.

So that the sort-out of the Army, Navy and Air Force and all their personnel and equipment into two distinct parts could be more efficiently carried out a Joint Defence Council was started to cover both the new countries, and it was decided that Sir Claude Auchinleck, then Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army, should keep administrative, as distinct from operational, control of all existing forces while their division was going on. After August 15th, he was to become 'Supreme Commander' until there was no longer any need for central administrative control. His appointment ended on November 30th when conditions between the two dominions had become difficult.

A striking comparison by Mountbatten gives an idea of the speed with which partition of the sub-continent was carried out. It had, he said, taken three years to separate Burma from India, two years to separate the province of Bombay from Sind and two years to separate the province of Orissa from Bihar. The division of India, one of the biggest countries in the world, was accomplished in two and a half months.

IV

PARTITION AND THE RIOTS

THE coming of freedom, so long awaited and so hardly won, was greeted in Karachi, now the Pakistan capital, on August 14th, and in New Delhi on the next day with scenes of joyous enthusiasm. In the streets of the larger cities shouts of 'Long Live Pakistan' and 'Victory to India' met the leaders who attended the solemn inauguration ceremonies of both dominions. Troops paraded, bands played, prisoners were amnestied and messages of good will exchanged with other countries. British residents found themselves unexpectedly popular and were drawn into the general rejoicing.

In New Delhi members of the Indian Constituent Assembly pledged themselves to the service of the nation 'to the end that this ancient land shall attain her rightful place in the world and make her full and willing contribution to the promotion of world peace and the welfare of mankind'. This oath was taken as the last stroke of midnight, August 14th, marked the legal end of the Indian Empire and the birth of its successors.

The voluntary surrender of power to India and Pakistan by Britain caused a stir of interest throughout the world. Never in history had there been an act comparable to this peaceful abdication of Imperial power after 180 years of absolute rule. Rajendra Prasad thought the arrival of Indian freedom was, in part, 'the consummation and fulfilment of the historic traditions and democratic ideals of the British race whose far-sighted leaders and statesmen saw the vision and gave the pledges which are being redeemed to-day' and, according to Maulana Abul

Kalam Azad, Muslim Education Minister and a former Congress President, the whole story of national freedom had been set a new example by the British Government which had performed peacefully a task always previously accomplished by devastating wars.

Many English people were opposed to the ending of British rule in India. They felt that the scheme of Imperial defence would be gravely prejudiced as a result. The land-frontier to the East, the Northern bastions of the Hindu Kush and Himalayan ranges which cut off the sub-continent from Inner Asia, and the North-Western military passes leading to Afghanistan would now have to be guarded separately by troops of two new dominions instead of by those of a single, strong and established power. India proper, straddling the defence and trade communications between the West, Middle East and Far East and forming a natural and vital strategic base, would no longer be under British control and there were no guarantees that in a crisis those who now governed it would stand on the British side.

These arguments lose their force when we consider that had the British resisted the thoroughly awakened nationalist spirit of India and refused to part with power there is no doubt that they would, within a very short space, have been faced with nation-wide revolution which even Gandhi's pacific influence could hardly have restrained. The anti-British riots of 1942, the situation during the war when the Indian National Army under Subhas Chandra Bose, once Congress President, fought on the side of the Japanese, the Indian Naval Mutiny of 1946, and the violent trends of sections of the political parties had been pointers in that direction. With all her other global commitments it is doubtful if for long Britain could have held on to India by force in the face of outbreaks

which would have been a hundred times more serious than those now taking place in Malaya and probably greater than the then contemporary revolts with which the French and Dutch were trying to deal in Indo-China and Indonesia at immense cost and with doubtful results.

Retention of power in India in such circumstances would, in fact, have weakened Britain for it could only have been accompanied by a continuous and exhausting drain on her already strained military and economic resources extending, in all likelihood, over several years. It would, too, have earned her the lasting distrust of hundreds of millions of people not only in India itself but in all the countries of the East.

Since the Indians were determined to be free, and since the existing British Government had always believed that they should be, the wisest course was the one adopted; agreement on the basis of mutual respect and friendship.

That policy at once began to reap its reward. From August 15th, 1947, British-Indian relations entered an entirely new phase. The British, who had shown themselves willing to go, now found the Indians more than ready to profit from their advice and assistance. India, with whom rather than with Pakistan this book is mainly concerned, paid Britain the compliment of inviting the last Viceroy to be the new dominion's first Governor-General. Many British officers and civil servants were retained to give both countries the benefit of their technical skill and wide administrative experience.

The quick jubilation of the people in India on August 15th, was tempered in the minds of the Congress leaders by the fact that the day was not only that on which the country became free but also that on which it divided itself. This was shown in most of the speeches with which they welcomed in the Indian Dominion. Rajendra Prasad,

for instance, declared 'The country which was made by God and Nature stands divided . . . I would be untrue to myself if I did not at this moment confess to a sense of sorrow at this separation,' and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the Deputy Premier, said that few could realise 'the bitterness and sorrow which partition has brought to those who cherished unity.'

The bitterness and sorrow of division were already being demonstrated in much more than a mental sense. Scarcely had the new Indian Government been sworn in than it found itself called to measure to the full the meaning of Nehru's warning that 'Freedom and power bring responsibility.' From the Punjab came news that rioting had again broken out and that people were crossing the frontier in fear from one new country to the other. All the grave and repeated promises of the leaders that the minorities in each dominion would be protected and their rights respected were made impotent by the grim aftermath that followed the coming of independence.

Sir Reginald Coupland's *Report on the Constitutional Problem in India*, indicates that the incidence of communal rioting in India increased from about 1922 onwards in proportion to the growing struggle for power between Hindus and Muslims. But the riots of which he gives statistics pale into insignificance compared with the violent and prolonged outbreaks which began in August, 1946, when the Muslim League called a 'Direct Action Day' in Calcutta and gangs roamed the streets shouting for Pakistan. We have already seen that these riots, in which thousands were killed, wounded or left homeless, spread quickly throughout Bengal and Bihar and that early in 1947 there were heavy outbreaks in the disputed Punjab.

In response to the appeals of the leaders and the action of the authorities these troubles had to a certain extent

slackened during the weeks preceding partition. They now burst out anew and with tremendous force under the impact of division.

On August 11th, at Bhatinda, Patiala State, Sikhs blew up part of a 'Pakistan Special', one of the trains taking Muslim civil servants from India to Pakistan. On August 15th itself at least fifty people were killed in reprisal stabbing attacks in Lahore and within two days the whole of the province was hit by a tornado of rioting which rapidly developed into one of the greatest mass tragedies in history. The position was so serious by August 19th, that in a broadcast to the nation Nehru spoke of 'an orgy of murder and arson' and said that the alternative to dealing firmly with the situation was complete chaos.

In a spate of religious fury trains were held up and their passengers killed, houses burned down over their owners heads, women raped and abducted, forcible conversions made from one religion to another, and every kind of physical atrocity practised. In the East (Indian) Punjab bands of Sikh and Hindu extremists roamed from village to village seeking out defenceless Muslims and putting them to the sword; in the West (Pakistan) Punjab gangs of Muslim League National Guards and street toughs slaughtered every Hindu or Sikh they could find. In the confusion Indian Christians in the Lahore area were forced to pin cloth crosses to their coats to secure a measure of safety. The Boundary Force proved hopeless to control the situation and refugees helped to spread the trouble by telling wildly exaggerated stories about what was going on in the districts which they had left. The riots extended over the whole province and absolute terror held the people firm in its grip as both national Governments struggled feverishly to end the holocaust by moving in

troops, setting up refugee camps and trying to pacify the people. The Joint Defence Council formed before partition gave the Indian and Pakistan leaders, despite the cold distrust they felt for each other, at least one means of mutual consultation and through it, with Mountbatten as Chairman, they were able to some extent to co-ordinate action for evacuating refugees by road, rail and air and for deploying troops. Through this agency, too, the ministers of one country were able to arrange to tour badly-affected areas in the other. In India a powerful steadying influence on the Government was the personal drive and initiative which Mountbatten brought to the Cabinet Emergency Committee started early in September to cope with the whole disastrous situation.

One of the worst drawbacks throughout was the uncertainty that higher administrative instructions would be obeyed by subordinates. It was difficult to get minor officials of one religion to act to protect people of another and there were instances of Hindu and Muslim troops and police being unwilling to open fire on mobs composed of their own communities. At a press conference attended by both dominion premiers Nehru remarked that giving orders was no trouble, 'but I am sure Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan (the Pakistan Premier) will agree with me that implementation is another matter'.

It is known now that altogether some 12,000,000 people moved between the two countries; over 6,000,000 fleeing from India and 6,000,000 from Pakistan. The number killed cannot be accurately estimated but it is unlikely that it was less than 200,000 and it may well have been far more.

The report of a Military Evacuation Organisation set up by the Indian Army on September 1st, after the abolition of the Boundary Force, to bring non-Muslim

refugees out of Pakistan, to help to move Muslim refugees the other way and to combat the riots, shows that in the 42 days from September 18th to October 29th 24 non-Muslim foot columns 849,000 strong with hundreds of bullock carts and herds of cattle crossed the frontier into India. These columns sometimes numbered up to 80,000 people in each and one, seen by the writer, measured 47 miles in length; its head well into India, its tail back in Pakistan. Some, from Pakistan districts like Lyallpur and Montgomery, had to make marches of up to 200 miles. During September many were inadequately protected and were attacked on the roads by one community or the other.

By January, 1948, when the flow had begun to slacken, 670 trains had moved 2,800,000 refugees of both kinds across the border. In the same period 640,000 more refugees were taken from one country to another by motor transport. In an air transport operation, 22 planes operated by the British Overseas Airways Corporation brought 35,000 Indian refugees out of Pakistan between October 20th and November 30th, 1947, and during August 7,000 Government servants and their families were flown by the same company from New Delhi to Pakistan in 23 aircraft.

At one stage, in October, when attacks on foot convoys had died down, it was possible to see great columns of both communities passing each other on the same road in opposite directions without incident. In the same month, however, unprecedented flooding occurred in the Punjab and thousands of refugees were either drowned or died of exposure.

To accommodate this mass of almost destitute humanity refugee camps were started in each country. Largest of the 56 in India was at Kurukshetra, in the East Punjab.

This vast tented town sheltered 300,000 people. Utterly unhygienic conditions in many of these camps led to cholera outbreaks in which more people died.

Delhi itself, the seat of the Indian Government, did not escape the riots. There, on September 8th and 9th, 1947, even the Governor-General's bodyguard was used in the frantic effort by which the authorities stamped out battles in which 1,000 were killed and which drove tens of thousands of Muslims to hastily-arranged refugee camps inside ancient buildings in the city. Small wonder that in such an atmosphere Nehru could declare: 'I have seen horror enough and death. I am ashamed of the things my people have done and fear that the consequences may remain with us for a long time,' and that Major-General Rajendra Singhji, commander in the Delhi area, ordering his troops to action against the rioters said they must 'prevent fools and knaves from ruining our political greatness.'

In Calcutta, through the influence of one man, sanity prevailed. Gandhi was there, and early in September, when minor rioting started in repercussion to the Punjab horrors (which were reported in many newspapers on both sides in an inflammatory manner suggesting that war between the two countries was likely), he began a fast for communal peace. This ended only when the leaders of both communities pledged themselves that there would be no further trouble. It was a remarkable demonstration of the power which the Mahatma could exert over Indians of all creeds.

Among all the horrors, the case of the abducted women was particularly sad. Indian Government figures gave the numbers recovered up to May 31st, 1948, as 13,021. Of these, 7,905 Muslim women were stated to have been handed over by India to Pakistan and 5,116 non-Muslim

women by Pakistan to India. Up to June 10th, 1948, the number of enquiries about abducted and converted persons recorded by the Ministry of Relief and Rehabilitation, started to deal exclusively with refugee problems, was 44,190. Early in 1950 India was still claiming that 5,000 non-Muslim abducted women remained in Pakistan who retaliated with the suggestion that 40,000 Muslim girls were still in the custody of Hindus and Sikhs in the East Punjab and East Punjab states. One must hope that these figures were exaggerated.

These sordid and depressing events have been described in considerable detail because of their importance in arriving at an assessment of the subsequent relations between India and Pakistan. The minds of the people had been steadily poisoned by the propaganda which had accompanied nearly half a century of increased Hindu-Muslim rivalry. Extremists on both sides had helped to spread the infectious communal disease until, with the accomplishment of division, it became a virulent epidemic almost overwhelming the new governments before they had begun to operate. Without the riots the post-partition relations of India and Pakistan could not have been less than strained, with them they became openly hostile. After such a start it was plainly impossible that there could be any feeling of tolerance between the two countries for a long time.

Those people in Britain, who to their fears that British might would be reduced through the transfer of power had added the belief that in any case the Indians were unfitted to govern themselves, pointed to the disorders as a quick justification of their view, though one imagines that the scope of the riots was not as great as they had feared or, perhaps, been led to believe.

Once they had got over the initial shock both the

Indian and Pakistan Governments tackled the situation with resolution.

But there were very great difficulties. When the disturbances began approximately half the members of both dominion cabinets had never before held office. In Karachi the Pakistan Government had barely begun to occupy the hurriedly-built hutments in which it was to be accommodated and 8,000 Pakistani officials were stranded inside India. In New Delhi a wholesale reorganisation to fill the gaps caused by the departure of Muslim civil servants was going on in the Indian ministries. The Armed Forces, railways, postal and other services were similarly sorting themselves out after the transfer of personnel and equipment. The new East Punjab Government had not started to function and that of the West Punjab was hardly in a better state. Through rail traffic between the dominions was cut off after the first train attacks.

With all these harsh and crippling handicaps with which to contend the surprising thing is that the riots were not more widespread, and when all the circumstances are taken into account it is clear that the fact that they were eventually restricted was largely due to the determination of the ministers who had to deal with them.

Up to June, 1949, six Inter-Dominion Conferences had been held, mainly concerned with the affairs of refugees and the disposal of their goods. In the matter of compensation there had been no progress up to the end of 1949 when India was accusing Pakistan of virtual confiscation of all non-Muslim evacuee property. This, according to the Indian Ministry of Information, amounted to £3,000 million pounds (40,000 Crores of Rupees) against Muslim property worth £300,000,000 (4,000 Crores of Rupees) left behind in India. The figures were admittedly incomplete and probably exaggerated.

V

JUNAGADH AND KASHMIR

APART from the riots the most urgent problem which faced the Indian Government on its creation was the future of the independent states. When British paramountcy lapsed on August 15th, 1947, the princes of pre-partition India had before them these choices: in accordance with the terms of the Indian Independence Act they could become completely sovereign or they could accede to either India or Pakistan in regard to Defence, External Affairs and Communications.

We have seen that following Mountbatten's advice, most of the states had agreed to accede. They had realised the impossibility of existing as little independent entities scattered across the face of the country and had appreciated that only a serious administrative and political vacuum could result from such a course.

In explaining accession to the rulers the Viceroy had said: 'I am not asking any state to make any intolerable sacrifice of either its internal autonomy or independence. My scheme leaves you with all the practical independence that you can possibly use and makes you free of all those subjects which you cannot possibly manage on your own.' On July 5th, 1947, when the Indian States Department was formed, the states were assured that all that was asked of them was accession in respect of the three subjects and that their autonomous existence would be scrupulously respected. They were warned, however, that the alternative to co-operation in the general interest was anarchy and chaos which would overwhelm great and small in a common ruin.

Partition of the sub-continent had wiped out its old geographical, economic and political integrity and it was clear to the Congress leaders that on no account could any individual action by the states be allowed to repeat that partition within the borders of the new India. If it was to survive the dominion had to be united, for the independent states left within it or abutting it accounted for 48 per cent. of its area. Including the now disputed Kashmir, with 84,471 square miles of territory, there were Hyderabad covering 82,313 square miles, 15 states covering over 10,000 square miles each, 67 covering between 1,000 and 10,000 miles each and over 400 with less than ten square miles apiece. Altogether they had a population of 88,808,434 out of a total then of 318,912,506 for the whole dominion. A Congress resolution of 1938 had declared that the Indian states would be an integral part of free India and the 'scrupulous respect' of autonomy first promised soon turned out to be little more than a formality.

On accession Standstill Agreements were made between the dominion and the covenanting states which allowed for the continuance of the administrative arrangements which they had had with undivided British India and through which the life of the sub-continent had been carried on.

By August 15th, the only states which had not acceded to either India or Pakistan were Junagadh, Kashmir and Hyderabad. Then, a few days later, the Muslim Nawab of Junagadh announced his intention of acceding to Pakistan.

The importance of the Nawab's decision to Indo-Pakistan relations lay in the fact that in his accession talk to the princes Mountbatten had explained that though the states were theoretically free to link their future with

whichever dominion they cared they should have regard to the wishes of their majority of their people and to 'certain geographical compulsions' which could not be evaded. One of these compulsions obviously affected Junagadh. Covering 3,337 square miles, this state lay in the Southernmost part of the Kathiawar Peninsula, which juts out into the Arabian Sea between Bombay and Sind, and was separated from Pakistan by 400 miles. Surrounding it were about 450 states, some large and some very small, which had already acceded to India. Among these was Nawanagar, covering 3,790 square miles North of Junagadh, and North of Nawanagar again, though outside the peninsula, was the India-acceding state of Cutch. Further, the territory of Junagadh did not consist of one piece. Parts of it either contained, or were encircled by, the lands of other states which had opted for the larger dominion. The railway, posts and telegraph services in the state were part of the Indian system. From the population standpoint, also, there were strong reasons against Junagadh's accession to Pakistan, for of its 671,000 people 543,000 were non-Muslims.

When the Nawab made his intention known it naturally caused concern at the Indian States Ministry and this was increased when Pakistan, which could have advised the ruler to act sensibly and join India, calmly accepted the accession.

On any analysis this Pakistan acceptance of Junagadh's accession, after a month's consideration, would appear to have been made with one object alone in view: embarrassment of India. Junagadh itself could be of little use to Pakistan except to give her a foothold inside Indian territory. The whole incident, though restricted, is nevertheless interesting as the earliest demonstration after the riots of the intensity of the ill-feeling existing between the

two dominions, and because it was the forerunner of much more serious events in regard to the states.

It was fortunate for India that during the intense troubles which followed partition her Minister for Home, Information and Broadcasting, and States Affairs was a man of exceptional strength of character. Vallabhbhai Patel, after Gandhi and Nehru, was by far the most important of the Congress leaders and despite his 72 years he controlled the three ministries with great energy.

Like many of the Indian leaders he had given up a good legal practice to take part in politics and first became concerned in Congress affairs when he joined Gandhi in helping striking mill-workers at Ahmedabad in 1916. Long before he became a minister he was famed for his determined behaviour and uncompromising forthrightness. 'The Sardar has thorns on his tongue,' the Mahatma once remarked, adding, almost as an afterthought, 'but he has a kind heart.'

As Secretary to the States Ministry Patel had an administrator of remarkable capability. This was V. P. Menon who, starting life in the civil service as a poor clerk, had worked upwards to become, well before partition, the chief constitutional adviser to the Indian Government. This position brought him directly under the Viceroy, and when Mountbatten took over he was quick to realise the value of Menon's advice on many aspects of the situation and to profit from it.

Both Patel and Menon saw at once that their plans for consolidating the Indian Dominion would be jeopardised and the country's security weakened unless the Junagadh accession to Pakistan could be reversed, and they acted accordingly. A suggestion to Pakistan that there should be a referendum in the state to decide the accession issue having brought no response, Indian troops arrived in

Kathiawar on September 5th and virtually blockaded Junagadh. Near the end of October the Nawab fled to Pakistan which, in the meantime, had told India that no plebiscite could be considered until her troops were removed. After a period of deadlock India took control of the state on November 9th, having first occupied the small principedom of Manavadar, which had also acceded to Pakistan, and arrangements were made for a referendum which eventually showed an overwhelming majority in favour of accession to the larger dominion.

Events in Junagadh had not reached this climax when a far more serious crisis faced the Indian Government: the invasion of Kashmir by marauders from the Tribal Areas of the North-West Frontier.

Kashmir, a land of placid lakes and mountain snows, is the largest and most beautiful state in the sub-continent. Lying to the far North it abuts, and partly contains, a section of the Hindu Kush and Himalayan ranges. Within it are towering and majestic peaks like Mount Godwin Austen, the second highest mountain in the world, and the glorious Nanga Parbat. The Indus and the Chenab rivers flow through the state, the Jhelum rises within it and the Ravi enters it for some miles. It is bordered by Tibet to the East, by the Sinkiang province of China to the North-East and by Afghanistan to the North. Russian Turkestan lies only a few miles beyond its furthest edge. After partition the full length of the state's Western frontier, from which issue its most important roads and trade routes, was bounded by Pakistan. The South-Eastern areas alone fringed India.

Kashmir itself falls naturally into four regions. In the South, amid the lowest foothills of the Himalayas, lies Jammu province; in the centre is the Kashmir Valley proper with the capital Srinagar; to the North is the vast

Gilgit Agency and between the Kashmir Valley and Tibet is the remote and windswept district of Ladakh. So much of this territory is mountainous and barren that the state's population is small in comparison to its size. According to the 1941 Census it consisted of 4,021,616 people including 3,073,540 Muslims, 807,549 Hindus, 65,903 Sikhs and 40,696 Buddhists. Most of this population was gathered in the Kashmir Valley, where the Muslims predominated, and in Jammu province where the Hindus had a substantial majority. The Buddhists have always dwelt in the Southern parts of Ladakh.

While Junagadh, a predominantly Hindu state, was ruled by a Muslim Nawab, in Kashmir the position was reversed. There a Hindu Maharaja controlled a state in which more than three-quarters of the people were Muslims.

Most of the Kashmiris are very poor. Some live by agriculture, some are shepherds and others are normally employed in the timber trade for rich forests cover one-eighth of the state. But the best-known products are exquisite silk shawls and carpets, delightfully-carved furniture and delicate papier-mâché work. Before the troubles a prosperous tourist trade provided part of the market for these goods.

In 1938 a movement towards democratic government caused the formation of a 'National Conference' led by Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah, a Muslim. The Maharaja's regime was reactionary and opposed the emancipation of the people. As a result Sheikh Abdullah was imprisoned seven times for agitation. On the last occasion, in 1946, he was sentenced to nine years gaol on charges of sedition for organising a 'Quit Kashmir' campaign against the ruler.

Sir Hari Singh, the 55-year-old Maharaja, has always

been more famous for his race-horses than for his political sagacity, and in the summer and autumn of 1947 he found himself unable to take any decision about accession. In July he was visited by Mountbatten, who said afterwards, 'I spent four days with him . . . and on every one of those four days I persisted with the same advice: "Ascertain the will of your people by any means and join whichever dominion your people wish by August this year".'

The facts that his most important frontier was that which bordered Pakistan and that the ratio of the population was three Muslims to every Hindu appear as reasons compelling enough to have persuaded the Maharaja at once to accede to the smaller dominion, but there were two aspects of the situation which militated against this course. One was that Hari Singh, an orthodox Hindu, had no desire to acknowledge the supremacy of a Muslim state and would have preferred either independence or, failing that, accession to India, and the other was the position of Abdullah.

This locally popular politician was not only the leader of the National Conference but also President of the All-India States Peoples' Congress and a close personal friend of Nehru who is himself of Kashmiri extraction. He was one of the few Muslims who had rejected Jinnah and the idea of partition. From his point of view if Kashmir had to join one of the new dominions, it had better be India. Though Abdullah was in prison his party was important though it did not represent all the Muslims in the state for a section belonged to an organisation called the Muslim Conference and was pro-Pakistan.

The division of India heightened the natural strategic importance of Kashmir in the sense that both new countries wished to control the state. To-day there is no

Pakistani who would not say that possession of Kashmir, was essential for his country's survival. Without Kashmir Pakistan would feel incomplete and weakened on a vital flank. In the Pakistani view Indian control of Kashmir would gravely menace the security of the wide and productive plains of the West Punjab which include the dominion's finest agricultural land, much of its industry and a large proportion of its military installations. It has also been stated that a hostile nation holding Kashmir would be able not only to debouch its armies from the hills into comparatively open country but to interfere with the natural flow of the big rivers which, from a network of irrigation canals, water the West Punjab. Though the Kashmir terrain is exceedingly difficult for military operations, concentrations and communications there may be a certain justification for the first of these two points. The second, however, is the more important. The rivers which the Pakistanis fear might be affected are the Indus, Chenab and Jhelum. These flow into Pakistan from Kashmir. Further, from the East Punjab the Ravi and the Sutlej, enlarged by its tributary the Beas, both enter the West Punjab. In December, 1947, the Chief Engineers of the East and West Punjab signed a Standstill Agreement, valid until March, 1948, for the continuance of supplies of water for Pakistan's irrigation canals from headworks in India. A condition of this arrangement was that seignorage for the waters used should be paid by Pakistan. On April 1st, 1948, claiming that Pakistan had not renewed the agreement, the East Punjab Government rather arbitrarily cut off the supply of canal waters for three weeks and the matter has been a bone of contention ever since. While an Inter-Dominion Conference in Delhi in May, 1948, agreed on the East Punjab's need to develop famine areas and to the principle of

progressive diminution, Pakistan suggested in June, 1949, that the affair should go to the International Court of Justice and Sir Mohammed Zafrullah Khan, the Pakistan Foreign Minister, mentioned the matter before the United Nations. In September of the same year Mr. N. V. Gadgil, the Indian Minister for Works, pointed out that on partition only three of the sixteen original canal systems had gone to the East Punjab which contained 45 per cent. of the old undivided province and required urgent development for rehabilitation of refugees and the raising of food crops. All along it has been quite apparent that the fears of the Pakistanis about Kashmir's sources of water have been closely connected with the actual dispute about the flow of water from the East Punjab, though interference with the flow of a river like the Indus would obviously require a tremendous engineering project.

Apart from the irrigation question India's strategic reasons for wanting to hold Kashmir are rather similar to those of Pakistan. Without the state she would feel seriously weakened and would be always conscious that a great Islamic crescent stretched across the whole length of her North-Western border. Pakistani control of Kashmir would exert the same kind of threat to the East Punjab that Indian control of Kashmir would imply to the West.

While the Maharaja dilly-dallied over accession the partition of India took place. The backwash of the Punjab riots began to lap the Kashmir frontier and early in October the state government complained to Pakistan of 'unfriendly acts' including the hold-up of essential supplies like petrol, food, sugar and cloth. Hari Singh's forces had been engaged for some time trying to put down a revolt in the Poonch area, near the Pakistan border,

where the inhabitants objected to the intolerant system of taxation. Meanwhile to placate the National Conference, Abdullah had been released amid popular rejoicing.

It was in this situation that the tribal attack on Kashmir after some preliminary skirmishes, began in earnest on October 15th. Frontier outposts either fell to the raiders or were surrounded and on October 24th the key town of Muzzaffarabad, where the Rawalpindi-Srinagar road crosses the Jhelum, was captured.

The invasion was a well-organised affair out of the category of normal tribal raids. The tribesmen came not only from nearby Hazara District but across 200 miles of Pakistan from the Peshawar area. They arrived in buses and lorries, some wore green uniforms and all were armed. After a desultory disarming of a few hundred Pathans at Abbottabad the Pakistan authorities allowed the rest to pass unhindered. Later they contended that owing to their Army's commitments in the Punjab because of the riots they were unable to impede the tribesmen. Since these protestations Pakistan has had no difficulty in controlling the tribes in their own areas, in bombing the Fakir of Ipi's gang, and putting down a revolt in Kalat State. In fact, the invasion was prepared by a whip-up of religious feeling throughout the Tribal Areas by North-West Frontier political leaders and this was coupled with the irresistible promise of loot. Whether the affair was prompted by the Pakistan Government is a moot point, but certainly that Government did nothing to prevent it and not only allowed towns like Rawalpindi and Abbottabad to be used as bases for the campaign—in which, according to the Indian Government, more than 80,000 Pathans were at one time involved—but soon assumed the role of protector of the Azad (Free) Kashmir Government which had declared itself against the

Maharaja at the beginning of the trouble and was ensconced in the Poonch area under the presidency of Sardar Mohammed Ibrahim Khan, a young lawyer who had previously practised in the state.

After the capture of Muzzaffarabad, with the raiders advancing down the road towards Srinagar, Hari Singh hurriedly packed bag and baggage and departed Southwards to the comparative safety of Jammu town. There he was visited by V. P. Menon and composed 'in haste' a letter to the Indian Government offering the accession of his state, begging for military assistance, and stating that Abdullah would be asked to form a government. The alternative to accession, wrote the Maharaja, 'is to leave my state and my people to freebooters'. Mountbatten replied that provisional accession would be accepted but that when law and order had been restored and the state cleared of the invaders the question would be finally decided 'by a reference to the people'.

On October 27th, the morning after the Accession Instrument had been signed, the first Indian troops were flown into Kashmir. Srinagar was saved by a hair's breadth and after a few days the tide turned against the invaders and local rebels who were gradually pushed back.

The tribesmen carried out their attacks with complete savagery. They burned hundreds of villages, massacred the inhabitants and killed several Europeans. Only their desire for booty on the road prevented them from reaching Srinagar before the Indians and creating a shambles.

The Kashmir operation provided a severe test for the Indian Army. Difficult country, the onset of winter and a rickety line of communications extending for 1000 miles hampered its activities; so did large movements of refugees. But these drawbacks were overcome. The airstrips at Jammu and Srinagar were improved, work was

started on a new bridge and road into the state from Pathankot, and troops were moved in by land and air. At the height of the campaign in early 1948 at least three divisions were deployed. In addition great quantities of foodstuffs were sent by convoy from the East Punjab to Jammu and thence over the Banihal pass to Srinagar for the civilian population. Before the 1947 snows closed down the Indians had cleared most of the Kashmir Valley and much of Jammu province and had consolidated their positions. Gilgit, with the small Northern fiefs of Hunza and Nagir, had declared for Pakistan. The Southern part of Ladakh was under Indian control.

Indo-Pakistan relations, bad enough before, became utterly disastrous as the result of Kashmir. Talk of war grew louder on all sides and the leaders did not escape this dangerous infection which had first seized the press and public. Thus on November 16th, Liaquat Ali Khan was announcing: 'It is quite clear now that what the India Government are after is the permanent occupation of Kashmir . . . The India Government's whole conduct is based on "might is right" and on the belief that Pakistan is unable to fight them.' On December 3rd Nehru declared: 'The Government of India cannot tolerate the continuance of the use of Pakistan territory for organising raids into a part of Indian Dominion territory and must consider it an act of hostility.'

Amid this war fervour scare Mountbatten, with whom the ministers conferred on all grave problems, advised the Indians to take the whole question to the United Nations and this was done on the last day of December under Article 35 of the Charter dealing with the reporting of situations 'likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security'. 'Such a situation exists between India and Pakistan,' stated the Indian Government's

telegram to the Chairman of the Security Council. Only the day before Liaquat Ali Khan, clearly on Jinnah's instructions, had written to Nehru claiming that India had never wholeheartedly accepted partition 'but her leaders paid lip-service to it merely to get the British troops out of the country'. He averred that India had sabotaged the implementation of partition by holding up Pakistan's share of stores and funds and that she had forcibly occupied Junagadh and procured the fraudulent accession of Kashmir all with the direct object of destroying Pakistan. Before UNO Pakistan countered the Indian complaint and raised also the questions of Junagadh and 'Genocide'; the killing of Muslim minorities in India. Such were the straits to which the two countries, both members of the British Commonwealth of Nations, had been brought within six months of their creation.

It is not proposed to trace here in any detail the long-drawn out efforts of UNO to deal with the dispute nor to describe the interminable legal bickerings in which both sides indulged. Though the Security Council quickly advised both governments to do nothing to extend the dispute, and to try to reduce it, an additional grave development took place in May, 1948. With Indian troops advancing towards her frontier, Pakistan moved units of her own Army into Kashmir to take up positions which she considered essential for her security and to prevent the Indians from lining her border. A military deadlock ensued with both Pakistan and India fortunately wise enough not to allow their armies to attack each other. But the situation was fraught with danger and its incongruity can be judged when it is remembered the Commanders-in-Chief of both dominion armies were at this period British and that numerous British officers, though they were not allowed inside Kashmir, were

employed by both dominions. The case before UNO was further complicated because, of course, India now raised the point that Pakistan troops were actually on the soil of a state which had acceded to her. Pakistan replied, as she had done before, with the claim that the areas under control of the Azad Kashmir Government had not been covered by the Maharaja's accession which, in any case, she rejected. And had not India, in the case of Junagadh, caused her troops to enter a state which had acceded to Pakistan?

In August, 1948, eight and a half months after the battle for Kashmir had begun, and over six months after India had referred the question to the United Nations, a Security Council Investigation Commission reached the sub-continent. In the same month it proposed a 'Cease-Fire' to both parties to be followed by the progressive withdrawal of armed forces from the state and the creation of a situation in which a free and impartial referendum could be held on the accession question. Though the terms of this proposal were accepted by India they were rejected by Pakistan which disagreed with the suggested order of withdrawal from the state and with the Commission's subsequent explanatory interpretation of the status of the Azad Kashmir Government. However, at the end of the year the Commission was successful in getting both Governments to agree to a 'Cease-Fire' as the first step towards a settlement. This began on the first day of 1949.

VI

MAHATMA GANDHI

WHEN his fast had assured communal quiet in Calcutta Gandhi hastened to Delhi. He wished first to go to the Punjab to try and bring about a change of heart but decided, instead, to remain in the Indian capital until peace had been restored there.

The terrible events which accompanied partition had filled the Mahatma with sorrow. Was this the freedom to which he had brought the nation? Was this the result of half a century of preaching the creed of non-violence and the brotherhood of man? He felt himself borne down by the 'surrounding madness'. On October 1st, 1947, the eve of his 78th birthday, he declared: 'I would prefer to die rather than live in an India where such brutalities are practised.'

Because the Sweepers' Colony in which he usually lived in Delhi had been given over to refugees Gandhi had to stay at Birla House, the home of one of the great Congress-supporting industrialists. There he continued to hold his evening prayer meetings at which he pleaded for a return to sanity among the people. His days were spent in conversations with the leaders and in listening to the sad stories of refugees for whom he arranged relief.

In the months before August 15th the Mahatma's evening prayers had been spasmodically interrupted by communalists who disagreed with his attitude towards religion and believed that he was weakly acquiescing in the creation of Pakistan. Division was in the air and militant Hindu youths attended the prayer meetings to voice their protests.

To Gandhi the essence of religion was Truth and if the Bible, or the Koran, or the Sikh Holy Book contained wise words he would use them. It was his Islamic quotations, of course, that prompted the interruptions.

After August 15th the communalists felt more than ever that Gandhi had been one of the forces that had brought about partition. They felt, too, that his influence with the Indian Government prevented it from taking a strong line against what they considered were the aggressions of Pakistan and resented his efforts to protect those Muslims who had been left in India.

During this period both the reactionary Hindu Mahasabha and the Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh, believing in 'Akhand Hindustan' or 'Undivided India', increased their strength as more and more caste Hindus were roused to communal hatred through the disorders in the Punjab and the wild tales spread by the refugees and press. The two organisations now wanted the Muslims cleared out of India altogether, an idea entirely at variance with the declared policy of the Government which was to protect the minorities.

The history of the Mahasabha shows that as far back as 1943, when V. D. Savarkar, a former convicted terrorist, was its president, the Working Committee, always believing that Congress was giving in to the Muslims, had passed a resolution to the effect that 'the Hindus may have to meet and fight the danger of Pakistan single-handed'. In the next year another resolution declared that 'the suicidal policy of appeasement, specially jeopardising Hindu rights, has not proved a success in the past, nor will it in the future'. Near the end of 1946, L. B. Bhopatkar, then Mahasabha president, outlined the ideals of the Mahasabha and indicated to the Hindus 'the right lines for their defence against Muslim aggression'. The

more important of these were that firstly the Hindu masses should be educated in Mahasabha ideology and made communally conscious, secondly that a Hindu Front of caste Hindus and others should be organised in order that the Hindu mind should be remoulded by making it more self-reliant and, if necessary, militant.

The fascist ring in these aims and objects sounded a louder note in the case of the R.S.S. in which racial-religious ideology was more clearly defined. This body, founded in 1925, was closely associated with the Mahasabha until 1938 when, though retaining contact, it began to develop a separate policy. Its members drawn largely from clerks, shopkeepers, poor tradesmen, teachers and undergraduates were youthful and had to have 'firm faith in their Hindu parentage, heritage and culture'. They were taught to admire the ancient Hindu heroes and to behave in a disciplined manner. Their leaders aimed at a national regeneration of the Hindus and put forward their claims in much the same way that the Nazis exulted Aryan supremacy. Doctor Hedgewar, the movement's founder, had borrowed some of his ideas from Europe.

Though no figures of R.S.S. membership are available it is unlikely that at the time of partition it was less than 1,000,000 and some sources suggest that it was over 5,000,000. It was arranged on a military model. At the top was the Sar Sangh Chalak, or Supreme Head, and under him were provincial leaders each with an assistant. It was a closed shop. 'No foreigners can make inroads into this family. No alien can invade or subdue this spirit of corporate life. No enemy can fetter the progress of this neo-culture,' said the body's weekly journal in 1947.

Leader of the Sangh for over ten years has been Madhav Golwalkar, formerly a Benares Hindu University professor. Golwalkar was born in the Central Provinces in

1906 and early became a disciple of Hedgewar. His followers give him the high personal title of 'Guruji' or 'Wise Master'.

Though the Mahasabha and the R.S.S. did all they could to inflame the people, and R.S.S. men took an active part in the riots, the Mahatma's hold on the masses was unimpaired. He was still their 'Father' and they looked to him to lead them out of their troubles.

The deep-seated enmity of man for man preyed continually on Gandhi's mind during these months. Unless both India and Pakistan were to destroy themselves violence must be ended. What could he do to bring peace? At last, on January 13th, 1948, he began a fast, his fifteenth, for the restoration of communal amity. If the whole of India or at least Delhi responded it might soon be over, he said, adding: 'Death for me would be a glorious deliverance rather than that I should be a helpless witness of the destruction of Hinduism, Sikhism and Islam.'

Some foreign observers speculated on additional reasons for the fast besides the one stated. They based their assumption on these facts: Before partition the Cash Balances of the Indian Government with the Reserve Bank of India were £281,250,000 (Rupees 375 Crores). On partition this was divided to give Pakistan, as her share, an immediate payment of £15,000,000 (Rupees 20 Crores) with £41,250,000 (Rupees 55 Crores) to follow later. This outstanding balance had not been made over to Pakistan by the time the Mahatma's fast began as Patel had told the Karachi Government that in view of its hostile attitude in regard to Kashmir the payment would have to be postponed. In other words India was withholding payment of the balance as sanctions against Pakistan for her activities in Kashmir. Gandhi, however,

was thought to be in favour of immediate payment of the outstanding amount and to be displeased, also, with the stern tone of a speech by the Deputy Premier regarding the attitude of those Muslims still left in India.

Stories published on these lines were vigorously denied both by Gandhi and the Indian Government, but on January 15th, three days after Patel had held a Press Conference at which he had firmly explained India's reasons for withholding the money and two days after the Mahatma's fast had begun, it was announced that the balances would be paid over to Pakistan immediately. Nehru commented: 'We have come to this decision in the hope that this generous gesture, in accord with India's high ideals and Gandhiji's noble standards, will convince the world of our earnest desire for peace and good will. We earnestly trust also that this will go a long way towards producing a situation which will induce Gandhiji to break his fast. That fast, of course, has nothing to do with this particular matter, and we have thought of it because of our desire to help in every way in easing the present tension.'

In Delhi the communalists at first organised small demonstrations against the fast but by January 16th, as Gandhi slowly weakened, nation-wide good will meetings were held and peace gestures made. On January 18th, one hundred leaders of all communities led by Rajendra Prasad, went to Birla House and promised that there would be communal peace in the capital. So the fast ended. In the evening Hindus brought Muslims to Gandhi's bedside. They sang the hymn 'Lead, Kindly Light', one of his favourites. Twelve days later the encircling gloom was to close down over India in black and appalling form.

The first warning came on January 20th, when a crude,

hand-made bomb exploded at the corner of a wall about thirty yards from where Gandhi was holding his prayer meeting. No one was injured and the Mahatma continued his address unmoved while men who rushed to the spot arrested Madan Lal Pahwa, a 20-year-old Punjabi refugee. 'Do not harm him,' Gandhi told the police authorities. The next day he referred to the incident: 'My life is in the hands of God and that leaves me without fear . . . To those who are believed to have helped this man and used him as an instrument I would say this is no way to help the Hindu religion.'

On January 30th, the Mahatma, who had been talking to Patel, was a little late for the evening meeting. Shortly after five o'clock, leaning on the shoulders of his young grand-daughters, he walked briskly along the covered way leading from Birla House towards the square of grass from which he always spoke to the crowd from the shelter of a raised stone dias. As he reached the top of the steps giving on to the green, a Hindu stepped forward, pulled an automatic from his khaki bush shirt and fired three rounds straight at the Mahatma, who crumpled and fell to the ground with his hands folded in a gesture of greeting and the name of God upon his lips. For a moment there was stunned silence. Then, while some of the people seized the attacker, others, weeping, carried their leader towards the house. He was dead before they reached it. One shot had caught him in the chest and two in the abdomen.

The news of the Mahatma's death shocked the entire world. Governments, leaders of public opinion, great thinkers, even the poor and unknown sent messages of sympathy and distress. In India the effect was tremendous and shattering. A sense of forlorn misery descended upon the land. The next day, to the lamentations of millions,

Gandhi's body was taken through the streets of Delhi to be cremated on the banks of the Jumna river. Amid the vast crowd, mingling with the Sikhs and Hindus, moved many Muslims come to take leave of the man who had sought to protect them.

Gandhi's death was the result of a careful conspiracy headed by Nathuram Vinayake Godse, the 37-year-old assassin, a Poona journalist with Mahasabha connections, and Narayan Apte, a 34-year-old company director from the same area. It involved twelve men of whom nine were arrested and three absconded. Eight of those taken were tried after a long delay by a Special Court, while the ninth, Digamber Badge, an arms shop owner, turned approver. The court found seven of the accused guilty on a variety of charges. V. D. Savarkar, charged with complicity, was acquitted. Godse and Apte were sentenced to death and later hanged and the rest, including Madan Lal Pahwa, were sentenced to transportation for life, a sentence form meaning life imprisonment.

Godse, thin-faced, crop-haired and fanatical to the end, told the court that 'the only effective remedy to relieve Hindus from Muslim atrocities was to remove Gandhiji from this world'.

In the crisis which had struck India an immense upsurge of feeling seized the people. In anger at their leader's death they turned on the communal organisations which had destroyed him. In several cities houses of Mahasabha and R.S.S. members who had shown joy at the assassination were stoned and fired. In New Delhi an hostile crowd tried to approach the residence of Doctor Shyama Prasad Mookerjee, the Minister for Industry and Supply and a former Mahasabha president. Under the compulsion of popular opinion the Government was forced to take action which it ought to have adopted long

before but had, perhaps, felt incapable of carrying out. It outlawed the R.S.S.

The manner of Gandhi's death, said an official announcement on February 2nd, was 'a grim and urgent reminder of the forces of hate and violence that are at work in our country and which imperil the freedom of the nation and darken her fair name . . . There is no place to-day in India for any organisation preaching violence or communal hatred. No such organisation will, therefore, be tolerated. No private armies will be permitted.' The charges made by the authorities against the R.S.S. were that individual members had indulged in arson, robbery, dacoity and murder and had collected illicit arms and ammunition. In addition, they had circulated leaflets exhorting people to resort to terrorist methods, to collect firearms, to create disaffection against the Government and suborn the police and military. Six days later, though both organisations had ceased to be in any way effective within the dominion, the Muslim League National Guards and the Khaksars were similarly banned.

The Government's hand also fell on the princes of Alwar and Bharatpur, two Hindu-ruled states to the South of Delhi, where the Muslim inhabitants had been most violently attacked during the communal riots. Both rulers were ordered to remain outside their states while investigations were made into allegations that their administrations had been concerned in R.S.S. activities. Dr. N. B. Khare, the Premier of Alwar, was served with notice to stay in Delhi on information that he 'had acted in a manner prejudicial to the public safety and maintenance of public order by furthering or permitting in Alwar State the activities of the R.S.S. which has been declared an unlawful organisation'.

Some thousands of R.S.S. members in different parts of the country were arrested immediately the Government decided to ban the organisation. Golwalkar was detained in Nagpur and a large number of Mahasabha officials were also held. That organisation though not banned, decided to suspend political activities. Despite the Government's rapid action and firm words we shall see later that both R.S.S. and Mahasabha were by no means broken and within a year were to become as active and menacing as ever.

One body which had cried out for the Government to act against the communalists was the Socialist Party of India, which had been started in 1934 by Jai Prakash Narain, a young Congressman who had played a big part in the anti-British struggle. It was first called the Congress Socialist Group and its leaders were Congress members. But in 1947, the Socialists, though neither strong nor politically mature, began to feel increasingly dissatisfied with the trend of the Congress hierarchy. During most of the intense period of national agitation the Congress had represented many shades of opinion from capitalist to near-Communist all brought together in the common cause and showing, under Gandhi's leadership, a striking unity. Then, after the Indian Interim Government took office in 1946 and power began to be transferred, the old cohesion of Right and Left within the parent body began to disappear. Though they felt that the big business element was exerting ever greater influence on both the Government and the Congress Party machine the Socialists were at first loth to cut adrift. One reason for this was that Jai Prakash Narain, a good friend of Nehru, believed that ideologically the premier was Socialistic and that by remaining within the Congress the Left could support him in withstanding the demands of the Right and safeguarding the interests of the people.

When the riots began the Socialists became completely dissatisfied with the situation. While they strongly supported Gandhi and Nehru in their anti-communal policies they insisted that the Congress Right was less particular in its attitude. There were other cleavages. Many big employers were Congress members, but the Socialists controlled one section of the trade unions and the workers, despite the Government appeals for industrial peace, were becoming restive and prone to strikes in the face of rising living costs and shortage of essentials.

It was obvious from the circumstances that sooner or later the Left Wing would splinter from the main Congress body and launch out on its own. Gandhi had held the Congress together; his death provided the motive force for separation. Immediately after the assassination the Socialists called for the resignation of the Government 'in symbolic atonement' for the murder. They demanded that when the administration was reconstituted the Home and Information Ministries should be held by someone 'able and willing to curb the cult and organisation of communal hate', suggested that the Mahatma had not been properly protected and hinted that they were prepared for office.

The implication against Patel was so clear that the framers of the protest might as well have mentioned him outright, but the Deputy Premier was not alarmed. He promptly accused the Socialists of exploiting the Mahatma's death for political ends, claimed that extensive measures had been taken for his safety and prepared to force the critics out of the Congress.

Early in February, as if to make their going doubly sure, the Socialists for the first time fought a municipal election on their own 'ticket'. In Bombay they gained 26 seats against the Congress' 49 and so caused the bigger

party to lose its absolute majority on the local council. Later in the month the All-India Congress Committee offered them the choice between leaving the Congress or remaining within it at the cost of their own political extinction. A resolution based on Mr. Gandhi's 'Last Testament', said to have been prepared shortly before his death and to contain the fundamentals for a new Congress constitution, was adopted by the committee. One clause laid down that Congress members could not belong to any other political party having a separate membership, constitution and programme.

A month later at their convention at Nasik, near Bombay, the Socialists, without waiting to be expelled, voted that all members of the party should leave the Congress by April 15th. From then on, they declared, the Socialist Party would fight on its own and aim at power, for the national character of Congress had disappeared since the attainment of India's freedom and it could not now become a working class movement.

VII

HYDERABAD AND INTEGRATION

AMONG those who hurried to send messages of condolence to the Indian Government on the death of Gandhi was His Exalted Highness Mir Osman Ali Khan, Asaf Jah VII, Nizam of Hyderabad and Berar.

Hyderabad, the richest and most important state in the sub-continent, had not acceded to either dominion by August 15th, 1947, and in a proclamation on June 26th, 1947, the Nizam emphasised that he wished to be independent. However, the state's size, its geographical position and the communal ratio of its population made its accession to India in some form or another not only desirable but essential.

The state covers an area approximately equal to that of England, Scotland and Wales put together and in 1941 it had a population of 16,338,534, which included 2,097,475 Muslims, 10,382,005 caste Hindus and 2,928,040 Scheduled Castes. Besides Urdu, the Muslim language, Telegu, Marathi and Kanarese are spoken.

Hyderabad's domains, covering the great Deccan plateau, are spreadeagled across the whole of Southern India. Its frontier, nearly 2,700 miles long, is flanked by Madras, Bombay and the Central Provinces. The big Godavari and Kistna rivers pass through it. Its communications are provided by some 5,300 miles of roads and 1,400 miles of railways and except through India it has no access to the outside world. While normally self-sufficient in food grains and with surpluses of cotton, pulses, groundnuts, castor seed, coal and cement it depends on India for essentials like salt, unrefined sugar,

wheat, iron and steel, chemicals and tea and tobacco. Foreign goods of all kinds, including petrol and oil, are brought in through India.

At partition, though the Muslims in Hyderabad formed only 12½ per cent. of the population they had ruled the state for a great many years. The first Nizam was appointed Viceroy of the Deccan by the weakening Moghul Emperor in 1713. By a series of uneasy military alliances and an extraordinary variety of political stratagems his successors held on to the kingdom he had carved out and eventually became subordinate to the British in 1798. From that date until the transfer of power there was never any question of independence. The position which existed between the British and the Nizam, and thus between the British and all other Indian princes, was laid down in a letter which Lord Reading, then the Viceroy, wrote to the present ruler in 1926 when Hyderabad had revived an old claim to the sovereignty of Berar, leased in perpetuity to Britain long before. The Nizam, who had made his application on a certain basis of equality, was told: 'The Sovereignty of the British Crown is supreme in India, and therefore no Ruler of an Indian State can justifiably claim to negotiate with the British Government on an equal footing.' Britain's supremacy, said the letter, was not based only upon treaties and engagements but existed independently of them.

But this paramountcy, under which the Nizam had frequently been advised on the choice of dewans and through which the strength of his army was regulated, lapsed with the departure of the British and Mir Osman Ali believed that independence was in his grasp. In this he not only ignored Mountbatten's advice in regard to the wishes of the majority of the people of the states and

to 'geographical compulsions', but put his own interpretation on the most important section of the Cabinet Mission Memorandum of May 12th, 1946. Besides stating that the British 'could not and will not in any circumstances transfer paramountcy to an Indian Government' this had added that the void created by its disappearance would have to be filled 'either by the state entering into a federal relationship with the successor Government or Governments in British India, or failing that, entering into particular political arrangements with it or them'.

The Nizam, regarded by Muslims in various countries as one of the defenders of their Faith, with his own army and police, had no desire to come under the sway of Hindu India any more than the Maharaja of Kashmir had wished to be controlled by Muslim Pakistan. Hyderabad was feudal to a degree and in its ruler it presented the world with its best contemporary example of an Oriental despot. According to the Indian Government the Nizam received a Privy Purse of £375,000 (Rupees 50 Lakhs) a year and in addition he had an annual personal revenue of about £2,250,000 (Rupees three Crores) from his 12,000-square-mile private estates besides immense hoarded treasure. In contrast to this vast wealth the mass of the people were poor cultivators whose conditions of life, while perhaps no worse than those existing in several other areas of India, are brought into interesting relief by a visit of the Prince of Berar, the Nizam's heir, early in 1947 to districts where there had been anti-landlord disturbances.

'His Exalted Highness has altogether abolished the system of forced labour, or *begar*,' the prince announced, adding in the same breath: 'And this must stop.' As in other parts of the sub-continent the law was obviously one thing; its enforcement another.

The Nizam, born in 1886, succeeded his father in 1911. Despite his fabulous wealth he has always been noted for his miserly personal habits and also for his political stubbornness.

In November, 1947, Hyderabad reached a Standstill Agreement for one year with the Indian Government and was the only state to do so without acceding. The arrangement was the result of negotiations started in the previous July about the situation which was to exist between the state and India after the British had left. It was made as a stop-gap by India at a time when she was deeply engaged with the Punjab riot situation and embarrassed by the invasion of Kashmir.

On signing the document the Nizam informed Mountbatten: 'I have not been prepared to contemplate accession to either Dominion, but short of this I have been prepared to negotiate with your Dominion upon any other basis . . . By executing this Standstill Agreement I am in no way permanently prejudicing my rights as an independent sovereign.' The Governor-General replied: 'Placed as Hyderabad is, its interests are inextricably bound up with those of India; and my Government hope that before the present agreement expires it will be possible for Hyderabad to accede to the Dominion.'

Fundamentally the agreement was the same as those into which India had entered with acceding states for the continuance of former interlinked administrative arrangements. However, in the accompanying letters India promised to supply Hyderabad's army with its legitimate requirements of arms and equipment and to withdraw all Indian troops then stationed inside the state by February, 1948. Secunderabad, a large garrison town a few miles from the Hyderabad capital, and two minor stations

were at this time occupied by units of the Indian Army and these were eventually removed.

Under the system of government created by the Nizams the high administrative offices were almost always held by Muslim nobles, but there are records that occasionally even that of Prime Minister was given to a Hindu. However, for many years the educated Hindus in the state found their living mainly as prosperous merchants or in the professions and they appear to have been satisfied with an existence in which they were prohibited from any measure of democracy. A Hyderabad State Congress was started in 1938, when the All-India Congress was attacking conditions in the states generally and pressing for reform, but was subjected to periodical banning by the Nizam and to the occasional arrest of its leaders. Though it was numerically strong its powers of resistance were limited and the final removal of the Muslim reactionaries who surrounded the ruler was achieved as the result of external pressure and not through an internal struggle.

The strongest Muslim organisation in the state was the Ittehad-ul-Muslemeen, founded in 1926, and devoted to preserving the power of the ruling class. In 1947, the leader of the Ittehad was Syed Qasim Razvi, a small-town lawyer of fanatical appearance and unbounded ambition. At a meeting with this man in December, 1947, the writer reached the conclusion that he was suffering from megalomania. Under Razvi's influence a private army, distinct from the Nizam's regular forces, was formed. Its members were called Razakars and were given military training similar to that provided for the R.S.S. in India.

With the arrival of Pakistan the Hyderabad Muslims felt isolated and they prepared to fight for the retention

of their power. In October, 1947, Razvi managed to delay the signing of the Standstill Agreement for a month and to cause the resignation of the Prime Minister, the Nawab of Chhattari, and his replacement by an Ittehad magnate, Mir Laik Ali. After this the Indian Government began to realise that the Razakars had reached a stage where they virtually held the Nizam, willing or unwilling, in their grip.

Apart from the withdrawal of the Indian troops the Standstill Agreement hardly worked and from January, 1948, there began a long series of Indo-Hyderabad negotiations aimed at something more final and definite. From the Hyderabad side these talks soon assumed the character of procrastinations.

Inside the state the Razakars increased their numbers and Indian feelings towards the Nizam were not improved when they discovered that Hyderabad had transferred £15,000,000 (Rupees 20 Crores) of Government of India securities to Pakistan as a loan. As the negotiations dragged on a serious deterioration in relations was taking place. While India charged that armed Razakars were making terror raids into the surrounding dominion provinces Hyderabad said that raids were being launched into her territory from India and that the Nehru Government was instituting an economic blockade of the state to force it into the union. In the South-Eastern areas of Hyderabad Communist agitators took advantage of the situation to extend the hold they had on the peasants and to promote disturbances. They claimed that 2,500 villages were under their control, attacked local landlords and officials and began dividing the land among the people.

Meanwhile Razvi encouraged his followers by a series of vitriolic anti-Indian speeches. In one he is reported to

have declared: 'With the Koran in one hand, the sword in the other, let us march forward, cut our enemies to pieces and establish Islamic supremacy,' and in another that the Hyderabad flag would soon fly from Delhi's Red Fort. Razvi's outbursts and the activities of his men caused the Indian Government to ask Hyderabad to ban the Razakars; a request repeated without result at intervals throughout the summer. They also caused many Hindus, fearful for their lives and property, to leave the state and they encouraged a number of die-hard Muslims from other areas to move into it.

At the same time the Nizam's Government was making great efforts to bring in arms and ammunition for its 25,000 troops, 35,000 police and for the Razakars. To stop this the Indian blockade of the state was gradually tightened.

Though desultory talks continued round the possibility of accession, of association, of a plebiscite and of the grant of responsible Government in the state there was no hope of their success in the poisonous atmosphere which had been created. As India became more peremptory in her demands the Nizam and his Government grew more stubborn in their refusals. Prolonged personal intervention by Mountbatten, who took a leading part in the negotiations and steadfastly sought for a settlement, was of no avail and C. Rajagopalachari, who succeeded him as Governor-General in June, 1948, was no more successful. Activity by Sir Walter Monckton, the Nizam's legal adviser, also produced no result.

By early July, the Indian Government had frozen over £67,500,000 (Rupees 90 Crores) of securities held by the Nizam in Indian Banks, banned the export of gold and currency into the state and refused to supply petrol to the Deccan airways operating between the dominion and

the state. In the same month, cut off from supplies by land and with through train services interrupted, the Nizam employed foreign mercenaries to fly in warlike stores from Pakistan. He cried out that no salt, chlorine or medical supplies were being allowed into his state. The planes, said his officials, were on 'mercy' trips bringing in first aid supplies.

Hyderabad's activities now aroused Indian opinion to fever pitch and the outbursts of some popular papers were as violent as those of Razvi. 'What we want is the thunder of guns, the roar of aeroplanes, the resounding tramp of marching feet, the dull booming of cannons, the swish and grind of armed convoys on the march,' wrote the intrepid leader-writer of the *Free Press Journal* from the safety of his Bombay office. The Socialist Party Executive joined in the general clamour for action.

On August 19th, the Nizam's Government informed the dominion that it had decided to take the dispute to the United Nations. Then, on September 7th, Nehru announced that India had asked the Nizam for the last time to disband the Razakars and repeated a demand for immediate facilities for the return of Indian troops to Secunderabad 'in such strength as is necessary to restore order'. This proposal the Nizam had already described as out of the question. 'All Hyderabad's resources are being mobilised for war and no country in India's position can tolerate such preparations,' the Indian Premier declared.

Finally, at 4 o'clock a.m. on September 13th, the Indian Army entered Hyderabad 'to restore peace and tranquility inside the state and a sense of security in the adjoining Indian territory.' This military operation, accompanied by the proclamation of a State of Grave Emergency throughout India and the bombing of Hyderabad aerodromes, was dubbed a 'Police Action'.

Pakistan's reaction to it was tempered by the fact that Mohammed Ali Jinnah had died suddenly two days before.

The Indian troops met some resistance from the state forces and Razakars but by the afternoon of September 17th, the affair was over. The Nizam had capitulated and thus saved the nominal prerogatives of his dynasty. His Government had resigned and he had announced that his case would be withdrawn from the United Nations where its legality was already being discussed. Razvi and other fanatics were arrested while Swami Ramanand Tirth, the local Congress leader who had been imprisoned since the previous January, was released. Only about ten Indian soldiers had been killed but casualties on the other side were higher. The state forces officially lost 600, the Razakars 1,200, and as an aftermath Hindu elements in parts of the state attacked and killed Muslims. The Nizam is now the Rajpramukh (Prince-Governor) of Hyderabad, Mir Laik Ali escaped to Pakistan after over a year's detention and Razvi with eight of his supporters and five former ministers was arraigned for trial by a special tribunal in April, 1950, charged with numerous murders and acts of violence and with attempting to set up an independent Islamic State.

The idea that the Nizam was a puppet in the hands of his Ittehad ministers and that he had, in his own words, been rendered 'completely helpless' is not easily acceptable. Mir Osman Ali Khan wished to be an independent monarch and apart from the fanatics who surrounded him he gained encouragement in his intransigence from outside sources. The first was Pakistan which helped him with armaments and propaganda, the second was Mr. Winston Churchill, who strongly supported his plea for independence in the House of Commons and the third

was the anti-Indian attitude of a section of the British Press. Another factor which undoubtedly influenced his resistance was the complete abdication of their ruling powers which, during this period, the other princes of India were voluntarily making.

Between the time when the Nizam signed the Standstill Agreement and the end of the Hyderabad episode the autonomy of practically every other state in India had disappeared. Under central pressure their renunciation of power had gone far beyond the original subjects of Defence, External Affairs and Communications and they were completely a part of the new India. To use Patel's phrase, they had been integrated. In place of a chequered, piecemeal patchwork of hundreds of territorial divisions the map of India had become a consolidated block of great provinces. Nehru's verdict was: 'A historian who looks back will no doubt consider that one of the dominant phases of India's history to-day is this integration of the states into India.' An Indian Government White Paper in July, 1948, said the change had been 'brought about by a process of two-fold integration; firstly consolidation into sizeable and viable administrative units, and secondly growth of democratic institutions and responsible governments.'

The same document gave a graphic idea of the disruption which would inevitably have resulted if the states had been allowed to retain their independence:

'The yellow and pink map of pre-partition India showed . . . in the North-East Cooch-Bihar enclosed within the territories of the Bengal Province and Manipur State surrounded by the territories of the Province of Assam. Southwards, in the Eastern portion of India, the next block of Indian States territory was to be found in a chain of small states which were known as the Chattisgarh

and Orissa States. Further South figured the states of Hyderabad and Mysore, the latter a unit larger than the Irish Free State and having twice its population. Facing the Indian Ocean further Southwards still were the two densely populated states of Cochin and Travancore. Northwards up the West Coast, and both on the coast and inland, were to be found various states of the Mahratta period, the largest of these being Kolhapur. The chain of States ended with the State of Baroda, made up of several separate areas to the North of Bombay Presidency. Further to the North-West lay the extremely numerous assemblage of States and Estates in the Western India States Area, of which the better known were Cutch, Nawanagar, Bhavnagar and Junagadh. To the North-East of Bombay, separating Bombay and the Central Provinces from the United Provinces, lay the main mass of Central India States which included Gwalior, Indore and Rewa. The Northern and North-Western portion of Bombay was divided from the Punjab by the wide strip of Rajputana States. Among the states of this group, which constituted the largest unit of the Indian States, were the important Rajputana States of Bikaner, Jaipur, Jodhpur and Udaipur. In the United Provinces were to be found the isolated states of Tehri-Garhwal, Rampur and Benares. To the North-West were the Punjab States, including Patiala, stretching up to Simla; and the States of Jind, Nabha and Kapurthala.'

A description by Patel breaks down one of these areas into its components: 'The States in Kathiawar comprise 13 Salute States (those whose rulers were entitled to a salute of cannon), 107 limited jurisdictional states (those entitled to administer a proportion of the law) and 329 non-jurisdictional estates . . . making up 449 units altogether. The area involved is more than 22,000 square miles with

a population of between three and a half and four millions. The administration of the states is complicated by the fact that many of them have scattered islands of territory all over the place. The Salute States of Nawanagar, Gondal and Junagadh, for instance, have respectively 9, 18 and 24 separate areas of territory. Added together these 449 units divide the map of Kathiawar into about 860 different areas.'

Forty states had had treaties with Britain and the others some form of arrangement with her. Nothing was uniform either in these agreements or in the administrative interlinks.

Within the states themselves the system of Government varied just as greatly as the rest of the whole fantastic set-up. In 1946 more than 60 Indian states had started some form of legislative body, in others there were schemes for giving the people a part in the government and in many there were periodical agitations by the State Congress for the grant of democratic institutions. But in the great majority the ruling powers rested solely with the prince and his appointed council. Immediately before and after partition various princes, aware that popular internal pressure would have the fullest support of the Congress in India and realising their inability any longer to deprive the people of political rights, began to promise constitutional government. One or two actually instituted it. But their days as independent rulers were numbered.

In December, 1947, Patel met the rulers of the 39 Chattisgarh and Orissa states, which covered 56,000 square miles and had a population of 2,000,000. After an initial hesitation these princes fell over themselves to surrender all their powers in return for guarantees concerning their succession, personal property, rights, privi-

leges, dignities and titles. They had seen the writing on the wall. If they had not agreed they would have been subjected to isolation and internal unrest which they would have been unable to control. Their states were accordingly merged with the neighbouring provinces while they retained their palaces and generous pensions.

The action of these rulers prompted others to follow suit. In February, 1948, 16 Deccan states covering 7,651 square miles agreed to merge with Bombay. In March, 21 Simla Hill states with an area of 10,600 square miles agreed to consolidate into one unit under the Central Government and in the same month 157 Gujerat states covering 19,300 square miles elected to join Bombay. In May the ruler of the 8,461 square mile state of Cutch signed his principedom into India. Other smaller units did the same. Some groups of states were so large that it was decided to gather them together as new provinces. Thus in February the 449 units in Kathiawar became Saurashtra, a completely united block, which formed the model for others including Vindhya Pradesh, a 24,610 square mile corridor between the United and Central Provinces, Rajasthan, the immense province which all the Rajput rulers eventually joined, Patiala and the East Punjab States Union and Madhya Bharat covering 20 states in Central India, including Gwalior and Indore.

When a union was formed a more important prince was elected as Rajpramukh with a Ruler's Council to assist him and popular ministries were started. There were many special arrangements to cover individual cases or to vary pensions but the general pattern was the same. Here and there a recalcitrant prince had to be brought to heel but the great majority quickly realised the wisdom of a course which, while retaining their prestige, absolved

them of responsibilities they could not shoulder. Many princes gave their full services to the Indian Union.

The process of integration, of course, was gradual. Rajasthan, for instance, was enlarged several times as different states agreed to come in. Baroda was one of the last states to merge with Bombay. Matsya, a union of four states South of Delhi, was eventually absorbed by its neighbours. Here and there were states big enough to stand as provinces on their own.

A confidential memorandum prepared for Rajpramukhs and ministers of Union States by the States Ministry in the middle of 1948 gave some interesting sidelights on integration. The objective underlying each of the arrangements, this stated, was to ensure that the people of the states should have the advantages of sound, efficient and democratic administration which, broadly speaking, each of them could not, in isolation, give to its people. It went on: 'It would obviously be disastrous indeed, if through slackness or for any other reason, an impression were to be created that conditions under the old regime were better, or even no worse than the conditions under the new Governments.'

From this warning it is clear that the Central Government is well aware of the dangers likely to beset the new unions through mismanagement by inexperienced popular ministers and uncertainty on the part of Rajpramukhs. In the formative stage the Central Government decided to keep a very close eye on states' unions affairs and the same memorandum added that at least for two or three years each Union Government should have the assistance of a Chief Secretary, drawn from amongst the experienced officers of the neighbouring provincial administrations or the Central Government.

Further on the memorandum declared: 'Obviously

among the first things the new Governments must do is to abolish and eliminate all objectionable feudal practices, such as that of forced labour and the use of the revenue machinery for the collection of the dues of jagirdars (squires). It is also necessary to abolish special privileges of classes where they exist, customs barriers, trade monopolies, etc. Similarly, the establishment of the rule of law must not be delayed. Then again . . . unless the land holding and land revenue system are brought into conformity with the modern conception of relationship between Government and the landlord on the one hand and tenants on the other, the public in general will not find they have benefited in any material way from the integration of the states and the reconstitution of the governments.'

Under India's new Constitution the term 'Province' has been replaced by that of 'State', and these 'States', divided into classes A, B and C, consist of augmented former provinces, of princely states' unions, of princely states large enough to exist alone and of areas ruled by Chief Commissioners or Lieutenant-Governors for economic or strategic reasons.

Class A States are Assam, Bihar, Bombay, Madhya Pradesh (formerly the Central Provinces and Berar), Madras, Orissa, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh (formerly the United Provinces), and West Bengal.

Class B States are Hyderabad, Jammu and Kashmir, Madhya Bharat, Mysore, Patiala and East Punjab States Union, Rajasthan, Saurashtra, Travancore-Cochin and Vindhya Pradesh.

Class C States are Ajmer, Bhopal, Bilaspur, Cooch-Bihar, Coorg, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh (Simla Hill States), Cutch, Manipur and Tripura.

The sparsely inhabited Andaman and Nicobar Islands

now also belong to India and are administered by the Central Government. From 1858, until the Japanese occupied them in 1942, the Andamans, which are more extensive than the Nicobars, were used as a penal settlement, mainly for Indian long-term prisoners. Efforts to develop the islands economically are now being made.

VIII

THE CONSTITUTION

UNDER the enlightened influence of Gandhi and Nehru the Constitution which the Indians have made for themselves is a liberal one emphasising both the inalienable rights of man and his duties to the state. Its authors have borrowed freely from the progressive Constitutions of other democratic nations and if all its intentions are not easy of achievement that is no slur on its originators.

The preamble sets the tone of the whole 251-page document:

‘WE, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a SOVEREIGN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC and to secure to all its citizens:

JUSTICE, social, economic, political;

LIBERTY of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship;

EQUALITY of status and opportunity;

and to promote among them all

FRATERNITY assuring the dignity of the individual and unity of the Nation;

IN OUR CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY this twenty-sixth day of November, 1949, do HEREBY, ADOPT ENACT AND GIVE TO OURSELVES THIS CONSTITUTION.’

Work on the Constitution began almost three years before its final adoption and went on through all the troubles of partition and the earliest days of the new country. The Chairman of the Drafting Committee was Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, a member of the Scheduled Castes and their champion over many years. As a schoolboy Ambedkar was made to sit apart from the rest of the class lest he should contaminate it and of a later experience

he once said: 'As a man in the Accountant-General's office at Baroda, papers had to be flung at me instead of handed to me, and the carpet had to be rolled back lest higher castes stood on the same material as I stood on.' Such restrictions did not prevent Ambedkar from becoming Law Minister in the first Indian Cabinet which originally consisted of six Hindus, two Muslims, two Scheduled Castes, two Christians, one Sikh and one Parsee.

The Constituent Assembly, as laid down by the Cabinet Mission, was elected through the Provincial Legislative Assemblies on the basis of one seat to each million inhabitants. As we have seen the only Muslims at first to take part in it were those who supported the Congress. But after partition other Muslim representatives, who had obeyed Jinnah's boycott instructions even though their constituencies had no chance of being in Pakistan, came in as well. Delegates from the princely states joined at intervals and there were arrangements for the representation of tribes and minorities.

The Constitution contains 22 Parts, comprising 395 Articles and eight Schedules. Twelve pages are devoted to Fundamental Rights, six to Special Provisions Relating to Certain Classes and three to Directive Principles of State Policy which really amount to moral precepts. Other sections deal with subjects like the powers of the Executive and Judiciary, relations between the Union (Central Government) and the States (Provinces), Finance, Trade, Elections and Languages. Practically every phase of life in India, or Bharat, to give it its other name, is covered in one way or another and though the bulk of the Constitution is naturally intended to be permanent it can be amended.

From the Indian point of view the Constitution is

extremely advanced for many of its declarations strike at the fundamental caste traditions of Hindu society.

Nehru, in *The Discovery of India*, has described how the dead weight of caste has pressed down on his country's development. India, he writes, 'must get rid of the exclusiveness in thought and social habit which has become like a prison to her, stunting her spirit and preventing growth. The idea of ceremonial purity has erected barriers against social intercourse and narrowed the sphere of social action. The day-to-day religion of the orthodox Hindu is more concerned with what to eat and what not to eat, who to eat with and from whom to keep away, than with spiritual values. The rules and regulations of the kitchen dominate his social life . . . Caste is the symbol and embodiment of this exclusiveness among Hindus. It is sometimes said that the basic idea of caste might remain, but its subsequent harmful development and ramifications should go; that it should not depend on birth but on merit. This approach is irrelevant and merely confuses the issue. In a historical context a study of the growth of caste has some value, but we cannot obviously go back to the period when caste began; in the social organisation of to-day it has no place left. If merit is the only criterion and opportunity is thrown open to everybody, then caste loses all its present-day distinguishing features and, in fact, ends. Caste has in the past not only led to the suppression of certain groups, but to a separation of theoretical and scholastic learning from craftsmanship, and a divorce of philosophy from actual life and its problems. It was an aristocratic approach based on traditionalism. This outlook has to change completely, for it is wholly opposed to modern conditions and the democratic ideal.'

In considering this quotation it should be remembered

that Nehru's ideas, like those of Gandhi, have always been well in advance of the mass of Indian opinion.

The Indian Constitution, produced mainly by Hindus and numerically mainly for Hindus, first undermines the caste system by abolishing Untouchability. Everyone of whatever religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth is made equal before the law and promised equal opportunities of State employment. No citizen on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth will in any way be restricted in his access to shops, restaurants, hotels, places of entertainment, or in his use of wells, tanks, bathing places, roads or meeting places maintained wholly or partly by the State.

The mere writing into the Constitution of the abolition of Untouchability obviously does not mean that this restrictive practice has vanished overnight. Though caste Hindus who try to enforce its stigmas can now nominally be punished it will be a long time before the thing itself disappears under the spread of education and the development of social conscience. Indeed, later in the Constitution, there is an arrangement for the reservation of seats in the Indian Parliament for members of the Scheduled Castes for a period of years.

N. V. Gadgil, speaking on a caste question in the Legislative Assembly in February, 1948, summed up the situation when he said: 'So long as we are still used to think in terms of the past and act by force of acquired habit, so long as we have to deal with vested interests, it will not be possible to abolish these distinctions by one stroke of the pen. We have to acquire a new outlook. We have to take a new vision. All that will take some time. Until we have gone a long way in changing peoples' habits and minds, such distinctions will persist—but I

have no doubt that their intensity will not only gradually but rapidly decrease.'

In fact, in many of the big Indian cities to-day there are substantial signs of this change of outlook, which the Constitution so fully embodies, being put into practice. In the country generally, however, and particularly in remote or backward areas such a revolutionary alteration is bound to take a long period to become effective.

After equality other Fundamental Rights contained in the Constitution include seven *Rights to Freedom*. Every citizen is given the right to freedom of speech and expression, the right to assemble peaceably and without arms, to form associations or unions, to move freely about the country, to live in any part of it, to possess property and to practise any profession or occupation. This last provision also disregards established practice, for, as was pointed out in Chapter I, many castes in India have an occupational foundation.

Next come safeguards against false imprisonment and clauses forbidding traffic in human beings, forced labour and the employment of children under 14 in factories, mines or hazardous employment. Religious freedom is promised to all and the anti-caste battle carried a stage further by a proviso that the State may throw open public Hindu religious institutions to all types of Hindus.

The Constitution also contains guarantees by which minorities will be able to keep their own languages, scripts, cultures and schools. State education, however, will be open to all.

The Directive Principles of State Policy which follow the Fundamental Rights are described as essential for the government of the country and the State is charged with the duty of applying them when making laws. They form a creed, well described in the precept that: 'The State

shall strive to promote the welfare of the people by securing and protecting as effectively as it may a social order in which justice, social, economic and political, shall inform all the institutions of national life.'

Six particular objectives are listed, one of which relating to the employment of women, puts India ahead of Britain at least so far as intention is concerned: The State is instructed to see that all citizens have the right to an adequate means of livelihood: that the ownership and control of the material resources of the community are distributed for the best common good: that the economic system does not result in the concentration of wealth and means of production to the common detriment: that there is equal pay for equal work for both men and women: that the health and strength of all workers and the tender age of children are not abused and that citizens are not forced by economic necessity to do work unsuited to their age and strength: that childhood and youth are protected against exploitation and against moral and material abandonment.

Besides providing for just and humane working conditions the State is enjoined to secure a decent standard of life for the workers and their full enjoyment of leisure and social and cultural opportunities. Free compulsory education for all children up to the age of 14 is promised within ten years of the Constitution becoming effective while the traditional Gandhian Congress policy against alcohol is covered by an injunction to the Government to bring in prohibition.

In addition to these guiding principles for the internal life of the country there are four rules for the conduct of Foreign Affairs: The State must try to promote international peace and security, to maintain just and honourable relations between nations, to foster respect for

international law and treaty obligations and to encourage the settlement of international disputes by arbitration.

From all this it can be seen that by any standards the Indian Constitution is a noble document, and when it is considered in relation to the status and condition of other Eastern peoples, and not a few of those in the West, it becomes truly remarkable for its breadth of vision and idealistic conception. It would be a pity if it proved to be so far ahead of public opinion and private practice that it turned out to be impracticable.

Though no Constitution has yet been worked out for Pakistan, a Resolution of Aims and Objectives adopted by the Constituent Assembly there in March, 1949, contrasts strikingly with the Indian Constitution because of its emphasis on religion.

It begins: 'In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful: Whereas sovereignty over the entire universe belongs to God Almighty alone and the authority which He has delegated to the State of Pakistan through its people for being exercised within the limits prescribed by Him is a sacred trust' and then, while promising adequate safeguards for the legitimate interests of the minorities, goes on to affirm that in Pakistan the Muslims 'shall be enabled to order their lives in the individual and collective spheres in accord with the teachings and requirements of Islam as set out in the Holy Koran and Sunna.'

Those who drafted the Indian Constitution used no such narrow, and from the point of view of the minorities, forbidding religious approach.

The new India is a federation of large states bound together under a central government, and the Constitution stipulates that the executive power of this Union shall vest in a President who will also be the Supreme Commander of the Defence Forces. Directly under him

are a Vice-President and a Council of Ministers headed by a Chief Minister or Premier.

The Union Parliament, when elected, will consist of two Houses known as the Council of States and the House of the People. The Council of States will have twelve members nominated by the President from people with special knowledge of literature, science, art and social service and not more than 238 state representatives elected in the case of Class A and Class B States by the members of the State Legislative Assemblies and in the case of Class C States in a manner laid down by Parliament. One-third of the Council of States' members will retire every second year. The House of the People will consist of not more than 500 members directly elected through adult suffrage on the basis of not less than one member for every 750,000 of the population and not more than one member for every 500,000 of the population. Normally the life of the House of the People will be five years. Citizens will not qualify to be members of the Council of States unless they are over 30 or members of the House of the People unless they are over 25. The Vice-President of India will be *ex-officio* Chairman of the Council of States and the House of the People will elect its own Speaker and Deputy-Speaker.

Both Houses will be run rather on the lines of the British Parliament. Thus the Government will be expected to resign if defeated on a major issue in the House of the People and bills must be passed by both Houses before they can become law. However, where there is disagreement or delay between the Houses over a bill the President can call a joint meeting of both Houses to vote finally upon it. No money bill can be introduced into the Council of States which will not have to approve of financial measures for them to become effective.

The Council of States and the House of the People will not be formed until after the elections promised for 1951 and until then the Constituent Assembly is acting as the country's law-making body. Rajendra Prasad, the first Indian President, was elected directly by the assembly before January 26th, 1950, when India became a Republic and the Constitution began to operate. The next President will be chosen by an Electoral College consisting of the members of both Houses of Parliament and the elected members of the States' Legislative Assemblies.

Under the Constitution the President first appoints the Prime Minister and then the other ministers on his advice. Since the judiciary is separated from the executive the President directly appoints the Attorney-General, the Chief Justice and other Supreme and High Court Judges. He also appoints the Comptroller and Auditor-General.

The constitutional arrangements for the bigger States are arranged on a similar model to those for the centre. Each Class A State has a Governor as its executive head. He is appointed by the President and holds office for five years. Under him are a Council of Ministers and a Chief Minister whom he appoints and they are responsible to the State Legislative Assembly. The Governor also appoints the State Advocate-General.

The States Legislatures will, after the elections, consist of two Houses in the Class A States of Bihar, Bombay, Madras, the Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal and one House in Assam, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa. Where there are two Houses they will be known as the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly; where there is one House it will be called the Legislative Assembly. Legislative Assembly members will normally be elected on the basis of one to every 75,000 of the population but no assembly will have more than 500 members or

less than 60 members. The number of members in a State Legislative Council will not exceed one quarter of the number of members in the corresponding State Legislative Assembly, though in no case will it be less than 40.

The method of election to the Legislative Councils is somewhat complicated: One-third of the members will be chosen by members of municipalities, district boards and the like; one-twelfth will be elected by teachers in schools in the State above Secondary Standard; one-third will be selected by the Legislative Assembly from people who are not its members; the rest, nominated by the Governor, will be citizens with special knowledge of things like literature, science, art, co-operative movements and social service.

Normally the Legislative Assemblies will last for five years while one-third of the Legislative Councils will retire every two years. No one under 25 can be a member of a Legislative Assembly, no one under 30 a member of a Legislative Council.

For Class B States the Governor becomes a Rajpramukh recognised by the President and in the case of Kashmir, Hyderabad and Mysore this will normally be the ruler of the State. The only Class B State allotted two Houses is Mysore.

In both Class A and Class B States the rules for the conduct of business are virtually the same as those designed for the centre. For Class C States Parliament can set up a form of State Legislature with a Council of Advisers or Ministers.

The Constitution grants the vote to everyone over 21 and separate electorates, one of the root causes of partition, are abolished. Under the 1935 Act, on which, incidentally, much of the administrative detail of the Constitution is based, it was estimated that some

30,000,000 people were entitled to vote. The new arrangement is a great advance on that situation. When the first elections are held it is estimated that well over 160,000,000 people will be on the rolls. According to Rajendra Prasad this immense number of names will need 10,000,000 sheets of foolscap to list and if the sheets were bound together they would be 200 yards thick.

Though separate electorates go, seats will be reserved in the House of the People and in the State Legislative Assemblies for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, of whom there are nearly 200 different varieties, in proportion to their numbers. Further, if the President thinks the Anglo-Indians are not properly represented in the House of the People he can allot them two additional seats and Governors and Rajpramukhs are also entitled to nominate additional Anglo-Indians to the State Legislatures.

But all these safeguards will end after the Constitution has run for ten years, during which the claims of the Scheduled Castes and Tribes to Government positions will be watched, and there will be a gradually reduced allotment of situations to Anglo-Indians in the railways, customs, postal and telegraph services. The minorities mentioned are the only ones to receive special consideration.

Though Hindi is to be the official language of the Union there has been no sudden jettisoning of English for there is a wide appreciation of the advantages this alien tongue has brought. Maulana Azad, one of the finest Urdu orators in the country, stressed this in a speech to Patna students in December, 1947. 'The English language has been responsible for creating a bond of mental fellowship between all educated Indians from Kashmir to Cape Comorin,' he said. It was the

connecting link between the provincial governments, universities, legislative assemblies, public platforms and national organisations of the dominion and through it 'India cultivated direct intellectual relationship with Europe and America.' The replacement of English by Indian languages would have to be done gradually; a sudden change would cause confusion.

The Constituent Assembly has followed this line. Until the Constitution has been operating for 15 years English will continue to be used for the official purposes for which it was previously employed, though alongside Hindi if the President authorises this. Even after 15 years English will not necessarily go, for Parliament can then authorise its use to continue. Further, English will continue to be used, until Parliament decides otherwise, for proceedings in the Supreme and High Courts and as the authoritative text of Parliamentary and State Legislature Bills, Acts, Ordinances and similar official instructions. Any State Legislature, of course, can adopt an official Indian language for itself but until it does so English will be employed.

IX

THE ECONOMIC SITUATION

ON August 15th, 1947, India's economic situation appeared moderately good.

In Sterling Balances, which were, in effect, Britain's 'War Debt' to the undivided country, she had been credited with £1,160 million for herself and Pakistan; in Cash Balances she possessed £225,000,000; her net (uncovered) Public Debt was about £375,000,000 and though she had an adverse foreign trade balance her internal revenues were satisfactory. She possessed vast natural resources in the form of exportable coal, iron-ore, manganese, mica and other minerals. She was the world's largest producer of tea, growing upwards of 550 million pounds a year, and was one of the most important sources of vegetable oils and oil seeds. Her potential agricultural development was large and her industries were waiting to be expanded.

Her hope was the same as that of Britain—to increase her exports and to restrict her imports, especially from hard currency areas, to essentials and the capital goods needed for expansion. But from the beginning, despite her reasonable financial position, she was faced with three extremely difficult problems. The first of these was the food situation.

The 1941 Census was eight years old when it was used as the basis for division and even when it was taken it was undoubtedly inaccurate in some of its detail. In considering any Indian statistics of a vital kind, in fact, a considerable allowance should be made for errors of one sort or another and the figures should be treated as

broadly indicative and not as one hundred per cent. accurate. It is, however, fairly reliably estimated that the population of the Indian Union to-day is in the region of 350,000,000 and it is known that it is increasing by over 5,000,000 a year. Of the total number of inhabitants nine out of ten live in villages and more than seven out of ten are engaged in agriculture. Ever since the first inhabitants began to till her lands India has depended for her life-blood on the waters of great rivers and the eagerly awaited monsoon. Throughout her history she has been subjected to occasional disastrous droughts, in which millions have died, and as her population has increased the problem of food supply has correspondingly grown.

Although such a large proportion of her people work on the land India is not self-supporting in foodgrains, the staple sustenance of the population, and this drawback affects every phase of her national life. 'Agricultural wealth is the basis of our industrial activity and national prosperity,' declared Jairamdas Daulatram, then Food Minister, in September, 1948. Yet in 1947 there had to be imported into undivided India, to August 15th, and into the Indian Dominion after that date, 2,330,000 tons of foodgrains at a cost of £66,750,000 (Rupees 89 Crores). On partition, Pakistan—gaining fertile lands in East Bengal and the West Punjab—was self-sufficient in food-grain production, but India, with 77.7 per cent. of the original population of the undivided country, received only 73.1 per cent. of its area, 72.5 per cent. of its rice acreage, 70 per cent. of its wheat acreage and 70 per cent. of its irrigated lands. Her position was thus worsened, and in 1948 her foodgrain imports were 2,840,000 tons at £97,500,000 (Rupees 130 Crores) and in 1949 3,700,000 tons at £111,000,000 (Rupees 148 Crores).

In May, 1948, a Foodgrains Policy Committee

reported that the 'constant threat of scarcity, famine and helpless dependence on imports' would be removed if foodgrains production was increased by 10,000,000 tons a year. At that time four of these 10,000,000 tons were expected from large multi-purpose projects aimed to bring an additional 19,000,000 acres of land under irrigation, three were to be obtained through the existing Five-Year Food Production Plans in the provinces and it was hoped that the gap of three million tons would be bridged by reclamation and cultivation of waste land.

The intention of the Indian Government is that the country should become self-supporting in foodgrains by 1952 and it has announced that no more foodgrains will be imported after 1951. It seems, on the facts, that this cannot possibly be achieved. The high level of foodgrain imports in 1949 was due to famine conditions in Bombay, Saurashtra and Cutch, but though the Food Ministry estimated an increased production of 2,000,000 tons in 1950 imports of 1,500,000 tons were budgeted for. Crop failure since makes 1951's import need over 5,000,000 tons.

One of the constant internal difficulties in regard to the foodgrain situation has been the reluctance of many producers to market what the Government considers a fair proportion of their crops. Hoarding against the future, against possible price increases or merely from a desire personally to have enough to eat has made procurement difficult. On occasion force has had to be used.

How is the grow-more-food campaign being tackled? On division less than six per cent. of the mean annual river water supply of India was being used for agricultural or other purposes. This was partly because the size of the rivers varies with the season; some, which are torrents in winter, dry up completely in summer. According to a very comprehensive *Economic Survey* written in March,

1949, by Rowland Owen, the Senior United Kingdom Trade Commissioner in India, and from which some of the statistics in this chapter have been obtained, the problem is how to equalise water supplies throughout the year; conserving them during periods of excess for release in times of shortage. Owen points out that in undivided India over 70,000,000 acres of land were irrigated each year: an area three times larger than that irrigated in the United States and more than the combined total of any other ten countries in the world. Besides water drawn from the rivers, perennial irrigation comes from flood water stored in tanks and from immense underground water reserves.

There are now four main multi-purpose projects in hand designed both to irrigate new land and give power for industrial development and the extension of the electricity supply of which half the country's total at the moment is used up by the cities of Ahmedabad, Bombay, Calcutta and Cawnpore.

By harnessing the Sutlej river in the Punjab, the *Bhakra Nangal Project* will irrigate 3,581,000 acres and generate 400,000 Kw. Its target date is 1955-56. The *Mahanadi Project*, in Orissa, will irrigate 1,095,000 acres and generate 321,000 Kw. Its target date is 1955-56. The *Damodar Valley Corporation* scheme will bring 900,000 acres in Bihar under irrigation and generate 350,000 Kw. Its target date is 1954-55. The *Tungabhadra Project*, for Madras-Hyderabad, will irrigate 66,000 acres and produce 20,800 Kw. Its target date is 1953.

The total cost of these schemes is estimated at £192,750,000 (Rupees 257 Crores). In addition, other projects to cost £106,500,000 (Rupees 142 Crores) are under construction, while 53 projects which are either waiting to be started or being planned will cost

£398,250,000 (Rupees 531 Crores). For the four big plants already being constructed the Commerce Ministry says that the 'probable date of completion of the projects is subject to adequate funds being made available.' Even without this proviso it would seem, on any analysis, that the target dates for the three largest schemes are extremely optimistic, considering the usual rate of delivery for generating equipment and the time taken in erection. The colossal total figure of £697,500,000 (Rupees 930 Crores), so near and impressive on paper, recedes into the far distance when considered in relation to India's general economic situation.

Cultivable waste lands in India cover about 77,000,000 acres but it is not possible to say how much of this land can be reclaimed although a seven-year campaign has been launched to clear 6,000,000 acres. Other ways in which the Government is trying to step up foodgrain production are by encouraging and financing the use of organic manures and fertilisers, which are in very short supply, distributing improved seeds, sinking tube wells and educating the peasants in the use of more modern methods and equipment. This last, by the way, is no easy task.

The development of all these ideas means heavy expenditure on imports of plant, and machinery like tractors, but the vicious circles revolves in such a way that the more foodgrains India buys from abroad the less money she has to spend on capital goods.

The second problem which faced India from the outset of her existence was that of jute. Until partition jute goods were the most important export from the sub-continent, which was the world's greatest jute producer, and most of the trade was with America. On partition, however, 75 per cent. of the jute-producing lands went

to Pakistan while the 113 jute mills remained in India. This meant that the Indian jute industry became mainly dependent for its raw supplies on Pakistan which naturally wished to build up its own markets, erect its own mills and export direct through Chittagong, the port being developed in East Bengal. India, though still Pakistan's best customer, began to bring more land under jute cultivation. In May, 1948, an agreement was reached between the two countries to run to June, 1949, by which Pakistan would send 5,000,000 bales of raw jute to India, who in turn agreed to supply Pakistan with 50,000 tons of jute goods and to restrict her own jute exports to 900,000 bales.

This arrangement was necessary unless the jute industries of both countries were to languish; that of Pakistan through being unable to export her full production, that of India through having too small an amount of raw supplies to keep her mills running. All the same, the erratic jute export licence policy of the Indian Government—several different systems were used between mid-1947 and mid-1949—the uncertainty about how much jute would actually be available for export and the increasing world search for jute substitutes all caused great uneasiness in the jute industry.

The third major problem for the new India was that of her other great export—cotton. Undivided India was the second largest producer of cotton in the world and in 1946-47 3,566,000 bales of short or medium staple were grown. Partition made India dependent on Pakistan, now the producer of 1,500,000 bales annually, for big supplies. It was eventually agreed that Pakistan should supply 650,000 bales of raw cotton to India from September, 1948, to August, 1949, and at the same time India began to increase the lands under cotton cultivation. In fact,

actual imports from Pakistan during the 1948-49 season amounted to only 300,000 bales. For the 1949-50 season the agreement was for 450,000 bales but this, as we shall see, was affected by devaluation and the Bengal riots.

In addition to imports from Pakistan, India also takes substantial cotton supplies from Egypt, Kenya and the United States. Her cotton need is of paramount importance for cotton textile manufacture is the largest industry in the country, employing about 450,000 people. There is also a large hand-loom industry and home-spinning, long advocated by Gandhi who favoured the development of cottage industries, is a feature of Indian life. Yarn production in India in 1948 was 1,445 million pounds and in 1949, 1,356 million pounds. Corresponding figures for mill cloth were 4,338 million yards and 3,918 million yards. This decrease, caused partly by procurement difficulties, is not encouraging though a textile expansion scheme foresees a production increase of 25 per cent. over the next few years. In 1948-49, India's cloth exports totalled 340 million yards of which about two-thirds went to Pakistan. The Government ceiling for exports in 1949-50 has been fixed at 800 million yards, but it is unlikely that this will be reached.

Though 1947 was a bad year from the general industrial point of view, largely through partition troubles, 1948 was not much better while 1949 showed an overall decrease on the previous year of about five per cent. In regard to steel, an industry vital for the country's development, this fall-off, however, did not apply. In 1948 steel production was 850,000 tons and in 1949, 900,000 tons against an installed capacity of 1,240,000 tons and a normal future estimated annual consumption of 2,000,000 tons. Iron ore reserves in the country are put at 4,165 million tons and the Government intends to erect new

steel plant capable of producing 1,000,000 tons annually and to encourage the expansion of existing plant. Cement production also increased during 1949, reaching about 2,000,000 tons against approximately 1,500,000 tons in 1948. The Government aims at an annual production of 3,300,000 tons.

Coal output in India is at the rate of 30,000,000 tons a year and a proportion of this is normally sent to Pakistan. It is not likely that this ceiling can be raised much until the railway transport situation improves. Transport trouble, indeed, affects the efficiency of all the industries in the country and has handicapped the uniform distribution of foodgrains. At partition India got 34,000 miles of the 40,000 miles of railroad in the sub-continent. The railways suffered badly from overwork during the war and have not yet recovered. The turn-round of wagoons has been slow and there is a shortage of rolling stock. Some measure of the problem can be gauged from the fact that India has ordered 863 new engines, which should all be delivered by 1951.

The import-export situation in early 1949 was summarised by Rowland Owen as follows: 'India's dependence on exports has never been as great as at the present time when the country cannot provide sufficient foodgrains for the people without importing on a large scale.'

'India also depends on imports for steel and non-ferrous metals, for capital goods to increase production, for a proportion of the stores required for the railway transport system and for a large variety of consumer goods to satisfy miscellaneous needs and fight inflation. The contribution which India's Sterling Balances can make can finance only a fraction of her total imports. India's balance of payments with the soft currency areas is not unsatisfactory, but her balance of trade position with

hard currency areas is far from satisfactory. Accordingly, the stimulation of exports to hard currency areas is the first object of India's policy. The second object is that of preserving markets overseas; and the third that of reciprocation.'

'As regards the first object, India's position has recently deteriorated; dollar exports have declined following the fall in the value of exports of raw jute, cotton, hides and skins consequent on the loss of producing areas now incorporated in Pakistan and on the failure to maintain competitive standards of price and quality in such items as oilseeds and tea.'

In 1948 and 1949 the balance of payments position was causing the Government considerable concern. Much of the trouble was created, of course, by the heavy food imports but some was the result of variations made from time to time in the general import policy against a background of inflation.

The main imports on which India is really dependent apart from those already mentioned are petroleum, metals, vehicles, chemicals, and dyes. But in 1946 and early 1947 a large number of luxury and semi-luxury goods, like fountain pens, wrist watches, cameras, playing cards, etc., were imported under a system of Open General Licences issued by the Import Trade Control. The result was a heavy drain on foreign exchange resources. Later in 1947 it was decided that such generous imports could no longer be allowed. As K. C. Neogy, the Commerce Minister, said afterwards, 'the country found that it would soon have to limit imports to what it could pay for from current earnings, plus the transfers from Sterling Balances as fixed by mutual agreement.'

To elaborate this further: in the half year ended December, 1947, India's foreign exchange was still

multilaterally convertible and licences were freely issued for imports from dollar and hard and soft currency areas. This had the effect of starting a drain on dollars and from January, 1948, there was more stringent control against the dollar and hard currency areas.

The country cut down on luxuries in favour of plant and machinery and these restrictions actually gave her a surplus balance with the soft currency areas by June, 1948.

'Meantime,' to quote Neogy again, 'the prices of various articles were also mounting up . . . the inflationary conditions in the country required a larger supply of goods to be made available so as to reduce scarcity.'

This internal price rise was not by any means entirely due to the more rigid import control which had been imposed. In December, 1947, under constant pressure from the big industrialists, the Government ordered internal decontrol of two essential commodities: food-grains and sugar, and from mid-January, 1948, it began a gradual relaxation of the controls on the price and distribution of cloth. The cumulatory inflationary effect of all these measures is demonstrated to some extent by the Economic Adviser's Wholesale Price Index during the first seven months of 1948. Against a base of 100 in 1939 the figures were:

January, 1948	329.2
February, ,,	342.3
March, ,,	340.7
April, ,,	347.9
May, ,,	367.2
June, ,,	382.2
July, ,,	389.6

a jump of 60.4 points in seven months! In comparison the average monthly figure for 1947 was 297.4.

Three factors should be considered in relation to these figures: firstly, that they are wholesale, and not retail; secondly, that until controls were removed the Economic Statistics Department naturally used the controlled prices where applicable for the calculation of their data; thirdly, that in India the cost of living varies to a far greater extent for different groups than it does in England. Thus it has clearly risen much more for the urban population and middle classes, dependent as they are on many imported goods, than for the agricultural population.

After July, 1948, when the millers and middlemen had made substantial profits, this sudden burst of inflation was stabilised by recontrol of cloth and foodgrains and liberalisation of import policy with the intention of increasing supplies of consumer goods. The result on the cost of living is indicated by the steadier Wholesale Price Index for the next four months of the year :

August, 1948	.	.	383·1
September, „	.	.	382·3
October, „	.	.	381·7
November, „	.	.	382·2

The question of India's liberal import policy has to be viewed in relation to the whole Sterling Balance position. When the balances were fixed at £1,160 million just before partition they were placed in what was called the Reserve Bank of India No. 2 Account with the Bank of England. From this No. 2 Account £65,000,000 was at once transferred to a No. 1 Account for the immediate use of India and Pakistan. After January, 1948, the United Kingdom ceased to finance India's dollar deficit from the central reserves of the Sterling Area and it was agreed, as we have seen, that the convertibility of India's sterling should be limited. The limits fixed were £10,000,000

(\$40 millions) for the half year January-June, 1948, and £15,000,000 (\$60 millions) for the year July 1948 to June, 1949.

In July, 1948, a further agreement in regard to Sterling Balances was made. The money India had earned in that half year had raised her holdings in her No. 1 Account to £81,000,000 and since it was thought this would be enough for her current needs no provision was made for any transfer from the No. 2 Account to the No. 1 Account for the period July 1st, 1948, to June 30th, 1949. From July 1st, 1949, to June 30th, 1950, £40,000,000 was to be transferred as necessary from No. 2 Account to No. 1 Account and the same arrangement was made for the period July 1st, 1950, to June 30th, 1951. For military installations handed over at partition India agreed to pay Britain £100,000,000. She also bought annuities from Britain for £168,000,000 to cover pensions to retired civil servants and officers who had served under the British Raj. The net effect was that when these payments, and Pakistan's part of the total, were deducted, India's share of the Sterling Balances at mid-August, 1948, was about £800,000,000.

Because of relaxed import control after July, 1948, these balances rapidly decreased and the £81,000,000 which had stood to India's credit in the No. 1 Account was soon exhausted. Thereupon yet another agreement was reached between India and Britain in August, 1949, by which the dominion was allowed to use £50,000,000 a year from the Sterling Balances during the two years ending June 30th, 1950, and June 30th, 1951, plus a further £50,000,000 needed to cover outstanding merchants' contracts.

The Times (of London) of August 5th, 1949, criticised the arrangements:

'Owing to the freedom with which India admitted imports during 1948 she drew no less than £81,000,000. This £81,000,000 was then supposed to be in anticipation of the releases already agreed for 1949-50 and 1950-51. But this has proved entirely theoretical and in the event it is now necessary to write off this £81,000,000. So far from it being treated as an advance drawing on the agreed releases for 1949-50 and 1950-51; the releases for these two years are to be increased to £50,000,000 a year compared with the £40,000,000 originally agreed. Even this is not the end of the story. The results of India's liberal import policy in spite of its partial amendment early this year, continue. In order to provide for liquidation of outstanding commitments an additional release of £50,000,000 will be permitted this year subject to the proviso that for the remaining two years of the original agreement India's deficit should be no larger than is consistent with an annual release of £50,000,000.'

'Like so many current plans this agreement draws heavily on the future. Heavy drawing will continue for the time being, but in theory this will entail much lower earnings next year. The trouble is that when next year arrives reasons will have been found—or this is the usual order of events—for amending the agreement again. What is immediately important is that during the first two years of the original agreement India may well have spent nearly £250,000,000 from her Sterling Balances.'

The paper added that though the 1948 agreement arranged that India's purchase of dollars from the Sterling Pool would be limited to £15,000,000 a year her dollar drawings actually amounted to about £31,000,000 in 1948-49.

Though India had banked down her liberal import policy in May, 1949, when she was again becoming alarmed at the drain on her foreign resources, she made still further import restrictions after the August, 1949,

Agreement. To conserve the dollar resources of the Sterling Area she suspended dollar import licensing for two and a half months from June, 1949, and like other Sterling regions she agreed to limit her dollar imports for the year ending June, 1950, to 75 per cent. of those for 1948. The immediate effect of devaluation (apart from the question of trade with Pakistan, which did not devalue) was a stimulation of the export trade, a search round for more possible restrictions on dollar imports, a corresponding improvement in the balance of payments position, and a determination to economise on revenue and capital expenditure and to bring down retail prices of some commodities.

In its review for the year 1948-49 the Reserve Bank of India put the 1948 adverse balance of payments at £92,250,000 (Rupees 123 Crores) and at the 1950 Annual Session of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce the President, Mr. K. D. Jalan, described the position which had developed:

‘As far as the balance of payments position on trade account is concerned, the position was really precarious during the greater part of 1949, although latterly the outlook has become hopeful and the tide seems to have turned in India’s favour after October last. India’s total adverse balance of trade in 1948-49 reached a record figure of 214·9 Crores of Rupees (£161,175,000). The position during the six months from April to September, 1949, was even worse as we had an adverse balance of trade of the order of 146·5 Crores of Rupees (£109,875,000) and if the figure of the land route trade with Pakistan is taken into account the adverse balance would be in the order of 152·2 Crores of Rupees (£114,150,000) which works out at an annual rate of 304 Crores of Rupees (£228,000,000).’

Industrial improvement immediately after devaluation

was negligible, but during October and November, 1949, there was a measurable rise in the Wholesale Price Index:

August, 1949	.	.	389.6
September, „	.	.	389.8
October, „	.	.	393.3
November, „	.	.	390.0
December, „	.	.	381.6

while between January and February, 1950, the index jumped from 384.7 to 392.3.

Against this rather complicated statistical background on the foreign expenditure position—and its betterment is absolutely vital for recovery in India—there are two additional factors of the country's financial situation which merit consideration.

The first is the huge expenditure on defence due to the quarrel with Pakistan over Kashmir.

For 1948-49, out of a total estimated budget expenditure of £192,975,000 (Rupees 257.3 Crores) Defence accounted for £90,750,000 (Rupees 121 Crores) which turned out on actuals to be an underestimate of about £25,500,000. For 1949-50 out of a total estimated expenditure of £241,875,000 (Rupees 322.5 Crores) Defence accounted for £117,750,000 (Rupees 157 Crores): another underestimate of approximately £9,750,000. For 1950-51 out of an estimated expenditure of £253,350,000 (Rupees 337.8 Crores) the Defence figure was £126,000,000 (Rupees 168 Crores). Pakistan has more than kept pace with this uneconomic and retrograde expenditure.

Such heavy armed forces costs have a crippling effect on India's internal economy and allow for little of the reformative and progressive expenditure on health, education and so on which is so much needed in the country. This extravagant Defence financing has been aggravated

by the subsidies which India has had to pay to keep the civil administration running in that part of Kashmir which she controls. In addition, she has had to spend over £52,500,000 (Rupees 70 Crores) on refugee relief and may have to spend up to £75,000,000 (Rupees 100 Crores) more. At the end of 1949 her uncovered debt was running in the region of £600,000,000 (Rupees 800 Crores), she had borrowed \$166 millions from World Bank establishments and her cash balances had declined to about £113,250,000 (Rupees 151 Crores).

The other factor affecting internal economy is that of 'Shy' capital. At the beginning of 1948 the Economic Programme Committee of Congress, with Nehru as chairman, recommended extensive nationalisation measures. It proposed that all undertakings in public utilities, defence and key industries should come under public ownership and that existing undertakings of the kind should start to be transferred to public ownership after five years. It also suggested that in industry generally a system of profit sharing should be started between workers and shareholders.

Industrial reaction was obviously strongly opposed to these ideas but on April 6th, 1948, the Government issued its own Industrial Policy Resolution which listed as exclusive Government monopolies:

1. Manufacture of arms and ammunition.
2. Production and control of atomic energy.
3. Ownership and management of the railways.
4. In any emergency any industry vital for national defence.

The state also intended to be 'exclusively responsible' for new undertakings, except where national interest

made it necessary to obtain the co-operation of private enterprise, in the following industries:

1. Coal.
2. Iron and Steel.
3. Aircraft manufacture.
4. Shipbuilding.
5. Manufacture of telephone, telegraph and wireless apparatus, excluding radio receiving sets.
6. Mineral oils.

Existing undertakings in these industries were to be allowed to develop for ten years when the position was to be revised. Compensation rights were guaranteed.

Apart from the generation and distribution of electricity (controlled by a separate regulating measure) the rest of industry was normally to be left to private enterprise 'subject to satisfactory progress being made'. Certain 'basic industries of importance' were to be planned and regulated by the Government 'on the grounds that they require considerable investment or Central control of location'. They were:

Salt, automobiles, prime movers, electric engineering, other heavy machinery, machine tools, heavy chemical fertilisers, pharmaceuticals and drugs, electro-chemical industries, non-ferrous metals, rubber manufactures, power and industrial alcohol, cotton and woollen textiles, cement, sugar, paper and newsprint, air and sea transport, minerals, and industries related to defence.

The multi-purpose projects were 'reserved to the Government'.

As in many of the plans and policies which India has outlined in the last three years it was again a case of her attempting to run before she could walk. Such a large-scale Governmental control of industry, far ahead in

intention of the British Labour Party's nationalisation plans, will plainly be impracticable for many years, though a National Planning Commission for industry is already being started.

The effect of both nationalisation statements was thoroughly to alarm the industrialists who saw confiscation looming ahead. It not only made them unwilling to expand their existing plant but it was part cause of a decline on the Stock Exchange in the value of both Government and private securities and a disincentive to investment.

Reassuring Government statements have not fully satisfied the uneasy industrialists about their fate.

X

THE PEOPLE AND THE PARTIES

THE cold statistical details of India's economic situation give no real impression of the actual conditions of her people. To find out how the millions who dwell in such profusion within her borders live one has to go far beyond the figures of her balance of trade or industrial output and possibilities.

It has been calculated that the expectation of life of an Indian is 27 years. This low figure is due to a variety of causes. Every year about 100,000,000 people in the sub-continent suffer from malaria and 2,000,000 die from it. Every year, too, 500,000 die from tuberculosis while another 2,500,000 become active tuberculosis cases. Smallpox is endemic in the country, so is plague and the cholera level rises and falls against a grim background of squalid and primitive conditions. Something like 250,000 infective lepers exist in a strange, wandering way until death releases them.

These are pre-partition figures, but divide them roughly in proportion to the populations of India and Pakistan and you get an estimate of the task which faces the Indian Health Ministry with under 50,000 registered doctors on its lists.

Apart from unhygienic habits or overcrowded living one reason for the appalling health situation is the low standard of nourishment of Indians generally. In 30 per cent. of Indian families the food eaten is insufficient to give the energy needed and diets are almost invariably ill-balanced.

Facts like these, revealed in the 1946 Bhore Report on

the health of the nation, have not altered fundamentally since its publication and the lines of reform suggested in it are being followed to some extent by the Indian authorities to-day. To ensure a primary health centre and a 30-bed hospital for every 40,000 people and a 200-bed hospital in each district the report thought that 15,000 new doctors would be required over five years. Nothing approaching that figure can be reached in present conditions.

In a review of the story of India from 1900 to 1950 the *Eastern Economist*, an influential statistical paper published in Delhi, dealt with the cost and standard of living of the people. It reached the broad conclusion 'that the standard of life of the Indian people to-day is in most sectors lower than it was ten years ago. In 1948-49 it lost further ground; but in 1949-50 on account of good rains it looks more promising. But there are no large dynamic elements at work such as a significant rate of new investment; the process of decline has probably been arrested, but it is too early to speak of advance.'

Basing its argument on carefully-compiled statistics the paper thought that though the question was open there was *prima facie* evidence that the greater portion of labour was not better off than ten years ago. It found that though a small sector of the middle class was better off than in 1939, 'the standard of life of the larger section of our agricultural community has not improved,' while 'the middle classes in secondary and tertiary occupations have certainly lost ground.'

The *Eastern Economist* also published a calculation which put the average wages of organised labour during 1948 at Rupees 738·3 a year (about £55 7s.) and it estimated the *per capita* annual income of the total population in the Indian provinces during 1948-49 as Rupees 186 (about £14) compared with Rupees 67 (about £5) in 1939-40;

a rise of slightly under three times. 'Since the cost of living as represented in terms of any reasonable cost of living index has risen over three times in the interval it would appear that the standard of life as a whole has declined,' the paper added.

While living standards in India have marked time or declined literacy has grown and is certainly considerably higher now than the twelve out of 100 who could read in 1941. An impression of the thirst for knowledge which exists is given by the fantastic number of papers published in the Union: about 23,000 dailies, weeklies and monthlies of one kind or another according to a very reliable estimate. Perhaps 4,000 of these are in the English language and most have infinitesimal circulations compared with papers in Britain. With such profusion it is not unnatural that the standards of journalism, except in the better-known papers, are not always high.

In January, 1948, Maulana Azad thought that at least 900,000 teachers would be needed to give basic education to the 30,000,000 children in India aged between six and eleven and that was without taking the princely states into account. For teaching every child up to 14 it is thought that 2,000,000 teachers would be required for the whole country.

Yet, throwing aside the Sir John Sargent scheme for basic education for the whole population in 40 years as inadequate, the Indian Government has announced the colossal project of complete compulsory basic education for the whole country within 16 years and has decided that in five years from January 1st, 1949, 50 per cent. of the people shall be made literate through provincial social service schemes. If these advances can be achieved, and with a chronic teacher shortage it is doubtful that

they can, the result will be an advance far exceeding that wrought by Kemal Ataturk in Turkey,

Just as communal differences had caused and encouraged the spread of Mahasabha and R.S.S. doctrines so the backwardness of the people, their low standards of living and the upheavals of partition provided a situation of which the Indian Communist Party was quick to take advantage.

The organisation came into existence after the 1914-18 War and from the early 'twenties began to get a grip on a section of the country's trade unions, eventually capturing control of the big All-India Trades Union Congress, originally established in 1920. Until 1942, when Russia had entered the war, the Communist Party was 'unlawful' but when the war ended the ban was not reimposed and with more freedom of movement the party members were able to step up their activities. It was they who started the protest strikes during the 1946 Royal Indian Naval Mutiny; it was they who organised the sporadic and well-justified peasant agitation against the extortionate landlords in Bengal, Madras and other areas soon after the war and it was they who led the 1946-47 strikes on the railways and in the textile industry which was virtually paralysed.

The party is virile, largely youthful and well-disciplined. In the *Peoples' Age*, now banned, it had a vivid and pungent weekly, perhaps the best-produced in India. It had a good propaganda machine and devoted field workers to incite the agricultural population. By early 1947, its hold in the A-I.T.U.C., which was estimated then to have about 700,000 members and to represent 50 per cent. of the trade unions in the country, had so increased that that organisation was said to be 75 per cent. Communist-dominated.

The year 1947 was noteworthy for the large number of industrial disputes which took place in India, undivided and divided. Altogether 1,811 were recorded involving 1,840,784 workers and a loss of 16,562,666 man-days. Many of the strikes were Communist-inspired for Government raids on the party's offices in January had not deterred its members.

Communist and Socialist control of most of the trade unions led the Congress to start a trade union organisation of its own in an effort to capture the bulk of organised labour. Called the Indian National Trade Union Congress this was inaugurated in May, 1947, by Acharya J. B. Kripalani, the Congress President, but the dominant influence was Patel's. At the meeting at which the decision was taken, Nehru, Jagjivan Ram, the Scheduled Caste Labour Minister, and the Premiers of Bombay and the Central Provinces, heard the Home Minister say that there were pockets of Communists in every Government organisation, that strikes were being organised and labour advised to go slow and that the Congress must aim at building a strong, healthy Labour movement. Another effort to weaken Communist activities was the adoption of a three year 'Industrial Truce' by a conference representing some sections of employers and labour in December the same year.

The removal of controls in the autumn, strangely enough a policy strongly favoured by Mr. Gandhi, was manna to the Communists. They profited from a situation in which 8,500 relief grain shops had to be opened in Madras and over 2,000 in Bombay through profiteering, shortages and transport difficulties; and the country-wide prices of food, sugar and cloth rocketed.

In February, 1948, an important and plainly pro-Communist Asian Youth Conference was held in Calcutta.

This was followed in March by the Second Congress of the Communist Party in India, also in Calcutta, where a re-orientation of policy was announced. As a preliminary, P. C. Joshi, the general secretary, was purged from office, accused of allowing the organisation to develop a tendency to line up behind Gandhi and Nehru instead of exposing their policy. B. T. Ranadive, who took Joshi's place, declared: 'For a time there was a serious situation inside our party. Reformism had invaded our ranks.' The congress called for a democratic front of the forces of the Left and accused the Government of dragging India into an anti-Soviet bloc 'in a scheme of defence of American and British empires in the East'. When it ended it was clear that the party, then believed to be about 90,000 strong, had aligned itself to fight tooth and nail against the Government and if necessary would go underground to do so. By shifting the centre of its activities from Bombay to Calcutta it strengthened its contacts with nearby Asian countries. A full combined South Asian plan of campaign is believed to have been drawn up during these big Calcutta meetings and the Youth Conference undoubtedly had some influence on the outbreak in Malaya.

But the West Bengal Government struck first. On March 26th, it outlawed the Communist Party throughout the province and began to arrest its leaders for a stay-in hunger strike, ostensibly directed against civil service retrenchment measures, had been called for April 2nd. On March 30th, the Central Government also acted. By radio Nehru warned Calcutta Government employees that they would be dismissed if they joined the strike which he said was 'part of a larger movement, essentially political and violent'. He also told the crowded Indian Legislature about the grave international situation then

existing and added: 'It would almost appear that the organised efforts that are being made to shatter the country's economy are meant to be related to these larger issues.' During that day and the following ones police raided Communist Party offices throughout the country and arrested party members and Communist union officials. However, the West Bengal Government's earlier action had warned the party and most of its leaders escaped into hiding. For the moment the Communists were curbed, but they continued to create trouble in the Nalgonda and Warangal districts of Hyderabad, where the Nizam's authority had practically disappeared, and where they were able to chase out the local jagirdars (squires) and divide the lands among the peasants.

While the Communists reorganised themselves the R.S.S suddenly emerged from the background into which it had been pushed after the Mahatma's death. The impact of the assassination on the public mind had waned and by December, with the Kashmir question still unsolved and communal thoughts again rising, the R.S.S. planned a 'non-violent' campaign against the ban which had been put upon it the previous February. As thousands of volunteers invited arrest all over India the police searched Sangh offices and detained members.

By December 15th, roughly 10,000 R.S.S. men were under arrest and so were over 1,000 Communists, other than trade unionists. In an Information Ministry letter to the writer these figures were related to the number of people arrested for Congress activities in 1942 which was given as 69,229 with nearly 18,000 others detained without trial. Other sources suggest that the final total of R.S.S. men under detention was about 40,000 and in November, 1949, between 3,000 and 4,000 Communists, some of whom were trade unionists, were being held.

In early 1949 the Communist Party was again ready for action and on February 20th, India was startled by the discovery of a nation-wide plot to wreck railways and bridges during a strike planned for March 9th by some railway and postal workers but not—after talks between Nehru and Jai Prakash Narain—by the Socialist elements in the powerful All-India Railwaymen's Federation. Secret circulars were discovered detailing Communist intentions to use explosives against important installations like power houses. Over 500 Communists were at once arrested in centres as far apart as Calcutta, Benares, Lucknow, Ahmedabad, Bombay and Madras and on February 25th a formidable anti-strike bill, not in the end proceeded with, was put to the Indian Parliament. This would have enabled the Government to prohibit strikes on the railways, in the police department, in power, light and water services, among dockers and in central ordnance stores and factories. An accompanying statement said the Government had gone to the utmost limits 'in a very difficult inflationary situation' to meet genuine labour demands and added that there were 'certain subversive elements which seemed determined to foment strikes in essential services with the object of disrupting the country's economy and causing confusion and chaos'.

One day later terrorists simultaneously raided the Calcutta Gun and Shell Factory, Jessop and Company's Engineering Works at Dum-Dum near the city, the Dum-Dum Airport and a West Bengal police outpost. They used bombs, revolvers and sten guns. At Jessop's three Europeans were thrown into a furnace. The Government attributed the attacks to the Revolutionary Communist Party of India, a group largely composed of students, but distinct from the Indian Communist Party.

On February 28th Nehru made a grave statement to the Indian Legislature on the whole situation. He said: 'The Communist Party of India has, during the past year, adopted an attitude not only of open hostility to the Government but one which can be described as bordering on open revolt. This policy has been given effect to intensively in certain limited areas of India and has resulted in violence, indulging in murders, arson, and looting as well as acts of sabotage. The House is well aware of the Communist revolts that have taken place in countries bordering on India. It was presumably in furtherance of the same policy that attempts were made in India to incite the people to active revolt'.

' . . . The Communist Party of India has recently concentrated on the issue of a general strike on the railways as well as in other essential services of paramount importance to the community. It has looked upon these strikes not from the trade union or economic point of view, meant to better the lot of the workers, but as a weapon designed to create a chaotic state in the country.' The Communists, went on the Premier, were trying to cause a breakdown of the administration and mass uprising.

Under the energetic action of the Government the March 9th strike collapsed and the general success of the Government's anti-strike policy is illustrated by the dispute figures for 1948 and 1949:

	<i>Number of disputes :</i>	<i>Number of workers :</i>	<i>Number of man- days lost :</i>
1948 .	1,259	1,059,120	7,837,173
1949 .	914*	684,188	6,580,887

and by the comparative strengths of trade union confederations as given by Jagjivan Ram in June, 1949:

* Of which, significantly, nearly half were lock-outs.

Indian National Trade Union Congress (Congress) . . .	853 unions and 1,199,629 members
Hind Mazdoor Sabha (Socialist) .	413 unions and 646,921 members
All-India Trade Union Congress (Communist) . . .	744 unions and 527,662 members

'These figures have not been verified by the Government of India,' the Labour Minister warned. Another source suggests that a fourth confederation, the United Trade Union Congress, which is vaguely Socialistic but with no party affiliation, may have up to 350,000 members. Allowing for optimistic union methods of counting all these figures may well be exaggerated, perhaps by as much as a third in some cases.

An Indian Home Ministry booklet issued in September, 1949, said the Communists had formed 'Shock Brigades' which according to seized papers were given a course in silent killing, night attacks and the use of weapons. Captured leaflets were quoted, mostly referring to the troubles which consistently occurred in Bengal, a notorious home of terrorism, during the year and culminated in a bomb-throwing outrage in the autumn at a great meeting attended by Nehru in Calcutta.

Listing a large number of incidents in different parts of the country the Ministry also gave figures which demonstrate the difficulties in restoring order in Hyderabad:

'Since the entry of the Indian troops into Hyderabad and up to July 31st, 1949, the Communists have murdered in cold blood 400 persons.'

Against this, the number of Communist casualties must also have been considerable.

Another impression of the menacing Communist situation is given by the Act passed through all its readings at a five-hour sitting of the Indian Parliament on February 26th, 1950, and made valid for one year. This gave the Government wide powers of arrest and detention without trial and Patel called it emergency legislation to combat subversive activities. It was framed to prevent action prejudicial to the defence of India, to India's relations with Foreign powers, to the security of India or a part of it, or to the maintenance of public order. Brought before Parliament too, in 1950, were the Labour Relations Bill and the Trade Unions Bill. The former, a comprehensive measure to supersede previous legislation at the Centre and in the States, allows for the prohibition of lightning strikes while the latter aims at 'strengthening and developing the genuine trade union movement'. Both measures are obviously partly directed against the Communist unions, and, one assumes, could also be used against those of a Socialist complexion. At its inception the I.N.T.U.C. certainly had the appearance of a stooge body controlled from above through the Congress machine, and the lot of an honest trade union official in India to-day must be as hard as that of those in Malaya where pressure or agitation for better conditions so quickly raises the cry of 'Communist'.

In the spate of detentions which the Indian authorities have made over the last three years—and at first they used the ready-to-hand machinery left them by the British Raj—the position of the judges is extremely interesting. They have not hesitated to restrain the too heavy hand of the executive and have maintained a sturdy and satisfying independence which augurs well for the future of the judiciary. The position was explained by

Sir Harilal Kania, the Chief Justice, inaugurating the Assam High Court on April 5th, 1948:

'The function of the Legislature ends with making the law. It cannot determine whether the act of the executive in question is within or without the law. It is the function of the judiciary to determine that. It is for this reason that the judicial system is considered very important, because on its decision rests the security and liberty of the citizens.'

The Chief Justice stressed the need for a keen Parliamentary opposition able by its criticism 'to check and keep in control the impulsive activities of the executive or administrative officers'. He went on: 'In view of the fact that the opposition (in the Legislature) at present is negligible the position of the judiciary becomes all the more important. In the Legislative Assembly a Bill can be passed and made into an Act without much difficulty. Indeed, the records show that in certain provincial legislatures more than half a dozen Bills were approved in the course of an hour or less in the Upper House. Having regard to this position of the Legislature, if the Executive Government, which is now responsible to the Legislature, does acts which encroach upon the liberty of the subject, the only forum which can give redress against the irregular action of the executive is the court.'

The judges were well alive to their responsibilities. In one case of Habeas Corpus proceedings on behalf of 195 West Bengal detenus before the Calcutta High Court in February, 1950, the Advocate-General told Presiding Justice Sen that the old detention orders, under which the men were originally held and on which their plea for release had been framed, had been cancelled and new orders under a new Central Act served on them. He claimed, therefore, that the court should not deliver

judgment. The judge disagreed and said the court would pronounce on the original detention orders. He held that the Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Act and the West Bengal Security Ordinance under which the detentions had first been made had become void from midnight on January 25th, when the new Constitution came into force and that since these laws were dead an 'Adaption of Laws Order, 1950' issued by the President of the Republic did not apply.

'It may be,' said Justice Sen, 'that in spite of all our efforts the petitioners will be arrested and brought back to custody. That is a matter with which we are not concerned. Our duty is that of right action.'

The Communist outbreaks of 1949 were paralleled by the resurgence of the Mahasabha and R.S.S. First to emerge was the Mahasabha. In May, 1949, Asutosh Lahiri, the general secretary, said that changed conditions had led the Mahasabha Working Committee to reverse its earlier decision to suspend political activities. Then, on July 12th, the Government lifted the ban on the R.S.S. Behind the scenes discussions, in which Patel figured, had produced an agreement under which the R.S.S. promised loyalty to the Constitution, respect for the National Flag and to do away with secrecy and violence. Critics can be pardoned for showing some astonishment at the way the snake shed its skin.

In fact, the R.S.S. and Mahasabha were soon fostering communalism as briskly as before. After the influence of Gandhi had stopped the Punjab partition riots and mass migration from being repeated in Bengal there was little communal trouble in that area until the beginning of 1950 although a fair number of people had crossed the East-West Bengal border in both directions. But in the previous three months there was a serious extension of the

Indo-Pakistan dispute. To the quarrels over Kashmir, over the Punjab canal waters, and over the important question of compensation for the property which immigrants to each country had left behind in the other, were added the forbidding results of devaluation in September, 1949.

When Pakistan, deciding that her balance of payments situation was satisfactory, did not devalue India refused to quote a new rate for the Pakistan Rupee. Pakistan then declared that India had not consulted her before devaluing and demanded exchange facilities on the new exchange basis which against sterling values left the Indian Rupee at 1s. 6d. and raised that of Pakistan to 2s. 2d.

Trade between the two countries ended. India cut off vital supplies of coal, steel and cloth and Pakistan held up the flow of raw jute. At the end of 1949 K. C. Neogy, the Indian Commerce Minister, announced that the suspension of coal supplies to Pakistan was a measure of retaliation for the Pakistani detention of 500,000 bales of raw jute already paid for by India. On January 20th, 1950, Pakistan interrupted the Indian train service across East Bengal to Assam.

It was in these circumstances that the February-March riots began in both East and West Bengal. They developed, too, through rumours circulated in West Bengal about the conditions of the 11,000,000 Hindus left in the Eastern part of the province at partition. As in the Punjab the virus spread like wildfire. Many incidents, real, exaggerated or imaginary, were reported from either side and a vast two-way traffic of refugees set in. It is estimated that up to mid-April, 1950, about 1,000,000 Hindus had left East Bengal while 1,000,000 of West Bengal's 5,000,000 Muslims had fled into Pakistan. Again talk of war

between the two countries went on on every side. *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, an important Calcutta newspaper, even held a plebiscite of its readers in which it claimed that 82.7 per cent. of the replies favoured army action. The Prime Ministers of both countries visited their affected provinces to try to improve the situation and eventually met in Delhi in the first week of April for talks lasting seven days. These ended in a declaration that both countries had accepted the principle that they should be secular states with full rights for all citizens, freedom of worship and public, political and civil equality. 'I hope that all talk of Pakistan being a theocratic state will now cease,' said Liaquat Ali Khan.

The main heads of the agreement were that the refugees were free to return to their old homes within a year and regain their immovable property, that a minister from each Government would remain in the affected areas until confidence had been restored, that a minister representing the minority community would be appointed to the state governments of West Bengal, East Bengal and Assam and that a Minority Commission would be set up to assist in implementing the agreement. Special agencies were to be started to seek the restoration of abducted women and it was decided that forced religious conversions would not be recognised.

After the Delhi meeting there were signs of an improvement and a fortnight later a limited arrangement was made for the resumption of trade by which Pakistan agreed to send 800,000 bales of raw jute to India up to July, 1951, while India promised to send Pakistan-manufactured jute, steel and cloth.

This settlement must be considered in relation to the extremes of feeling in each country. In India these can be estimated more accurately than from newspapers by the

fact that two ministers, K. C. Neogy and Shyama Prasad Mookerjee, resigned when the agreement was reached. On April 27th, 1950, the *Manchester Guardian* reported that in an interview Mookerjee 'came out for large-scale exchanges of population between the two countries, asserted that India should declare herself a Hindu state and admitted that at the beginning of the Bengal troubles he had been convinced India should declare war on Pakistan.'

XI

HANDICAPS AND HOPES

COMMUNALISTS and Communists aside, there is no doubt that some important Congress supporters have not advanced along the path of reform as far as their leaders and though success has been achieved in matters like the integration of the states and the moulding of a generous Constitution a mass of problems and prejudices, distinct from those already dealt with, still stands in the way of rapid Indian advancement.

One example of the immature type of political thought which is such a handicap to India is the question of Linguistic Provinces. In 1921 the Congress wedded itself to the idea that the provinces should be redistributed on a linguistic basis. The difficult post-partition period would seem by any reasonable argument to have been the worst possible time to press such a policy, yet India had hardly gained freedom before there was a revived agitation in its favour. Though this came when Patel was striving to co-ordinate the states and make them into workable entities it was backed by a substantial and powerful section of Congress opinion which saw nothing ridiculous, in the circumstances, in calling for the splitting-up of the existing provinces purely on the basis of language and without regard to the administrative chaos which would inevitably result.

These demands were so strong that in June, 1948, Rajendra Prasad, as President of the Constituent Assembly, announced the setting up of a Commission to examine the question in regard to the proposed Andhra, Kerala, Karnataka and Maharashtra provinces. The

Commission turned the idea down flat. It thought that other problems, like those of the refugees, of food and of inflation were far more urgent and important:

'The first and last need of India at the present moment is that it should be made a nation . . . Everything which helps the growth of nationalism has to go forward and everything which throws obstacles in its way has to be rejected or stand over . . . We have applied this test to linguistic provinces, and judged by this test they fail and cannot be supported. If once the principle is recognised it will set the ball rolling for the disintegration of the entire country.'

Since then the Government has successfully parried the attack.

A similar instance of backwardness has been shown in the attitude of the more rigid caste Hindus towards the Bill for the Codification of Hindu Law introduced into the Legislative Assembly by Ambedkar in April, 1948, after more than ten years of preliminaries.

The measure is an involved one, but its fundamental intentions are to equalise the inheritance rights of sons and daughters, to safeguard a woman's dowry from the depredations of her relatives and give her full control of her property, to establish monogamy, to provide for divorce, to make inter-caste marriages valid, to concede the claim of a mother to be the natural guardian of her children, to give her a say in questions of adoption and to ensure the right of a testator to will his property more or less as he chooses.

The content of the Bill itself explains the abuses it sets out to rectify and some of the changes it suggests have already been adopted by Madras and Bombay which have passed Acts forbidding polygamy and arranging for divorce. Nevertheless, from the moment of its introduc-

tion in the Central Legislature, and in apparent contradiction of some of the Fundamental Rights promised in the Constitution, a strong section of Hindus has vigorously opposed and delayed the measure.

One part of the Constitution to which very definite effect has been given is the banning of alcohol. It is open to argument whether this is progressive or not.

Prohibition, so dear to the Mahatma and one of the main planks of Congress policy, has already been introduced in Bombay, Madhya Pradesh, Madras and locally elsewhere. Economists and industrialists warned the Government in September, 1948, that its total enforcement would cost the country about £25,000,000 a year, but this advice has been disregarded.

Outside domestic matters a peculiar problem which has nothing to do with reaction or reform is that of the French and Portuguese possessions which remained in India after the British had left. From the end of the eighteenth century, when the British became the paramount power in India, these scattered, rather decrepit remains of the once great territories of France and Portugal were allowed to survive comfortably and undisturbed. The total area involved was very small. The Portuguese lands covered 2,500 square miles with a population of 624,000 and consisted of Goa, South of Bombay, Daman, to the North of it and the island of Diu, off Kathiawar. The French finger-tip holds were Chandernagore, near Calcutta, Pondicherry, Yanaon and Karikal, on the East Coast and Mahé in Malabar. Altogether they covered 203 square miles with a population of 362,000. Goa and Pondicherry were the only places of any account.

Indian agitation against these Imperial remnants was concurrent with that against the British. Naturally it

increased after August 15th, 1947. Nehru has repeatedly emphasised that the possessions must be returned and one, Chandernagore, was handed over by the French in April, 1950, after a vote in June of the previous year had shown an overwhelming majority of the inhabitants in favour of merger with India.

Disappearance of the rest of the French possessions is now certain to follow and though Portugal's resistance may last longer it is obvious that she will eventually have to give way. The whole affair has a parochial atmosphere compared with the wider sphere of world interests in which India has set out to play a full part.

From the beginning India was determined to assert her dignity and status as an independent nation and to make her voice heard and respected but these desires have, to some extent, been hindered by the communal disorders and the long, embittered quarrel with Pakistan. A particular illustration stands out: well before partition India was in dispute with South Africa over the treatment of Indian inhabitants there. She had championed their cause before the United Nations and when the Union failed to observe a United Nations resolution directed at bettering their conditions she had suspended her South African trade and withdrawn her High Commissioner. Yet, within a few days of independence, the state of hundreds of thousands of Indians actually in India became far worse than that of those in South Africa.

The events which happened after partition, said Nehru on March 8th, 1948, had 'suddenly brought down our credit in the international domain tremendously'. That collapse has not yet been completely repaired, nor will it be until communalism is dead, the future of Kashmir decided and all talk of war between India and Pakistan finally stilled. All the same, India constitutes a new and

enterprising international force and the importance of her geopolitical position is well appreciated by her leaders. As early as March, 1947, 200 delegates from countries in the East assembled in New Delhi for an Asian Relations Conference and heard Nehru declare: 'India herself is emerging into freedom and independence. She is the natural centre and focal point of the many forces at work in Asia.' The Indian Premier has made many similar statements of his views on India's position.

The most important example of the international stature of the new India has been her intervention in regard to Korea. By July, 1950, she was already urging that Communist China should be admitted to the United Nations and Nehru sent personal letters to Stalin and Mr. Dean Acheson expressing this view and hoping for a localisation of the conflict. Later, it was Nehru who declared it had been wrong for the United Nations' Forces to cross the 38th Parallel without an effort towards a peaceful solution, and that this had involved grave risks of conflict on a much wider scale.

Through her Chief Representative at the United Nations Organisation and her Ambassador at Peking, India has worked extensively in trying to ease the Korean situation. At Lake Success her efforts led to the formation of the 'Thirteen Asian Nations' Committee' which made important suggestions for ending the war. These more or less followed the Indian line that there should be a 'Cease-Fire', a 'demilitarised zone' and negotiations which, Nehru thought, should include the question of Formosa. There was, too, a request that Chinese Communist troops should not cross the 38th Parallel. India's actions throughout, while consistent with her naturally pacific outlook, have certainly increased her prestige.

On independence, the foreign policy which India adopted was broadly to maintain friendly relations with other powers but to avoid power blocs. She also wished to assist the people of subject lands to become free as she had done. Thus landing facilities were refused to Dutch planes during periods when the Netherlands' forces were attacking the Indonesians whose case India had pressed before the United Nations.

This Indian interest in Indonesia reached a climax on January 20th, 1949, when delegates from Afghanistan, Australia, Burma, Ceylon, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Pakistan, the Philippines, Saudi Arabi, Syria and the Yemen and observers from China, Nepal, New Zealand and Siam attended a 'Conference on Indonesia' in the Indian capital which adopted a resolution including demands for the withdrawal of Dutch troops, the restoration of the Republican Government and the release of the Republican leaders. A month later India's international position received further recognition when representatives of Britain, Australia and Ceylon met the Indians in Delhi to consider the Burmese situation and the prospects of influencing a settlement of the civil war there.

Besides these activities it was India who, as far back as October, 1947, put a resolution to the United Nations recommending trusteeship for non-self governing countries and her maternal concern for the welfare of Indians domiciled in Ceylon, Mauritius, East Africa, Fiji, Malaya and elsewhere has been almost jealous in its character.

Nearer home, more recently, she has keenly supported the movement for democratisation in the strategically important kingdom of Nepal and has extended her influence in the border princedoms of Sikkim and Bhutan. The incursion of Chinese Communist troops

into Tibet has, of course, increased her normal concern for the security of her boundaries.

In spite of India's frequently repeated aversion to blocs it was patent from the outset that it would be difficult for her not to lean to one side or the other in the present arrangement of world power, and circumstances have inclined her towards the Anglo-Americans rather than towards the Russians. Though she is a sovereign republic she is a full member of the Commonwealth of Nations, accepting the King as the symbolic head of a free association. This relationship was developed out of the important Prime Ministers' and Foreign Ministers' Conferences of October, 1948, and April, 1949, which discussed also subjects like defence, and economic arrangements.

It is clear that when the British departure was decided the hierarchy of statesmen, armed forces officers, important civil servants and business men in India was keenly alive to the immense value that continued association with Britain would have. These men realised that their country would still require foreign capital for development, that she would need outside technical assistance for many years, that the great bulk of her export trade lay with Britain and America and that she depended on these two countries for vast imports and for most of the requirements of her army—now perhaps 300,000 strong—and her growing navy and air force.

The public urge to cut completely free, so apparent in 1946 and 1947, has yielded to the compulsion of events. But this does not mean that a reversal of opinion could not occur through misunderstanding or any intolerance towards India's outlook in regard to world happenings.

America early sent her Ambassador to India and the apex of relations between the two countries was reached in the important visit which Nehru made to the United

States in 1949. It is not surprising that the eminence which India has attained in international affairs despite all drawbacks has caused a certain amount of resentment in Pakistan as part of the general quarrel with the larger country.

To-day, with the Communists in control of China and threatening Tibet, with the Burmese civil war continuing, with Malaya in the grip of a terrorist uprising, with trouble in Indo-China, uncertainty in Indonesia, war in Korea, and with her own preoccupations in Kashmir and Bengal, India's position is not enviable. Largely antipathetic to Communism by reason of the social structure which Hindu traditionalism created, and which the reformists have scarcely begun to remould, she wishes to advance, to become modern and industrialised and to give her people life. But she wants to do these things in her own way and without interference. The question is whether the swift movement of events will allow her time to consolidate. Certainly no real progress can be made until friendly relations are reached with Pakistan for the affairs of both countries are interlocked. The Bengal rapprochement and the appointment in April, 1950, of Sir Owen Dixon as United Nations mediator in the Kashmir dispute with the task of trying to secure the withdrawal of the armed forces of each side in preparation for the work of the Plebiscite Administrator, Admiral Chester Nimitz, were hopeful ideas. Yet the latter proved a disappointment as did the talks about Kashmir held during the Commonwealth Premiers' London meetings in January, 1951. Some form of partition in Kashmir, with a referendum in the main valley, might prove the best solution.

Apart from peace, the most essential thing of all, India has other great requirements besides those already indicated in this book. To become truly democratic she

needs a strong and resolute Parliamentary Opposition but it seems hardly likely that the power of the Congress will be sufficiently challenged in the elections promised for 1951 for this to be provided. Then there is the burning question of the peasants in whose emancipation, despite proposals to abolish landlordism in Madras and other parts, the Communists have stolen a march. Finally there is the serious shortage of executives, skilled administrators, scientists, technicians, doctors, nurses, teachers and trained workers of every kind with which to contend.

Among many encouraging signs is the use which the Congress Government has made of men of high integrity and great accomplishment who had previously served either the British or the princes or had stood aloof. These men, and thousands of others, both inside and outside the Congress, have one ambition. They seek to serve India, and outstanding among them all is Jawaharlal Nehru.

Nehru was born in Allahabad in 1889, the son of a prominent Hindu lawyer and Congress leader. He was educated at Harrow and Trinity College, Cambridge, and called to the Bar at the Inner Temple.

The bare facts of his political career, his nine imprisonments, the details of his Congress activities give no real impression of this scintillating, sometimes erratic and rather lonely figure. It is necessary to see him and talk to him or read his story in the pure and delightful English prose of his autobiography *Toward Freedom*, in his *The Discovery of India*, one of the great books of this century, or in his revealing *Glimpses of World History*.

Fastidious, eloquent, capable of exerting an extraordinary hold over huge masses of people and of influencing the thoughts and actions of more ordinary men Nehru's personal humanity, unembittered by years of

harsh struggle, gives him pre-eminence among world leaders.

Until division he devoted every energy to bring India into freedom and since then he has stood determinedly against the shocks and troubles of the times.

In the prison of Ahmadnagar Fort in September, 1944, when freedom was still a dream, he wrote these words about himself and his fellow-countrymen: 'We are citizens of no mean country and we are proud of the land of our birth, of our people, our culture and traditions. That pride should not be for a romanticised past to which we want to cling; nor should it encourage exclusiveness or a want of appreciation of other ways than ours. It must never allow us to forget our many weaknesses and failings or blunt our longing to be rid of them. We have a long way to go and much leeway to make up before we can take our proper station with others in the van of human civilisation and progress. And we have to hurry, for the time at our disposal is limited and the pace of the world grows ever swifter. It was India's way in the past to welcome and absorb other cultures. That is much more necessary to-day, for we march to the one world of to-morrow where national cultures will be intermingled with the international culture of the human race. We shall therefore seek wisdom and knowledge and friendship and comradeship wherever we can find them, and co-operate with others in common tasks, but we are no suppliants for others' favours and patronage. Thus we shall remain true Indians and Asiatics, and become at the same time good internationalists and world citizens.'

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