


Nehru On Communalism

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Edited by
N. L. GUPTA

Published by

**SAMPRADAYIKTA
VIRODHI
COMMITTEE**



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Kirorimal College, Delhi

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Foreword

The recent war between India and Pakistan has clearly demonstrated the most important aspect of Indian life. It is that in spite of communal and religious differences our people can rise as one man in the defence of the nation when its freedom is threatened.

All their life both Gandhiji and Jawaharlalji fought bitterly against communalism. It cannot be forgotten that Gandhiji laid down his life for the cause of communal amity. It is our duty to cherish this heritage and work ceaselessly for preserving and strengthening our secular democracy.

The Sampradayikta Virodhi Committee has done an excellent job by bringing out this collection of Jawaharlalji's writings and statements on communalism. This book should prove to be particularly useful to the younger generation for it reveals to them the true face of communal reaction.

Communalism is the greatest danger to the unity and integrity of India and we shall give no quarter to it in our country.

November 10, 1965

K. KAMARAJ

Introduction

No greater danger faces India today than a potential rise of the communal fury. It will not only mean large-scale human suffering but also disrupt the entire fabric of political life. The very unity of the nation is at stake.

An unsafe minority implies a constant area of discontent, suspicion and gloom which is comfortable for none. Lot of national energy which can be put to more positive use is wasted on removing frictions and irritations that tension caused by communalism generates. A society divided within finds it difficult to squarely face the real problem and make progress because on the way emerge situations that distract the attention.

That is the lesson of India's long struggle against foreign rule. None doubts that but for communal disunity we would have attained independence much earlier than we actually did. Communalism was the strongest weapon, stronger than bullets, bayonets and prison cells, that the British had against the freedom fighters. By a cunning working of the policy of 'divide and rule' they were able to frustrate partly our national aims. Pakistan was created to permanently maintain pressure on India and halt her progress.

Leaders of the national movement had realised this danger long ago. Communal harmony, therefore, was one of the major slogans of the freedom struggle. Even after the partition of the country it remains valid. Not only valid but more important than ever before because the force of communalism is frustratingly destructive.

It was not for nothing that the Father of the Nation laid down his life combating this evil. He was convinced that this cancer would not let the flower of nationalism blossom.

So, instead of compromising with it he preferred to die at the altar of national unity.

Gandhiji was a great humanist. For him every life was valuable and worthy of worship. He could not tolerate any living being smarting under fear. It offended his sense of human dignity. And so he made the protection of minorities his foremost task during the last phase of his life.

Perhaps it is difficult for everybody to look at this problem, as at many others, from Gandhiji's angle, although we as the heirs of the Gandhian tradition are duty bound to mould ourselves in accordance with his teachings and practice. But fight against communalism is not a mere idealistic venture, it is vital to the advancement of our national interests. It is a political fight for the maintenance of democracy and for progress towards a social life free from unnecessary frictions.

Jawaharlal Nehru has interpreted the national view on this problem in his writings and speeches. Sensitive to all the problems and interests of the nation as he was, he always came out fearlessly and uncompromisingly against all expressions of communal mentality. His speeches and writings collected in this volume provide a commentary on the developments during the freedom struggle.

Those who were too young in that period will get a historical perspective for understanding this problem in free India. Those who have been in the thick of that struggle would be reminded by this book of what impeded our progress then and may in future. Thus the nation as a whole, the young and the old, will get a fresh impetus to fight against this evil which raises its ominous head from time to time.

Shri Nandlal Gupta who has compiled and edited this volume deserves our thanks. It is of immense national importance that the post-independence generations remember

the ideals that we set before ourselves during the struggle so that they do not fall a prey to the forces that impeded national progress. The painstaking job done by Sri Gupta will be of great value for them.

I am grateful to Shri K. Kamaraj, the Congress President, who has contributed the Foreword for this book and encouraged us in our endeavour.

December 9, 1965

SUBHADRA JOSHI

Preface

To make our hard-won freedom meaningful for the common man has been the objective of all our social, political and economic activity in the post-independent days, just as much as it was the achievement of freedom itself that motivated all national activity in the pre-independence era. Communalism in our body politic has played a reactionary and disruptive role all along. During the British rule, it disrupted the freedom struggle and today it seeks to undermine all that is the basis of our national life—secularism, democracy and socialism.

Is communalism a religious phenomenon? Is it a social and cultural renaissance movement? Is it a political movement? These are the various questions that arise before people as they think about it. Communalism has had different aspects, social, psychological, economic and political. Having based itself on the religious and emotional sentiments of the people, it has drawn strength from the society's respect for past traditions which have not been understood scientifically and in proper perspective. The weak, sporadic and halting nature of the renaissance and reformation movements that emerged in different regions of India and in the various strata of society at different times, have prepared the soil for communalism to grow. It is little concerned with the socio-economic regeneration of the respective communities, and more often than not it stood for preserving the socio-economic status-quo. The leadership of Gandhi, who was a religious and social reformer and humanist was anathema to the communalists. It is they who snatched Bapu from the nation. The government imposed a ban on RSS following the assassination of Gandhiji but it was lifted when Shri M. S. Golwalkar gave

an undertaking that he and his organisation would confine themselves strictly to cultural activities. If training in the use of lathi and dagger to cut throats of human beings and indulging in killing innocent men, women and children, is a cultural activity, culture will need a new definition. And this is what RSS today is doing.

The essence of communal activities has been political. The Hindu Mahasabha and the Muslim League all along campaigned for setting up states wherein one community would dominate other communities. Both resisted all reforms in the socio-cultural frame-work of the respective communities. Both were looking to the British to help them attain their objectives, and often appeared to be dancing to the tune of the Britishers in this process. Both, in the result, betrayed the national struggle.

The role of communal parties has been equally reactionary in free India too. They fight against all those forces and policies that may help the economic growth and socio-political transformation of the Indian society. If before independence they looked to the British, in free India they are serving the interests of monopolies internally and imperialists externally. The solution to the national problems that these communal parties try to sell to the people are:

Democracy will be real when Jan Sangh comes to power;

Economic growth will be possible if free enterprise monopoly capital is let loose on the people;

Nationhood will be cemented only when 'Bhagwa Dhvaj' flies over the ramparts of Red Fort and Pakistan is conquered;

India will contribute to world peace only when it joins the western bloc without reservation.

The philosophy that they profess and base themselves upon is racist and fascist. To understand the nature and character of communalism is as important today as it was

before 1947. Its challenge and dangers are no less today than they were then.

Nehru, whether as a soldier fighting in the freedom struggle to liberate the country from foreign rule, or, as Prime Minister engaged in an endeavour to reconstruct and transform the socio-economic structure of the Indian society, fought relentlessly against communalism. This book presents his views on the problem of communalism as it got manifested at different stages of Indian politics from 1920 to 1957. The approach in compiling the book has been, largely, chronological and only more important speeches and writings have been included. Footnotes are added to provide the reader with original resolutions, statements or speeches and to enable him to comprehend the thoughts of Nehru on the subject in the context of the politics of the period. To see communalism through the eyes of Nehru may help in a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon, or, at last, may provoke further quest. If the book achieves that, it will accomplish its purpose.

I am grateful to Mrs. Indira Gandhi for permitting me to reproduce extracts from Nehru's writings and books and to Mr. V. K. Krishna Menon for his permission to reproduce an extract from the "Unity of India", edited by him. I am thankful to other editors and publishers also from whose books, extracts have been reproduced.

My thanks are due to Dr. Mrs. Madhur Singh and Messrs. Harbans Mukhia, Zahoor Siddiqi and Arjun Dev who helped me ungrudgingly in making selections from Nehru's writings.

Most of all I owe a profound debt of gratitude to Mrs. Subhadra Joshi. She has all along been a source of inspiration and encouragement and displayed great forbearance during the preparation of this book.

Hindu Mahasabha and Communalism¹

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, addressing last night² a crowded meeting of Hindu University students condemned strongly the recent activities of the Hindu Mahasabha. He said he had long been of opinion that the Hindu Mahasabha was a small reactionary group pretending to speak on behalf of the Hindus of India of whom it was very far from being representative. None the less misapprehensions were created by their high-sounding title and resounding phrases and it was time that these misapprehensions were removed. Nothing in recent months pained him quite so much as the activities of the Mahasabha group culminating in the resolutions passed at Ajmer.

Going a few steps further the Arya Kumar Sabha which was presumably an off-shoot of the Hindu Mahasabha had proclaimed its policy to be one of elimination of Muslims and Christians from India and the establishment of a Hindu Raj.³ This statement makes clear what the pretensions of the Mahasabha about Indian nationalism amount to. Under cover of seeming nationalism, the Mahasabha not only hides the rankest and narrowest communalism but also desires to preserve the vested interests of a group of big Hindu landlords and the princes.⁴ The policy of the Mahasabha as declared by its responsible leaders is one of co-operation with the foreign Government so that their fawning to it and abasing themselves before it might result in a few crumbs coming in their way.⁵ This is betrayal of the freedom struggle, denial of every vestige of nationalism and suppression of every manly instinct in the Hindus. The Mahasabha showed its attachment to vested interests by openly condemning every form of socialism and social change. Anything more degrading, reactionary, anti-national, anti-progressive and harmful than the present

policy of the Hindu Mahasabha it was difficult to imagine. The leaders of the Mahasabha must realize that the inevitable consequence of this policy of their lining up with the enemies of Indian freedom and most reactionary elements in the country is for the rest of India, Hindu and non-Hindu, to face them squarely and oppose them and treat them as enemies of freedom and all we are striving for. It is not a mere matter of condemnation and dissociation, though, of course, there must be both these, but one of active and persistent opposition to the most opportunist and stupid of policies.

1. Nehru, Jawaharlal. *Recent Essays and Writings (Kitabistan, Allahabad, second edition, 1937)*, pp. 45-46.

2. Extracts from a speech delivered on November 12, 1933 at a meeting of the Banaras Hindu University Students, presided over by Madan Mohan Malaviya. In this speech Jawaharlal Nehru denounced communalism in forcible language and deliberately laid stress on Hindu Communalism because he was addressing a Hindu gathering.

3. Nehru wrote later that no such resolution was adopted by the Arya Kumar Sabha and that he had fallen into a foolish error of referring to it. However, even if the Arya Kumar Sabha had not adopted such a resolution, the creed of Hindu Mahasabha has been the same as referred to by Nehru. Their main slogan has been: "Hindi, Hindu, Hindusthan". It gave a call to "Hinduise politics and militarise Hinduism". According to Mr. V. D. Savarkar, "They (Hindus) possess the same culture, because Hindus alone possess a common Rashtra, and a common *sanskriti* and accept India not only as a motherland and fatherland but also their holy land i.e. *punya Bhumi*. They alone constitute the Indian Nation" (emphasis added). The R.S.S. Chief, Shri Golwalkar, holds the same view today. According to him, "Hindus are the true children of this soil and a nation because they have a common blood. They are a brotherhood—a race determined by a common origin possessing a common blood". Jan Sangh holds: "What we have in India is a Hindu nation. The concept of India consisting of communities is shallow, superficial, devoid of meaning and full of inner contradictions".

In 1933, Bhai Parmanand, the then President of Hindu Mahasabha decried the theory of "Hindu-Muslim Unity, the only and the surest condition of attainment of swaraj as ridiculous". According to Mahasabha, the Muslims and Christians were to be treated as minorities and given rights as citizens but not as nationals.

4. The Ajmer Session of Hindu Mahasabha (October, 1933) adopted a resolution strongly disapproving of any movement advocating extinction of capitalists and landlords as a class as this "will ultimately retard all progress and make the redemption of Hindustan impossible".

The 1935 Act had provided for federation of British India and Indian States. It further provided that the representatives of British India will come to the Federal Legislature through election and the representatives of States through nomination by the princes. This was opposed by every section of popular political opinion in India as it amounted to ignoring the people of the States. But Bhai Parmanand endorsed this right of princes and said "... State representatives had best be left to Rulers of States". While the Congress was fighting against British Imperialism for complete Independence, the Mahasabha offered 'responsive co-operation' to the British Government to the extent not only of working the Act of 1935 but also giving the right to 'King Emperor' to frame the constitution of India. Pandit Nehru in his letter to Gandhi in September, 1933, described British Government, landlords and princes as three vested interests, which must go if "independence has meaning for the masses and their condition is to improve...". N. C. Kelkar denounced the demand of adult franchise made by the Congress. He said, "In the race for call for Democracy, the Congress has gone headlong even for adult suffrage!" What a hatred for people and their freedom! According to Bhai Parmanand "Indirect elections are more suited to a large country like Hindusthan...".

Even in the matter of Harijan movement including temple entry, headed by M. K. Gandhi, Bhai Parmanand in his Ajmer address said, "Personally I have the nearest sympathy for it and I think every member of the Hindu Mahasabha *individually* has got full right to co-operate with it or work for it. But collectively the position of Hindu Mahasabha is slightly different.... In the first place, this work can be properly done by the Hindu Mahasabha alone as representing the true interests of Hindus and as being the only advocate of Hindu solidarity. Taking this view I believe that the work of uplift does not lie with Depressed Classes, *but with the Caste Hindus who should develop the right national sense and offer the status of equality and brotherhood to everyone who bears the name.* The Hindu Mahasabha all along following the policy of remaining neutral on religious questions cannot bring any pressure to bear on the followers of a particular sect to open their temples to any other class for which the temples were not supposed to be meant". (emphasis added)

5. The Congress, in its 1929 Session, had adopted "Complete Independence" resolution and the people backed this demand by mass action in the non-co-operation and Satyagraha movements of 1931 and 1932. The Hindu Mahasabha opposed it. It was pleading for the acceptance of the Simon Commission proposals. It did not clearly demand even Dominion Status that other moderate and liberal political parties and groups were asking for.

N. C. Kelkar was assuring "good friendship and co-operation" to British Government if it "did not make trouble about India *ultimately*

getting independence *like colonies*". (emphasis added). To him complete independence was an *ultimate* ideal and not *immediate* goal or ideal. He said that Dominion Status *may* be stated as an immediate goal but he assured that it did not mean complete independence.

Dr. B. S. Moonje declared Hindu Mahasabha policy to be one of "Responsive Co-operation". He stated, "...the Mahasabha was of the view that whatever may be the constitution of the legislatures they should never be boycotted". Bhai Parmanand addressing the Ajmer Session said, "I feel an impulse in me that Hindus would willingly co-operate with Great Britain if their status and responsible position as the *premier* community in India is recognised in the political *institutions* of new India". (emphasis added). What was this "Status"? It was to secure a few more seats in the Central or Provincial legislatures than what the Communal Award or the White Paper had proposed. To take an instance, these proposals had awarded 80 seats to Hindus in the Bengal Legislature and Bhairji wanted 97.5 seats.

Hindu and Muslim Communalism¹

My recent remarks² on Hindu communalists and the Hindu Mahasabha have indirectly touched a sensitive spot of many people and have produced strong reactions. For many days every morning the newspapers brought me a tonic in the shape of criticisms and condemnations and I must express my gratitude for these to all who indulged in them. It is not given to everybody to see himself as others see him, and since this privilege has been accorded to me and my numerous failings in education, up-bringing, heredity, culture, as well as those for which I am personally responsible, pointed out to me gently, I must needs feel grateful. I shall try to profit by the chiding I have received but I am afraid I have outgrown the age when the background of one's thought and action can be easily changed.

I have not hastened to reply to the criticisms because I thought it as well for excitement to cool so that we might consider the question dispassionately and without reference to personalities. It is a vital question for all of us Indians, and especially for those who from birth or choice are in the Hindu fold.

But I must begin with an expression of regret and apology. It is clear that some of us were the victims of a hoax in regard to the alleged resolution of the Arya Kumar Sabha which was sent to us and in which it was stated there could be no peace in India so long as there were any Muslims or Christians in the country. It has been demonstrated that no such resolution was passed by the Arya Kumar Sabha at Ajmer or elsewhere; indeed no resolution of a political nature was passed by that body at all. I am exceedingly sorry for having permitted myself to fall into a trap of someone's devising and I desire to express my deep regret to the Arya Kumar Sabha.

I must also express my regret both to the Arya Kumar Sabha and the Hindu Mahasabha for having presumed that they were associated with each other.

In regard to my main contention, however, I confess that I am unrepentant and I hold still that the activities of Hindu communal organizations, including the Mahasabha, have been communal, anti-national and reactionary. Of course this cannot apply to all the members of these organizations; it can only apply to the majority group in them or the group that controls them. Organizations also change their policies from time to time and what may be true to-day may not have been wholly true yesterday. So far as I have been able to gather, Hindu communal organizations, especially in the Punjab and in Sind,³ have been progressively becoming more narrowly communal and anti-national and politically reactionary.

I am told that this is a consequence of Muslim communalism and reactionary policy and I have been chided for not blaming Muslim communalists. I have already pointed out that it would have been entirely out of place for me, speaking to a Hindu audience, to draw attention to Muslim communalists and reactionaries. It would have been preaching to the converted as the average Hindu is well aware of them. It is far more difficult to see one's own fault than to see the failings of others. I also hold that it serves little purpose, in the prevailing atmosphere of mutual suspicion, to preach to the other community, although of course, whenever necessity arises, facts must be faced and the truth stated.

I do not think that the Muslim communal organizations, chief among whom are the Muslim All Parties Conference and the Muslim League, represent any large group of Muslims in India except in the sense that they exploit the prevailing communal sentiment. But the fact remains that they claim to speak for Muslims and no other organization has so far risen which can successfully challenge that claim. Their aggressively communal character gives them a pull

over the large number of nationalist Muslims who met of themselves in the Congress. The leaders of these organizations are patently and intensely communal. That, from the very nature of things, one can understand. But it is equally obvious that most of them are definitely anti-national and political reactionaries of the worst kind. Apparently they do not even look forward to any common nation developing in India. At a meeting in the British House of Commons last year the Aga Khan, Sir Mohammad Iqbal and Dr. Shafaat Ahmad Khan are reported (in the *'Statesman'* of December 31, 1932) to have laid stress on "the inherent impossibility of securing any merger of Hindu and Muslim, political, or indeed social, interests". The speakers further pointed out "the impracticability of ever governing India through anything but a British agency". These statements leave no loophole for nationalism or for Indian freedom, now or even in the remote future.

I do not think that these statements represent the views of Muslims generally or even of most of the communally inclined Muslims. But they are undoubtedly the views of the dominant and politically clamorous group among the Muslims. It is an insult to one's intelligence to link these views with those of nationalism and freedom and of course any measure of real economic freedom is still further away from them. Essentially, this is an attitude of pure reaction—political, cultural, national, social. And it is not surprising that this should be so if one examines the membership of these organizations. Most of the leading members are government officials, ex-officials, ministers, would-be ministers, knights and title holders, big landlords, etc. Their leader is the Aga Khan, the head of a wealthy religious group, who combines in himself, most remarkably, the feudal order and the politics and habits of the British ruling class, with which he has been intimately associated for many years.

Such being the leadership of the Muslims in India and

at the Round Table Conference it is no wonder that their attitude should be reactionary. This reactionary policy went so far as to lead many of the Muslim delegates in London to seek an alliance with the most reactionary elements in British public life—Lord Lloyd and Company. And the final touch was given to it when Gandhiji offered personally to accept every single one of their communal demands, however illogical and exaggerated that might be, on condition that they assured him of their full support in the political struggle for independence. That condition and offer was not accepted and it became clear that what stood in the way was not even communalism but political reaction.

Personally I think that it is generally possible to co-operate with communalists provided the political objective is the same. But between progress and reaction, between those who struggle for freedom and those who are content with servitude, and even wish to prolong it, there is no meeting ground. And it is this political reaction which has stalked the land under cover of communalism and taken advantage of the fear of each community of the other. It is the fear complex that we have to deal with in these communal problems. Honest communalism is fear; false communalism is political reaction.

To some extent this fear is justified, or is at least understandable, in a minority community. We see this fear overshadowing the communal sky in India as a whole so far as Muslims are concerned; we see it as an equally potent force in Punjab and Sind so far as the Hindus are concerned, and in the Punjab the Sikhs.

It was natural for the British Government to support and push on the reactionary leaders of the Muslims and to try to ignore the nationalist ones. It was also natural for them to accede to most of their demands in order to strengthen their position in their own community and weaken the national struggle. A very little knowledge of history will show that this has always been done by ruling powers. The

Muslim demands did not in any way lessen the control of the British in India. To some extent they helped the British to add to their proposed special powers and to show to the world how necessary their continued presence in India was.

I have written all this about the attitude of the Muslim communalist leaders not only to complete the picture but because it is a necessary preliminary to the understanding of the Hindu communal attitude. There is no essential difference between the two. But there was this difference that the Congress drew into its ranks most of the vital elements of Hindu society and it dominated the situation and thus circumstances did not permit the Hindu communalists to play an important role in politics. The Hindu Mahasabha leaders largely confined themselves to criticising the Congress. When however there was a lull in Congress activities, automatically the Hindu communalists came more to the front and their attitude was frankly reactionary.

It must be remembered that the communalism of a majority community must of necessity bear a closer resemblance to nationalism than the communalism of a minority group. One of the best tests of its true nature is what relation it bears to the national struggle. If it is politically reactionary or lays stress on communal problems rather than national ones, then it is obviously anti-national.

The Simon Commission, as is well known, met with a wide-spread and almost unanimous boycott in India. Bhai Parmanandji, in his recent presidential address at Ajmer, says that this boycott was unfortunate for the Hindus, and he approvingly mentions that the Punjab Hindus (probably under his guidance) co-operated with the Commission.⁴ Thus Bhaji is of opinion that, whatever the national aspect of the question might have been, it was desirable for the Hindus to co-operate with the British Government in order to gain some communal advantages. This is obviously an anti-national attitude. Even from the narrow communal point of view it is difficult to see its wisdom, for communal advantages can only be given at the expense of another

community, and when both seek the favours of the ruling power, there is little chance of obtaining even a superficial advantage.

Bhaiji's argument, repeatedly stated, is that the British Government is so strongly entrenched in India that it cannot be shaken by any popular movement and therefore it is folly to try to do so.⁵ The only alternative is to seek its favours. That is an argument which I can only characterise, with all respect to him, as wholly unworthy of any people however fallen they might be.

Bhaiji's view is that the cry of Hindu-Muslim unity is a false cry and a wrong ideal to aim at because the power of gift is in the hands of the Government. Granting this power of gift, every cry other than one of seeking the government's favours is futile. And if the possibility of Hindu-Muslim co-operation and collaboration is ruled out,⁶ nationalism is also ruled out in the country-wide sense of the word. The inevitable consequence, and Bhaiji accepts this, is what he calls "Hindu nationalism", which is but another name for communalism. What is the way to this? Co-operation with British Imperialism. "I feel an impulse within me", says Bhaiji in his presidential address, "that the Hindus would willingly co-operate with Great Britain if their status and responsible position as the premier community in India is recognized in the political institutions of new India".

This attitude of trying to combine with the ruling power against another community or group is the natural and only policy which communalism can adopt. It fits in of course entirely with the wishes of the ruling power which can then play off one group against another. It was the policy which was adopted by the Muslim communalists with some apparent temporary advantage to themselves. It is the policy which the Hindu Mahasabha partly favoured from its earliest days but could not adopt whole-heartedly because of the pressure of nationalist Hindus, and which its leaders now seem to have definitely adopted.

Dr. Moonje, presiding over the C.P. Hindu Conference on May 17, 1933, made it clear that "the Mahasabha never had any faith in the kind of non-co-operation which Mahatma Gandhi has been preaching and practising. It believes in the eternal Sanatan Law of stimulus and response, namely, responsive co-operation. The Mahasabha holds that whatever may be the constitution of the legislatures, they should never be boycotted". Dr. Moonje is an authority on 'Sanatan Law', but I hope it does not lay down that the response to a kick should be grovelling at the feet of him who kicks. This speech was made when a widespread national struggle was going on and there was unprecedented repression under the ordinance regime. I shall not discuss here the wisdom of stating, long before the British-made constitution had taken shape, that whatever happens they would work it. Was this not an invitation to the government to ignore the Mahasabha for in any event it would accept the new dispensation?

Dr. Moonje himself went to the Round Table Conference in 1930, at the height of the Civil Disobedience Movement, though in justice to him it must be stated that he had declared that he went in his individual capacity. Subsequently of course the Mahasabha took full part in the London conferences and committees.

Of the part taken by the Mahasabha representatives in these deliberations, especially by those from the Punjab and Sind, I wish only to say that it was a most painful one. Politically it was most reactionary and efforts were made to increase the reserved powers and safeguards of the British Government or the governors in order to prevent the Muslim majorities in certain provinces from exercising effective power. The identical policy and argument of the Muslim communalists in regard to the whole of India were repeated by Hindu communalists in regard to certain provinces.⁷ But of course the special powers of governors were not going to be confined to some provinces. They would inevitably apply to all the provinces. The reason for

this reactionary attitude in both the cases was of course fear of the majority. Whatever the reason, this played entirely into the hands of the British Government.

The whole of the case of the Sind Hindu Sabha is a negation of the principle of democracy, except in so far as joint electorates are demanded. It is an attempt to prevent the will of the majority from prevailing because the minority might suffer. The anti-social arguments of greater wealth and education of the minority are advanced, and financial reasons based entirely on the continuation of the top-heavy British system are made a prop. Wealth and economic control are not only sufficient protection under modern conditions, but have to be protected against. Almost every argument that has been advanced by the Sind Hindu communalists can be advanced by the Muslim minority in India as a whole with this difference that the Hindus are generally the richer and more educated community and have thus greater economic power.

In the attempts to show the backwardness of the Muslims in Sind the Sind Hindu Sabha Memorandum to the Joint Parliamentary Committee has made sweeping statements about Muslims which are astonishing and most painful to read.⁸ They remind one of Katherine Mayo's methods of denunciation.

I do not know what the Punjab Hindu Sewak Sabha is. Probably it is not connected with the Hindu Sabha, and it may only be a mushroom growth fathered by our benign government. On the eve of Bhai Parmanand's departure for England last May, to give evidence before the Joint Committee, this Sabha sent him a message which laid stress on the retention of safeguards by governors in order to protect the Hindus of the Punjab. "The only thing", it said, "that can protect the Punjab Hindus is the effective working of safeguards as provided in the constitution". "Let not any endeavours of the politicians lead to the abrogation of these safeguards. . . . The judicious discharge of their special responsibility by our Governors has been greatly

helpful”.

Another organization, of which I know nothing, the ‘Punjab Hindu Youth League’ of Lahore, stated as follows in a public statement dated May 29, 1933: “We feel that the time has now come for unity not so much between Moslems and Hindus as between the British and Indians. . . Hindu leaders. . . should insist on having safeguards for the Hindu minority in the constitutions and cabinets”.

I cannot hold the Mahasabha responsible for these statements but as a matter of fact they fit in with, and are only a slight elaboration of, the Mahasabha attitude. And they bear out that many Hindu communalists are definitely thinking on the lines of co-operation with British imperialism in the hope of getting favours. It requires little argument to show that this attitude is not only narrowly communal but also anti-national and intensely reactionary. If this is the attitude when the Hindu Mahasabha feels that it has lost all along the line, in so far as the Communal Award is concerned, one wonders what its attitude will be when a petty favour is shown to it by the Government.

It is perfectly true that the Hindu Mahasabha has stood for joint electorates right through its career and this is obviously the only national solution of the problem. It is also true that the Communal Award is an utter negation of nationalism and is meant to separate India into communal compartments and give strength to disruptive tendencies and thus to strengthen the hold of British imperialism. But it must be borne in mind that nationalism cannot be accepted only when it profits the majority community. The test comes in the provinces where there is a Muslim majority and in that test the Hindu Mahasabha has failed.⁹

Nor is it enough to blame Muslim communalists. It is easy enough to do so for Indian Muslims as a whole are unhappily very backward and compare unfavourably with Muslims in all other countries. The point is that a special responsibility does attach to the Hindus in India both because they are the majority community and because

economically and educationally they are more advanced. The Mahasabha, instead of discharging that responsibility, has acted in a manner which has undoubtedly increased the communalism of the Muslims and made them distrust the Hindus all the more. The only way it has tried to meet their communalism is by its own variety of communalism. One communalism does not end the other; each feeds on the other and both fatten.

The Mahasabha at Ajmer has passed a long resolution on the Communal Award pointing out its obvious faults and inconsistencies. But it has not so far as I am aware said a word in criticism of the White Paper scheme.¹⁰ I am not personally interested in petty criticisms of that scheme because I think that it is wholly bad and is incapable of improvement. But from the Mahasabha's point of view to ignore it was to demonstrate that it cared little, if at all, about the political aspect of the Indian freedom. It thought only in terms of what the Hindus got or did not get. It has been reported that a resolution on independence was brought forward but this was apparently suppressed. Not only that, no resolution on the political or economic objective was considered. If the Mahasabha claims to represent the Hindus of India, must it be said that the Hindus are not interested in the freedom of India?

Ordinarily this would be remarkable enough. But in present day conditions and with the background of the past few years of heroic struggle and sacrifice, such a lapse can have only one meaning—that the Mahasabha has ceased to think even in terms of nationalism and is engrossed in communal squabbles. Or it may be that the policy is deliberate one so as to avoid irritating the Government with which the Mahasabha wishes to co-operate.

This view is strengthened by the fact that no reference is made in the resolutions or in the presidential address to the Ordinance rule and the extraordinary measures of repression¹¹ which the Government has indulged in and is still indulging in. The Mahasabha seems to live in a world

of its own unconnected with the struggles and desires and sufferings of the Indian people.

Even more significant was the refusal (if newspaper reports are to be credited) to pass a resolution of condolence on the death, under tragic circumstances, of Syt. J. M. Sen-Gupta.¹² This was a harmless resolution, a formal tribute to the memory of a great patriot and a Hindu, and yet the Mahasabha sensed danger in it.

Our friends the moderates or liberals, though they may be lacking in action and though their methods and ideology may be utterly inadequate, still consider these questions and pass resolutions on them. Not so the Mahasabha which has moved away completely from the political and national plane and rests itself solely on the communal issue, thereby weakening even its communal position. I submit that this attitude is wholly reactionary and anti-national. I have some contacts with the outside world, through foreign newspapers and other means, and I should like to tell the Mahasabha leaders that, whatever their motives or methods may have been, they have succeeded in creating a considerable amount of prejudice abroad against the Mahasabha and the communally inclined Hindus.

I cannot say what following the Hindu or Muslim communal organizations have. It is possible that in a moment of communal excitement each side may command the allegiance of considerable numbers. But I do submit that on both sides these organizations represent the rich upper class groups and the struggle for communal advantages is really an attempt of these groups to take as big a share of power and privilege for themselves as possible. At the most it means jobs for a few of our unemployed intellectuals. How do these communal demands meet the needs of the masses? What is the programme of the Hindu Mahasabha or the Muslim League for the workers, the peasants, and the lower middle classes, which form the great bulk of the nation? They have no programme except a negative one, as the Mahasabha hinted at Ajmer, of not disturbing the present social order. This in

itself shows that the controlling forces of these communal organizations are the upper class possessing social groups to-day. The Muslim communalists tell us a great deal about the democracy of Islam but are afraid of democracy in practice; the Hindu communalists talk of nationalism and think in terms of a 'Hindu nationalism'.¹³

Personally I am convinced that nationalism can only come out of the ideological fusion of Hindu, Muslim, Sikh and other groups in India. That does not and need not mean the extinction of any real culture of any group, but it does mean a common national outlook, to which other matters are subordinated. I do not think that Hindu-Muslim or other unity will come merely reciting it like a *mantra*. That it will come, I have no doubt, but it will come from below, not above, for many of those above are too much interested in British domination, and hope to preserve their special privileges through it. Social and economic forces will inevitably bring other problems to the front. They will create cleavages along different lines, but the communal cleavage will go.

I have been warned by friends, whose opinion I value, that my attitude towards communal organizations will result in antagonizing many people against me. That is indeed probable. I have no desire to antagonize any countryman of mine for we are in the midst of a mighty struggle against a powerful opponent. But that very struggle demands that we must check harmful tendencies and always keep the goal before us. I would be false to myself, to my friends and comrades, so many of whom have sacrificed their all at the altar of freedom, and even to those who disapprove of what I say, if I remained a silent witness to an attempt to weaken and check our great struggle for freedom. Those who, in my opinion, are helping in this attempt, may be perfectly honest in the beliefs they hold. I do not challenge their *bona fides*. But none the less the beliefs may be wrong, anti-national and reactionary.

1. Nehru, Jawaharlal. *Recent Essays and Writings* (Kitabistan, Allahabad, Second Edition, 1937), pp. 47-61.

2. Nehru's speech at Banaras Hindu University Students' Meeting on November 12, 1933.

3. The Hindu Mahasabha and various Hindu Conferences held in Sind and Punjab and the N.W.F.P. made narrow communal demands. They opposed the separation of Sind from Bombay and introduction of provincial autonomy in Sind, Baluchistan and N.W.F.P. on the ground that under Muslim ministers, the Hindu interests in these provinces will become unsafe. The Hindus constituted about 5 per cent of the population and were dominant in commerce, trade and services. They demanded the retention of over-riding powers of governors to protect Hindu interests. They demanded safeguards for Hindus in services in these provinces. These demands were similar to those that Muslim communalists were making on an all-India level.

4. "As it happened, unfortunately for the Hindus, the appearance of the Simon Commission without any Indian member on it, again placed the Hindu Sabha movement in the background and the leaders of Hindu Mahasabha joined hands with those of the Congress to oppose the working of the Simon Commission. I do not think, I should omit to mention here that it was due to a strong Hindu feeling amongst the Punjab Hindus that made them act in opposition to the move of the Hindu leaders in other provinces and co-operate with the Simon Commission."

Leaders like Lajpat Rai and Madan Mohan Malaviya had joined the boycott of the Simon Commission. They called a meeting of the Working Committee of Hindu Mahasabha at Simla and got the boycott resolution passed. The Punjab branch of Hindu Mahasabha under the leadership of Bhai Parmanand repudiated this resolution and refused to join the boycott and welcomed the Commission. Lajpat Rai and Madan Mohan Malaviya are described as "deserters" from Hindu movement by the official history of the Mahasabha. This act of theirs caused a serious split in the Mahasabha and its control passed into the hands of Bhai Parmanand, N. C. Kelkar, B. S. Moonje and V. D. Savarkar.

The Simon Commission was also welcomed by a section of the Muslim League in the Punjab.

5. Referring to the follies of the Congress under the leadership of Gandhi, Bhaiji said, "Neither could they realise how difficult it was for the Civil Disobedience movement to shake the foundations of a solid organisation like the system of British Government nor could they see that Hindu-Muslim Unity, on the magical power of which they had based all their hopes, was a thing which they could never attain".

6. One resolution passed at Ajmer "urged Hindus not to sacrifice [Hindu] nationalism for any kind of communal agreement".

7. The Punjab, Frontier and Sind Hindu Conference, presided over by Raja Narendranath held at Multan on the 14th May, 1933, adopted the following resolution:

"Resolved that this conference strongly condemns the differential treat-

ment of Hindu and Muslim minorities in respect of seats reserved in the provincial legislatures, maintaining weightage for Muslims in six provinces and denying to Hindu minorities representation even on their minority in the centre.

"Resolved that this conference opines that adequate representation be afforded to minorities in the N.W.F.P. in the cabinet in the coming constitution on the same principle as applied for Muslim minorities in Madras, Bihar and Orissa and United Provinces. That this conference... opines that in the case of services recruitment should be purely on the basis of merit, but if this principle is not accepted entirely, then a uniform principle for recruitment to the services should be adopted for all communities throughout India for removing inequalities.

"This conference strongly condemns the proposals of the White Paper in respect of the separation of Sind from Bombay and opines that this is being done only to placate a small section of Muslim opinion, it being significant that the Simon Commission and the financial experts committee's report does not regard separation financially practicable or sound and does not accept separation as a settled fact."

The Sind Hindu Conference of March, 1934, lodged "emphatic protest" against the contemplated separation of Sind from Bombay. This was described as an attempt to placate Indian Muslims, "administratively ruinous and economically unsound" and being pressed upon not "on any intrinsic merit of its own but to hold the Hindus of Sind as hostages in the event of bad treatment of the Muslim minorities in the other Provinces..."

In case, Sind was to be separated from Bombay, it demanded safeguards for Hindus:

- (i) That their representation in the Sind Legislative Council should be forty per cent of the elected total.
- (ii) That the Hindu voters, being the principal minority, should be placed on a special electoral roll and that voters of non-Hindu minorities be placed on the electoral rolls of Muslim majority.
- (iii) That the Hindus be allotted at least two seats in the lower house of the Federal Legislature and one in the Upper House.
- (iv) That in all matters pertaining to law and order and Sukkar Barrage the Governor should have special powers of interference, superintendence, control and direction to protect and safeguard the minorities and to see that trade, commerce and industry are not unduly taxed by the Legislative Council, dominated by the Muslim Zamindari interests...
- (v) That the Governor should be empowered to see that the proposals for taxation should not throw a disproportionately heavy burden on the minority communities.
- (vi) That the majority community should get preferential treatment for (a) recruitment; (b) admission and grants etc. to educational institutions; (c) acquisition of property; and, (d) that discriminatory laws, like the Land Alienation Act, should be interdicted.

Dr. Hingorani, President of Sind Hindu Mahasabha, at the session of

the All-India Hindu Youth Conference (1932), Karachi, said, "If separation (of Sind) took place, vigorous propaganda for boycott of Muslims would be carried on throughout Sind."

The Bengal Hindu Sabha and important members of Bengal Legislative Council issued a Manifesto placing Hindu demands and opposing the claim of Muslims for "statutory majority" in Bengal Legislative Council on the basis of population. It said, "We maintain that the claim of Bengal Mussalmans are anti-national, selfish, and not based on any principle of equity and justice. The claim for a statutory majority in Bengal, if conceded, will keep the Hindus in a perpetual state of inferiority and impotence and really aims at a form of communal government and tyranny." Referring to the coming reforms, it says, "We cannot permit Mussalman communalists (whose contribution to the national struggle has been negligible) so to maim and deform the scheme of government as to make it unrecognisable as a democratic constitution." It claimed superiority for Hindus in "educational qualifications and political fitness." "The achievement of Hindu Bengalis stand foremost in the whole of India in the fields of arts, literature and science, whereas the Muslim community in Bengal has not so far produced a single name of all-India fame in these fields. . . . Political fitness cannot be divorced from the larger intellectual life of the Nation and in political fitness the Mussalmans of Bengal are vastly inferior to Hindus. . . ." It counteracted the argument that Muslims constitute majority in Bengal on the ground that backward communities "grow faster than the communities relatively more advanced, socially, economically and intellectually."

The N.W.F.P. Hindus demanded a treatment similar to that given to the Muslim minority in the U.P. The President of the Frontier, Punjab and Sind Hindu conference advised the Hindus of the N.W.F.P. to approach the governor to *intervene* if the Muslim ministers failed to meet their legitimate demands, in accordance with the powers to be conferred upon the Governor under the scheme of the White Paper. In the Memorandum submitted to the Joint Parliamentary Committee, the Frontier Hindus demanded a statutory guarantee for inclusion of a Hindu in the cabinet *to protect Imperial interests, financial stakes of Hindus and their trade and commercial interests*. It also demanded reservation of seats for Hindus in district boards and municipal committees.

8. The Hindu Mahasabha submitted memoranda nos. 39 and 40 to the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Indian constitutional reforms opposing separation of Sind from Bombay and constitution of Sind as a separate Governor's province. It opposed the separation for economic, financial, administrative and political reasons. It said that the linguistic principle does not apply to Sind and that Sind cannot stand financially on its legs. But the material arguments it advanced against separation were two:

- (1) Hindu loyalty to the British in conquering Sind and sustaining British rule thereafter;
- (2) Loss of rights and amenities that Hindus were enjoying in Sind as a

part of Hindu majority in Bombay and Sind and the fear of being subjected to Muslim majority rule under a separate Sind Province.

The Memorandum 39 asked the British public "to recall to mind the circumstances under which they were invited by the Hindus to free them from the intolerable misrule of the Talpurs in the forties of the last century, the profession, made in this regard by the first British administrators, *the continuous and loyal co-operation they have had from the Hindus in Sind* in evolving order out of chaos, and the substantial contribution they have made to the economic, social and educational advancement of Sind on the assurance of British protection of life and property and encouragement of freedom of enterprise in Sind". The Memorandum no. 40 reads: "Sind was conquered by the British at the *direct* invitation of Sind Hindus, to free it from the intolerable misrule of the Talpur Mirs. It is being *made over to a still greater misrule—that of ignorant, fanatical and criminally inclined oligarchy of Sind Zamindars* without any adequate protection to the enlightened minority of the Sind Hindus, whose *unstinted* co-operation with the British for the last 80 years has brought order and progress to the unhappy valley of Burton's days" (emphasis added).

The Memorandum 39 argues that the separation of Sind would be a double loss to Hindus of Sind. It reads, "... they will not only lose their share in the amenities, the credit, and the increased power open to the Hindu majority in Bombay including Sind, but will be relegated as an ineffective minority in a Council with limited powers of control over the greater part of Sind and with little or no capacity for developing Sind."

It thus asked the government not to constitute a separate Sind province, or at least to defer it for 10 years, failing which to grant safeguards to Hindu minority. The main safeguards demanded were:

(1) "... Law and Order and justice (especially the highest court in Sind) should be made reserved subject in Sind and the control of town police be made over to municipalities". Failing this these departments should remain in the hands of a non-Muslim for first 20 years. [The Hindus were in a majority in towns.]

(2) If direct tax is to be levied in Sind after subvention to be given by the centre and the surplus revenue from Sukkar Barrage to meet the deficit during the next 10 years, "the Hindu community, which has all along opposed the constitution as a separate province, should in fairness be exempt from such direct taxation."

(3) "... for the first four terms of office, the Governor of the province shall be a *non-Muslim*." (emphasis added)

(4) Hindus [who constituted about 27 per cent of population] should be allotted 40 per cent seats instead of proposed 32.7 per cent for first 10 years. [This would have given Hindus 4 seats more.] After expiry of ten years, Hindu seats were to be reserved on population basis.

(5) In place of one seat to European Chamber of Commerce and one to two seats for two Indian chambers, as proposed, it demanded four seats each for the European and Indian chambers.

(6) The classification of seats to be General and Hindu in place of General and Muslim.

(8) One of the two landlords seats to be reserved for Hindus.

9. The Hindu Mahasabha failed in the test because it was not prepared to concede majority to Muslims in such provinces. It asked for "reservations" and "safeguards" for these provinces as the Muslim communalists were asking for on an All-India level.

10. The White Paper of December 1931 laid down proposals for Indian Constitutional Reforms, which became the basis of the Act of 1935. The White Paper was vehemently condemned by all except the Hindu and Muslim communalists. Mr. Attlee said, "The White Paper seemed directly to conflict with the principles laid down and our pledges..." He pointed out that the whole idea of Dominion Status had gone as also the idea of progressive advance towards self-government. He said, "...there was no central responsibility and no suggestion of progress towards full responsibility or relaxation of the existing control."

The Indian criticism of these reforms is summed up by N. N. Mitra in the I.A.R. (1933, Vol. 1) as follows: "Some called the proposal retrograde; some would call them 'stone for bread'; some would not touch them even with a pair of tongs; some would not touch them with a pair of sterilised gloves, as the White Paper was not only waste paper but nasty paper; some would hesitate before stopping to take it up, as the paper looked faded and folded; a few, however, would turn up their noses, and call it revolting rubbish paper, and yet take it up for what it was or was not worth, and insert it into their snug, little inner vest pockets. These at last professedly few in number, would swear by Tilak's gospel of responsive co-operation, and would hope 'to conquer by compliance.'" Nehru had described the Reforms Scheme unprofitable and unworkable. The Central Legislative Assembly had adopted the following resolution on these reforms: "unless the proposal for constitutional reforms are substantially amended in the direction of conceding greater responsibility and freedom of action to the people's representatives in the central and provincial spheres of Government, it will not be possible to ensure peace and contentment and progress of the country."

A joint meeting of the Working Committee of the Hindu Mahasabha and some Hindu members of the Central Legislature under the chairmanship of Dr. Moonje on the 26th March, 1933, declared that the reforms "will not allay but increase the discontent, as being most disappointing and inadequate, and even retrogressive". At Ajmer Session even this criticism was not made. Complete silence on constitutional reforms was observed except pronouncing upon Communal Award and minorities question. Rather, it was advocating the policy of "Responsive Cooperation." At the most it said that the representation given to Muslims was excessive and wanted the recommendations of the Simon Commission to be adopted. Or, it demanded "reservations" and "safeguards" for Hindus in Muslim majority provinces, as already noted.

11. The Civil Disobedience movement was resumed after Gandhi's return

from the Second Round Table Conference. Gandhi was arrested on 4th January, 1932 along with Sardar Patel. Jawaharlal Nehru, Sherwani, Dr. Khan Sahib and Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan had already been arrested. In the first four months the arrests of Satyagrahis had reached 80,000 and by April 1933, 1,20,000. The Government unleashed its policy of repression. Sir Samuel Hoare stated that the British government intended "to govern" India and declared "battle" against the Congress. The repressive Ordinances included Emergency Powers, Unlawful Instigation, Unlawful Association, and Boycott and Molestation Ordinances. Wholesale violence, physical outrages, shooting and beating up, punitive expeditions, collective fines on villages and seizure of lands and property accompanied the arrests.

12. "J. M. Sen Gupta was a Congress leader of Bengal. He was held State Prisoner at Ranchi. He died suddenly on the night of 22nd July, 1933 of apoplectic stroke. His mortal remains were brought to Calcutta. His funeral procession in the streets of Calcutta had to move at a snail's pace owing to the large crowd. Wreathes were placed on the body en route by the Mayor of the Calcutta Corporation, by Dr. B. C. Roy, an ex-Mayor and colleague of Mr. Sen Gupta and by the staff of the *Advance*."

13. Bhai Parmanand exhorted Hindu youth at Karachi on the 7th May, 1932 to "assemble under the flag of Hindu nationalism."

Mr. Savarkar said, "The Hindu Mahasabha itself is in fact but an enlarged and more comprehensive edition of the *Arya Samaj*."

Bhai Parmanand wrote in 1936, "Mr. Jinnah asserts that the Muslim League should be recognized as the sole representative of the Muslim community. . . . Mr. Jinnah argues that there are two nations in the country. . . . If Mr. Jinnah is right and I believe he is, the Congress theory of building up a common nationality falls to the ground. The situation has got only two solutions. One is the *partition* of the country into two and the other to allow a Muslim State to grow within the State" (emphasis added).

In 1937, at Ahmedabad Session of the Hindu Mahasabha, Shri V. D. Savarkar propounded the two-nation theory before Mr. Jinnah did so.

Reality and Myth¹

The suggestion made by me that both the political and communal problems in India should be solved by means of a Constituent Assembly has met with considerable favour. Gandhiji has commended it and so have many others. Others again have misunderstood it or not taken the trouble to understand it.²

Politically and nationally, if it is granted, as it must be, that the people of India are to be the sole arbiters of India's fate and must therefore have full freedom to draw up their constitution, it follows that this can only be done by means of a Constituent Assembly elected on the widest franchise. Those who believe in independence have no other choice. Even those who talk vaguely in terms of a nebulous Dominion Status must agree that the decision has to be made by the Indian people. How then is this decision to be made? Not by a group of so-called leaders or individuals. Not by those self-constituted bodies called All Parties' Conferences which represent, if anybody at all, small interested groups and leave out the vast majority of the population. Not even, let us admit, by the National Congress, powerful and largely representative as it is. It is of course open to the Congress to influence and largely control the Constituent Assembly if it can carry the people with it. But the ultimate political decision must lie with the people of India acting through a popularly elected Constituent Assembly.

This Assembly of course can have nothing in common with the sham and lifeless Councils and Assemblies imposed on us by an alien authority. It must derive its sanction from the people themselves without any outside interference. I have suggested that it should be elected under adult or near-adult franchise. What the method of election should be can be considered and decided later. Personally I favour the

introduction, as far as possible, of the functional system of election as this is far more representative of real interests. The geographical system often covers up and confuses these interests. But I am prepared to agree to either or to a combination of both. I see no difficulty, except one, and that is an important one, in the way of such a Constituent Assembly being elected and functioning. This functioning will be limited to drawing up of a constitution and then fresh elections will have to be held on the basis of the new constitution.

The one difficulty I referred to is the presence and dominance of an outside authority, that is, the British Government. It is clear that so long as this dominance continues no real Constituent Assembly can meet or function, so that an essential preliminary is the development of sufficient strength in the nation to be able to enforce the will of the Indian people. Two opposing wills cannot prevail at the same time; there must be conflict between them and a struggle for dominance, such as we see to-day in India. Essentially, this struggle is for the preservation of British vested interests in India and the White Paper effort is an attempt to perpetuate them. No Constituent Assembly can be bound down by these chains, and so long as the nation has not developed strength enough to break these chains, such an Assembly cannot function.

This Assembly would also deal with the communal problem, and I have suggested that, in order to remove all suspicion from the minds of a minority, it may even, if it so chooses, have its representatives elected by separate electorates. These separate electorates would only be for the Constituent Assembly. The future method of election, as well as all other matters connected with the constitution, would be settled by the Assembly itself.

I have further added that if the Muslim elected representatives for this Constituent Assembly adhere to certain communal demands I shall press for their acceptance. Much as I dislike communalism I realise that it does not disappear

by suppression, by a removal of the feeling of fear, or by a diversion of interests. We should therefore remove this fear complex and make the Muslim masses realise that they can have any protection that they really desire. I feel that this realisation will go a long way in toning down the feeling of communalism.

But I am convinced that the real remedy lies in a diversion of interests from the myths that have been fostered and have grown up round the communal question to the realities of to-day. The bulwark of communalism to-day is political reaction and so we find that communal leaders inevitably tend to become reactionaries in political and economic matters. Groups of upper class people try to cover up their own class interests by making it appear that they stand for the communal demands of religious minorities or majorities. A critical examination of the various communal demands put forward on behalf of Hindus, Muslims or others reveals that they have nothing to do with the masses. At the most they deal with some jobs for a few of the unemployed intellectuals but it is obvious that the problem even of the unemployed middle class intellectuals cannot be solved by a redistribution of State jobs. There are far too many unemployed persons of the middle class to be absorbed in state or other service and their number is growing at a rapid pace. So far as the masses are concerned there is absolutely no reference to them or to their wants in the numerous demands put forward by communal organizations. Apparently the communalists do not consider them as worthy of attention. What is there, in the various communal formulae, in regard to the distress of agriculturalists, their rent or revenue or the staggering burden of debt that crushes them? Or in regard to the factory or railway or other workers who have to face continuous cuts in wages and a vanishing standard of living? Or the lower middle classes who for want of employment and work are sinking in the slough of despair? Heated arguments take place about seats in councils and separate and joint electorates and the separation of

provinces which can affect or interest only a few. Is the starving peasant likely to be interested in this when hunger gnaws his stomach? But our communal friends take good care to avoid these real issues, for a solution of them might affect their own interests, and they try to divert people's attention to entirely unreal and, from the mass point of view, trivial matters.

Communalism is essentially a hunt for favours from a third party—the ruling power. The communalist can only think in terms of a continuation of foreign domination and he tries to make the best of it for his own particular group. Delete the foreign power and communal arguments and demands fall to the ground. Both the foreign power and the communalists, as representing some upper class groups, want no essential change of the political and economic structure; both are interested in the preservation and augmentation of their vested interests. Because of this, both cannot tackle the real economic problems which confront the country, for a solution of these would upset the present social structure and divert the vested interest. For both this ostrich-like policy of ignoring real issues is bound to end in disaster. Facts and economic forces are more powerful than governments and empires and can only be ignored at peril.

Communalism thus becomes another name for political and social reaction and the British Government, being the citadel of this reaction in India, naturally throws its sheltering wings over a useful ally. Many a false trail is drawn to confuse the issue; we are told of Islamic culture and Hindu culture, of religion and old custom, of ancient glories and the like. *But behind all this lies political and social reaction, and communalism must therefore be fought on all fronts and given no quarter.* (emphasis added) Because the inward nature of communalism has not been sufficiently realised, it has often sailed under false colours and taken in many an unwary person. It is an undoubted fact that many a Congressman has almost unconsciously partly succumbed to it and tried to reconcile his nationalism with this narrow and

reactionary creed. A real appreciation of its true nature would demonstrate that there can be no common ground between the two. They belong to different species. It is time that Congressmen and others who have flirted with Hindu or Muslim or Sikh or any other communalism should understand this position and make their choice. No one can have it both ways, and the choice lies between political and social progress and stark reaction. *An association with any form of communalism means the strengthening of the forces of reaction and of British imperialism in India: it means opposition to social and economic change and a toleration of the present terrible distress of our people; it means a blind ignoring of world forces and events.* (emphasis added).

What are communal organizations? They are not religious although they confine themselves to religious groups and exploit the name of religion. They are not cultural and have done nothing for culture although they talk bravely of a past culture. They are not ethical or moral groups for their teachings are singularly devoid of all ethics and morality. They are certainly not economic groupings for there is no economic link binding their members and they have no shadow of an economic programme. Some of them claim not to be political even. What then are they?

As a matter of fact they function politically and their demands are political, but calling themselves non-political, they avoid the real issues and only succeed in obstructing the path of others. If they are political organizations then we are entitled to know exactly how they stand. Do they stand for the complete freedom of India or a partial freedom, if such a thing exists? Do they stand for independence or what is called Dominion Status? The best of words are apt to be misleading and many people still think that Dominion Status is something next door to independence. As a matter of fact they are two different types entirely, two roads going in opposite directions. Is it not a question of fourteen annas and sixteen annas but of different species

of coins which are not interchangeable.

Dominion Status means continuing in the steel framework of British finance and vested interests; from this strangle-hold there is no relief under Dominion Status. Independence means a possibility of relief from these burdens and the freedom to decide about our own social structure. Therefore whatever measure of limited freedom we may get under Dominion Status it will always be subject to the paramount claims of the Bank of England and British capital, and it will also be subject to the continuation of our present economic structure. That means that we cannot solve our economic problems and relieve the masses of their crushing burdens; we can only sink deeper and deeper into the morass. What then do the communal organizations stand for: Independence or Dominion Status?

We need not refer to that travesty of a constitution which the White Paper is supposed to embody.³ It is only an ungentle reminder to us that British capital and interests in India will be preserved at all costs, so long as the British Government has power to preserve them.⁴ Only those who are interested in the preservation of these British vested interests or those who are very simple and unsophisticated can go anywhere near the White Paper or its offshoots.

Even more important than the political objective is the economic objective. It is notorious that the era of politics has passed away and we live in an age when economics dominates national and international affairs. What have the communal organizations to say in regard to these economic matters? Or are they blissfully ignorant of the hunger and unemployment that darken the horizon of the masses as well as of the lower middle classes? If they claim to represent the masses they must know that the all absorbing problem before these unfortunate and unhappy millions is the problem of hunger, and they should have some answer, some theoretical solution at least, for this problem. What do they propose should be done in industry and in agriculture? How do they solve the distress of the worker

and the peasant; what land laws do they suggest? What is to happen to the debt of the agricultural classes; is it to be liquidated or merely toned down, or is it to remain? What of unemployment? Do they believe in the present capitalist order of society or do they think in terms of a new order? These are a few odd questions that arise and an answer to them, as well as to other similar questions, will enlighten us as to the true inwardness of the claims and demands of the communalists. Even more so I think will the masses be enlightened if the answers manage to reach them. The Muslim masses are probably even poorer than the Hindu masses but the 'Fourteen Points' say nothing about these poverty stricken Muslims. The Hindu communalists also lay all their stress on the preservation of their own vested interests and ignore their own masses. I am afraid, I am not likely to get clear, or perhaps any, answers to my questions, because the questions are inconvenient, partly because the communal leaders know little about economic facts and have never thought in terms of the masses. They are expert only in percentages and their battleground is the conference room, not the field or factory or market place. But whether they like them or not the questions will force themselves to the front and those who cannot answer them effectively will find little place for themselves in public affairs. The answer of many of us can be given in one comprehensive word—socialism—and in the socialist structure of society.

But whether socialism or communism is the right answer or some other, one thing is certain—that the answer must be in terms of economics and not merely politics. For India and the world are oppressed by economic problems and there is no escaping them. *So long as the fullest economic freedom does not come to us, there can be no freedom whatever the political structure may be* (emphasis added). Economic freedom must of course include political freedom. That is the reality to-day; all else is myth and delusion, and there is no greater myth than the communal myth.

To go back to the Constituent Assembly. If a really

popular Assembly met with freedom to face and decide the real issues, immediately these real economic problems would occupy attention. The so-called communal problem will fade into the background for the masses will be far more interested in filling their hungry stomachs than in questions of percentages. This Assembly will release the vital forces in the country which are at present suppressed by our foreign rulers as well as by Indian vested interests. The lead will go to the masses and the masses, when free, though they may sometimes err, think in terms of reality and have no use for myths. The workers and the peasantry will dominate the situation, and their decisions, imperfect though they be, will take us a long way to freedom. I cannot say what the Constituent Assembly will decide. But I have faith in the masses and am willing to abide by their decision. And I am sure that the communal problem will cease to exist when it is put to the hard test of real mass opinion. It has been a hot house growth nurtured in the heated atmosphere of conference rooms and so-called All Parties' Conferences. It will not find a solution in that artificial environment, but it will wilt and die in the fresh air and the sunlight.

1. Nehru, Jawaharlal. *Recent Essays and Writings* (Kitabistan, Allahabad, Second Edition, 1937), pp. 72-81.

2. The Bombay Session of the Congress (1934) adopted the idea of Constituent Assembly for settling the Constitution of India. Nehru was prepared at this stage to have elections to the Assembly by separate electorates as a concession to those minorities who so desired it. He, at the same time, emphasized that the method of separate electorates would only be for the Assembly and that the future method of election as well as other matters connected with the Constitution could be settled by the Assembly itself.

3. The main proposals of the White Paper were: (1) Dyarchy in the centre and (2) Provincial autonomy in the Provinces. However, even this limited advance was hedged by 'safeguards'. The federal legislature was to be bi-cameral, lower house being elected directly and the upper house indirectly by the provincial legislatures. The lower house was to consist of 375 members of which 125 were to represent Indian States and were to be appointed by the Rulers. The remaining 250 were to represent

British India on communal basis to be allocated among various communities in accordance with Communal Award. The franchise was based upon property and educational qualifications. Approximately 2% to 3% of the total population of India was to be enfranchised for the purpose. In case of provincial legislatures, the right of vote was to extend to 14% of the total population or 27% of the adult population.

The powers of the Governor General were so wide, overwhelming and over-riding that little scope was left to the ministers. Defence, External Affairs, Ecclesiastical departments and Tribal areas were reserved departments to be administered by the Governor General through Councillors. He was to exercise special responsibility with regard to (a) rights of minorities, (b) rights of public services, (c) rights of States, (d) financial stability and credit of India, (e) prevention of grave menace to the peace and tranquillity of India or a part thereof and (f) prevention of commercial discrimination. Eighty per cent budget was to be outside the control of the ministers and vote of the legislature. Even in the remaining 20%, the Governor General was given the power of authentication and certification. He was given the power of promulgating Ordinances and Governor-General's Acts. The ministers were subjected to the "pleasure" of the Governor General. The Reserve Bank, the Railway Board, the loans and interest thereon, excluded areas, relations with Indian States and expenditure incurred thereon were beyond the control of ministers. Sardar Patel described the legislatures envisaged under the scheme as 'delusion and a snare'. The proposals were condemned on all sides. Even the moderates and liberals found them 'disappointing'. The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry found the proposal "not only in direct breach of solemn promises of conferring a Constitution on India on the line of the Dominions", but "definitely reactionary and retrograde" falling short of "even the modest aspirations of the country" and making the conferment of Dominion Status recede into the remote future. Madan Mohan Malaviya in his presidential address to Calcutta Congress said, "I hope that no self-respecting Indian who has a correct sense of his duty towards the motherland will take part in any further confabulations regarding the White Paper unless and until the British Government should change its present policy and make up its mind to treat Indians as equal fellowmen who are as much entitled to complete independence in the management of their own affairs as England herself is in regard to her own affairs". Ram Chandra Rao, presiding over the session of National Liberal Federation said, "The question is whether the proposals now made in the White Paper have carried out these solemn promises and whether the scheme adumbrated therein lays the foundation necessary for raising India to the status of a self-governing Dominion. The answer to this question can only be in the negative".

B. S. Moonje, on the other hand, explained the position of Hindu Mahasabha in May 1933 as follows:

"Now as for the joint Parliamentary Committee the Mahasabha never had any faith in the kind of non-cooperation which Mahatma Gandhi has been preaching and practising. It believes in the eternal Sanatan law of

stimulus and response namely responsive co-operation. The Mahasabha holds that they [Legislatures] should never be boycotted but should be worked to the best advantages of the country".

The Muslim communalists were pleading for stabilising the gains under the Communal Award and demanding more representation in this Assembly or that. They were further demanding the separation of Sind, extension of reforms to Baluchistan and grant of largest measures of administrative, fiscal and legislative autonomy to provinces, curtailment of powers of the Governor General, full responsibility of ministers to legislature, etc.

4. The White Paper had proposed two statutory bodies: Reserve Bank and Railway Board, and put these beyond the control of Indian ministers. Further the Governor General was charged with special responsibility of "prevention of commercial discrimination". It was elaborated in paras 122 to 124 of the Proposals.

Para 122 reads: The Federal Legislature and the Provincial Legislatures will have no power to make laws subjecting in British India any British subject (including companies, partnerships or associations constituted by or under any Federal or Provincial Law) in respect of taxation, the holding of property of any kind, the carrying on of any profession, trade, business or occupation, or the employment of any servant or agents. . . .

Para 123 reads: The Federal Legislature and the Provincial Legislatures will have no powers to making laws subjecting any British subject domiciled in the United Kingdom (including companies, etc., incorporated or constituted by or under the laws of the United Kingdom) to any disability or discrimination in the exercise of certain specified rights, if an Indian subject of His Majesty, or Company, etc., constituted by or under a Federal or Provincial Law, as the case be, would not in the exercise in the United Kingdom of the corresponding right be subject in the United Kingdom to any disability or discriminating of the same or similar character. . . ."

This ensured reciprocity between Indian and British industry and commerce. The need of the under-developed industry in India was not reciprocity of competition but protection against foreign and more particularly British competition. These provisions of the White Paper were condemned by the President of the Indian Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry. He said that it was the birth right of every country to develop her indigenous industries by all means including discrimination against all non-nationals. He further said that by these provisions the British Government wanted to retain privileged position of the British commerce and industry in the economic life of India, "even at the cost of the children of the soil". Neither the Muslim communalists nor the Hindu communalists raised their finger against these provisions.

Muslim Politics¹

My object was to point out that the communal leaders were in reality opposed to political, and even more so to social advance. All their demands had no relation whatever to the masses. They were meant only to bring some advancement to the small groups at the top. It was my intention to carry on oft-repeated appeal for Hindu-Muslim unity, useful as it no doubt is, seemed to be singularly inane, unless some effort was made to understand the causes of the disunity. Some people, however, seem to imagine that by a frequent repetition of the magic formula, unity will ultimately emerge.

It is interesting to trace British policy since the Rising of 1857 in its relation to the communal question. Fundamentally and inevitably it has been one of preventing the Hindu and Muslim from acting together, and of playing off one community against another.² After 1857 the heavy hand of the British fell more on the Muslims than on the Hindus. They considered the Muslims more aggressive and militant, possessing memories of recent rule in India, and therefore more dangerous. The Muslims had also kept away from the new education and had few jobs under Government.³ All this made them suspect. The Hindus had taken far more kindly to the English language and clerky jobs, and seemed to be more docile.

The new nationalism then grew up from above—the upper-class English-speaking intelligentsia—and this was naturally confined to the Hindus, for the Muslims were educationally very backward. This nationalism spoke in the gentlest and most abject of tones, and yet it was not to the liking of the Government, and they decided to encourage the Muslims more and keep them away from the new nationalist platform. Lack of English education was in itself a sufficient bar then, so far as the Muslims were concerned,

but this was bound to go gradually. With foresight the British provided for the future, and in this task they were helped by an outstanding personality—Sir Syed Ahmad Khan.⁴

Sir Syed was unhappy about the backward condition of his community, especially in education, and he was distressed at the lack of favour and influence it had in the eyes of British Government. Like many of his contemporaries, he was a great admirer of the British, and a visit to Europe seems to have had a most powerful effect on him. Europe, or rather Western Europe, of the second half of the 19th century was at the height of its civilisation, the unchallenged mistress of the world, with all the qualities that had made it great most in evidence. The upper classes were secure in their inheritance and adding to it, with little fear of a successful challenge. It was the age of a growing liberalism and a firm belief in a great destiny. It is not surprising that the Indians who went there were fascinated by this imposing spectacle. More Hindus went there to begin with and they returned admirers of Europe and England. Gradually they got used to the shine and glamour, and the first surprise wore off. But in Sir Syed's case that first surprise and fascination is very much in evidence. Visiting England in 1869 he wrote letters home giving his impressions. In one of these he stated: "The result of all this is that although I do not absolve the English in India of discourtesy, and of looking upon the natives of that country as animals and beneath contempt, I think they do so from not understanding us; and I am afraid I, without flattering the English, can truly say that the natives of India, high and low, merchants and petty shopkeepers, educated and illiterate, when contrasted with the English in education, manners and uprightness, are as like them as a dirty animal is to an able and handsome man. The English have reason for believing us in India to be imbecile brutes. . . . What I have seen, and seen daily, is utterly beyond the imagination of a native of India. . . . All good things, spiritual and worldly, which

should be found in man, have been bestowed by the Almighty on Europe, and especially on England."

Greater praise no man could give to the British and to Europe, and it is obvious that Sir Syed was tremendously impressed. Perhaps also he used strong language and heightened the contrasts in order to shake up his own people out of their torpor and induce them to take a step forward. This step, he was convinced, must be in the direction of Western education; without that education his community would become more and more backward and powerless. English education meant government jobs, security, influence, honour.⁵ So to this education he turned all his energy, trying to win over his community to his way of thinking. He wanted no diversions or distractions from other directions; it was a difficult enough piece of work to overcome the inertia and hesitation of the Muslims. The beginnings of a new nationalism, sponsored by the Hindu *bourgeoisie*, seemed to him to offer such a distraction, and he opposed it. The Hindus, half a century ahead in Western education, could indulge in this pastime of criticising the Government, but he had counted on the full co-operation of that Government in his educational undertakings and he was not going to risk this by any premature step. So he turned his back on the infant National Congress, and the British Government were only too willing to encourage this attitude.⁶

Sir Syed's decision to concentrate on Western education for Muslims was undoubtedly a right one. Without that they could not have played any effective part in the building up of Indian nationalism of the new type, and they would have been doomed to play second fiddle to the Hindus with their better education and far stronger economic position. The Muslims were not historically or ideologically ready then for the *bourgeois* nationalist movement as they had developed no *bourgeoisie* as the Hindus had done. Sir Syed's activities, therefore, although seemingly very moderate, were in the right revolutionary direction. The Muslims were still wrapped up in a feudal anti-democratic ideology, while the

rising middle class among the Hindus had begun to think in terms of the European liberals. Both were thoroughly moderate and dependent on British rule. Sir Syed's moderation was the moderation of the landlord-class to which the handful of well-to-do Muslims belonged. The Hindu's moderation was that of the cautious professional or business man seeking an outlet for industry and investment. These Hindu politicians looked up to the shining lights of English liberalism—Gladstone, Bright, etc. I doubt if the Muslims did so. Probably they admired the Tories and the landed classes of England. Gladstone, indeed was their *bete noir* because of his repeated condemnation of Turkey and the Armenian massacres; and because Disraeli seemed to be more friendly to Turkey. They—that is of course the handful who took interest in such matters—were to some extent partial to him.

Some of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's speeches make strange reading to-day. At a speech delivered in Lucknow in December 1887 he seems to have criticised and condemned the very moderate demands of the National Congress which was holding its annual session just then. Sir Syed said: "... if Government fight Afghanistan or conquer Burma, it is no business of ours to criticise its policy. . . . Government has made a Council for making laws. . . . For this Council she selects from all Provinces those officials who are best acquainted with the administration and the condition of the people, and also some *Raises* who, on account of their high social position, are worthy of a seat in that assembly. Some people may ask—Why should they be chosen on account of social position instead of ability? . . . I ask you—Would our aristocracy like that a man of low caste or insignificant origin, though he be a B.A. or M.A. and have the requisite ability, should be in a position of authority above them and have power in making the laws that affect their lives and property? Never! . . . None but a man of good breeding can the Viceroy take as his colleague, treat as his brother, and invite to entertainments at which he may have to dine with

Dukes and Earls. . . . Can we say that the Government, in the method it has adopted for legislation, acts without regard to the opinions of the people? Can we say that we have no share in the making of the laws? Most certainly not. . . .”

Thus spoke the leader and representative of the ‘democracy of Islam’ in India! It is doubtful if even the taluqdars of Oudh or the landed magnates of Agra Province, Behar, or Bengal would venture to speak in this vein to-day. And yet Sir Syed was by no means unique in this. Many of the Congress speeches read equally strangely to-day. But it seems clear that the political and economic aspect of the Hindu-Muslim question then was this: the rising and economically better-equipped middle class (Hindu) was resisted and checked to some extent by part of the feudal landlord-class (Muslim). The Hindu landlords were often closely connected with their bourgeoisie, and thus remained neutral or even sympathetic to the middle-class demands which were often influenced by them. The British, as always, sided with the feudal elements. The masses and the lower middle classes on either side were not in the picture at all.

Sir Syed’s dominating and forceful personality impressed itself on the Indian Muslims, and the Aligarh College became the visible emblem of his hopes and desires. In a period of transition a progressive impulse may soon play out its part and be reduced to functioning as a brake. The Indian Liberals are an obvious example of this. They remind us often that they are the true heirs of the old Congress tradition and we of a later day are interlopers. True enough. But they forget that the world changes and the old Congress tradition has vanished with the snows of yester-year and only remains as a memory. So also Sir Syed’s message was appropriate and necessary when it came, but it could not be the final ideal of a progressive community. It is possible that had he lived a generation later, he would himself have given another orientation to that message. Or other leaders could have re-interpreted his old message and applied it to changing conditions. But the very success that came to Sir Syed

and the reverence that clung to his memory made it difficult for others to depart from the old faith; and, unhappily, the Muslims of India were strangely lacking in men of outstanding ability who could point a new way. Aligarh College did fine work, produced a large number of competent men, and changed the whole tone of the Muslim intelligentsia, but still it could not wholly get out of the frame-work in which it was built—a feudal spirit reigned over it, and the goal of the average student's ambition was government service. Not for him the adventures of the spirit or the quest of the stars; he was happy if he got a Deputy Collectorship. His pride was soothed by his being reminded that he was a unit in the great democracy of Islam, and in witness of this brotherhood, he wore jauntily on his head the red cap, called the Turkish fez, which the Turks themselves soon afterwards were going to discard utterly. Having assured himself of his inalienable right to democracy, which enabled him to feed and pray with his brother Muslims, he did not worry about the existence or otherwise of political democracy in India.

This narrow outlook and hankering after government service was not confined to the Muslim students of Aligarh and elsewhere. It was equally in evidence among the Hindu students who were far from being adventurous by nature. But circumstances forced many of them out of the rut. There were far too many of them and not enough jobs to go round, and so they became the *déclassé* intellectuals who are the backbone of national revolutionary movements.

The Indian Muslims had not wholly recovered from the cramping effects of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's political message when the events of the early years of the twentieth century helped the British Government to widen the breach between them and the nationalist movement, now clamant and aggressive. Sir Valentine Chirol wrote in 1910 in his *Indian Unrest*: "It may be confidently asserted that never before have the Mohammadans of India as a whole identified their interests and their aspirations so closely as at the present day with the consolidation and permanence of British rule."

Political prophesies are dangerous. Within five years after Sir Valentine wrote, the Muslim intelligentsia was trying hard to break through from the fetters that kept it back and to range itself beside the Congress.⁷ Within a decade the Indian Muslims seemed to have outstripped the Congress and were actually giving the lead to it.⁸ But these ten years were momentous years, and the Great War had come and gone and left a broken-down world as a legacy.

And yet Sir Valentine had superficially every reason to come to the conclusion he did. The Aga Khan had emerged as the leader of the Muslims, and that fact alone showed that they still clung to their feudal traditions, for the Aga Khan was no bourgeois leader. He was an exceedingly wealthy prince and the religious head of a sect, and from the British point of view he was very much a *persona grata* because of his close association with the British ruling classes. He was widely cultured, and lived mostly in Europe, the life of a wealthy English landed magnate and sportsman; he was thus far from being personally narrow-minded on communal or sectarian matters. His leadership of the Muslims meant the lining up of the Muslim landed classes as well as the growing *bourgeoisie* with the British Government; the communal problem was really secondary and was obviously stressed in the interests of the main objective. Sir Valentine Chirol tells us that the Aga Khan impressed upon Lord Minto, the Viceroy, "the Mohammedan view of the political situation created by the partition of Bengal, lest political concessions should be hastily made to the Hindus which would pave the way for the ascendancy of a Hindu majority equally dangerous to the stability of British rule and to the interests of the Mohammedan minority whose loyalty was beyond dispute".

But behind this superficial lining up with the British Government other forces were working. Inevitably the new Muslim *bourgeoisie* was feeling more and more dissatisfied with existing conditions and was being drawn towards the nationalist movement. The Aga Khan himself had to take

notice of this and to warn the British in characteristic language. He wrote in the *Edinburgh Review* of January 1914 (that is, long before the war) advising the Government to abandon the policy of separating Hindus from Muslims, and to rally the moderate of both creeds in a common camp so as to provide a counterpoise to the radical nationalist tendencies of young India—both Hindu and Muslim. It was thus clear that he was far more interested in checking political change in India than in the communal interests of Muslims.

But the Aga Khan or the British Government could not stop the inevitable drift of the Muslim *bourgeoisie* towards nationalism. The World War hastened the process, and as new leaders arose the Aga Khan seemed to retire into the background. Even Aligarh College changed its tone, and among the new leaders the most dynamic were the Ali Brothers, both products of Aligarh. Doctor M. A. Ansari, Moulana Abul Kalam Azad, and a number of other *bourgeois* leaders now began to play an important part in the political affairs of the Muslims. So also, on a more moderate scale, Mr. M. A. Jinnah. Gandhiji swept most of these leaders (not Mr. Jinnah) and the Muslims generally into his non-co-operation movement, and they played a leading part in the events of 1919-23.

Then came the reaction,⁹ and communal and backward elements, both among the Hindus and the Muslims, began to emerge from their enforced retirement. It was a slow process, but it was a continuous one. The Hindu Mahasabha for the first time assumed some prominence, chiefly because of the communal tension, but politically it could not make much impression on the Congress. The Muslim organisations were more successful in regaining some of their old prestige among the Muslim masses. Even so a very strong group of Muslim leaders remained throughout with the Congress. The British Government meanwhile gave every encouragement to the Muslim communal leaders who were politically thoroughly reactionary. Noting the success of these reactionaries,

the Hindu Mahasabha began to compete with them in reaction, thereby hoping to win the goodwill of the Government. Many of the progressive elements in the Mahasabha were driven out or left of their own accord, and it inclined more and more towards the upper middle classes and especially the creditor and banker class.

The communal politicians on both sides, who were interminably arguing about percentages of seats in legislatures, thought only in terms of patronage which influence in Government gives. It was a struggle for jobs for the middle-class intelligentsia. There were obviously not enough jobs to go round, and so the Hindu and Muslim communalists quarrelled about them, the former on the defensive, for they had most of the existing jobs, the latter always wanting more and more. Behind this struggle for jobs there was a much more important contest which was not exactly communal but which influenced the communal issue. On the whole the Hindus were, in the Punjab, Sind, and Bengal, the richer, creditor, urban class; the Muslims in these provinces were the poorer, debtor, rural class. The conflict between the two was therefore often economic, but it was always given a communal colouring. In recent months this has come out very prominently in the debates on various provincial bills for reducing the burden of rural debt, especially in the Punjab. The representatives of the Hindu Mahasabha have consistently opposed these measures and sided with the banker class.

The Hindu Mahasabha is always laying stress on its own irreproachable nationalism when it criticises Muslim communalism. That the Muslim organisations have shown themselves to be quite extraordinarily communal has been patent to everybody. The Mahasabha's communalism has not been so obvious, as it masquerades under a nationalist cloak. The test comes when a national and democratic solution happens to injure upper-class Hindu interests, and in this test the Mahasabha has repeatedly failed. The separation of Sind has been consistently opposed by them in the economic

interests of a minority and against the declared wishes of the majority.

But the most extraordinary exhibition of anti-nationalism and reaction, both on the part of Muslim and Hindu communalists, took place at the Round Table Conferences. The British Government had insisted on nominating only definitely communal Muslims, and these, under the leadership of the Aga Khan,¹⁰ actually went to the length of allying themselves with the most reactionary and, from the point of view not only of India but of all progressive groups, the most dangerous elements in British public life. It was quite extraordinary to see the close association of the Aga Khan and his group with Lord Lloyd and his party.¹¹ They went a step further, and made pacts with the representatives of the European Association and others at the R.T.C.¹² This was very depressing, for this Association has been and is, in India, the stoutest and the most aggressive opponent of Indian freedom.¹³

The Hindu Mahasabha delegates responded to this by demanding, especially in the Punjab, all manner of checks on freedom—safeguards in the interests of the British. They tried to outbid the Muslims in their attempts to offer co-operation to the British Government, and, without gaining anything, damned their own case and betrayed the cause of freedom. The Muslims had at least spoken with dignity, the Hindu communalists did not even possess this.¹⁴

The outstanding fact seems to me how, on both sides, the communal leaders represent a small upper class reactionary group, and how these people exploit and take advantage of the religious passions of the masses for their own ends. On both sides every effort is made to suppress and avoid the consideration of economic issues. Soon the time will come when these issues can no longer be suppressed, and then, no doubt, the communal leaders on both sides will echo the Aga Khan's warning of twenty years ago for the moderates to join hands in a common camp against

radical tendencies. To some extent that is already evident, for however much the Hindu and Muslim communalists attack each other in public they cooperate in the Assembly and elsewhere in helping Government to pass reactionary measures. Ottawa was one of the links which brought the three together.

Meanwhile it is interesting to notice that the Aga Khan's close association with the extreme Right wing of the Conservative party continues. In October 1934 he was the guest of honour at the British Navy League dinner, at which Lord Lloyd presided, and he supported wholeheartedly the proposals for further strengthening the British Navy, which Lord Lloyd had made at the Bristol Conservative Conference. An Indian leader was thus so anxious about imperial defence and the safety of England that he wanted to go further in increasing British armaments than even Mr. Baldwin or the 'National' Government. Of course, this was all in the interest of peace.

The next month, in November 1934, it was reported that a film was privately shown in London, the object of which was "to link the Muslim world in lasting friendship with the British Crown". We were informed that the guests of honour on this occasion were the Aga Khan and Lord Lloyd. It would seem that the Aga Khan and Lord Lloyd have become almost as inseparably united—two hearts that beat as one—in imperial affairs, as Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Mr. M. R. Jayakar are in our national politics. And it is worth noticing that, during these months when the two were so frequently communing with each other, Lord Lloyd was leading a bitter and unrelenting attack on the official Conservative leadership and the National Government for their alleged weakness in giving too much to India.¹⁵

Latterly there has been an interesting development in the speeches and statements of some of the Muslim communal leaders. This has no real importance, but I doubt if many people think so, nevertheless it is significant of the

mentality of communalism, and a great deal of prominence has been given to it. Stress has been laid on the 'Muslim nation' in India, on 'Muslim culture' on the utter incompatibility of Hindu and Muslim 'cultures'. The inevitable deduction from this is (although it is not put boldly) that the British must remain in India for ever and ever to hold the scales and mediate between the two 'cultures'.

A few Hindu communal leaders think exactly on the same lines, with this difference, however, that they hope that being in a majority their brand of 'culture' will ultimately prevail.

Hindu and Muslim 'cultures' and the 'Muslim nation'—how these words open out fascinating vistas of past history and present and future speculation! The Muslim nation in India—a nation within a nation, and not even compact, but vague, spread out, indeterminate. Politically, the idea is absurd, economically it is fantastic; it is hardly worth considering. And yet it helps us a little to understand the mentality behind it. Some such separate and unmixable 'nations' existed together in the Middle ages and afterwards. In the Constantinople of the early days of the Ottoman Sultans each such 'nation' lived separately and had a measure of autonomy—Latin Christians, Orthodox Christians, Jews, etc. This was the beginning of extra-territoriality which, in more recent times, became such a nightmare to many eastern countries. To talk of a 'Muslim nation', therefore, means that there is no nation at all but a religious bond; it means that no nation in the modern sense must be allowed to grow: it means that modern civilisation should be discarded and we should go back to the medieval ways; it means either autocratic government or a foreign government; it means, finally, just nothing at all except an emotional state of mind and a conscious or unconscious desire not to face realities, especially economic realities. Emotions have a way of upsetting logic, and we may not ignore them simply because they seem so unreasonable. But this idea of a Muslim nation is the figment of a few imaginations only,

and, but for the publicity given to it by the Press, few people would have heard of it. And even if many people believed in it, it would still vanish at the touch of reality.

So also the ideas of Hindu and Muslim 'culture'. The day of even national cultures is rapidly passing and the world is becoming one cultural unit. Nations may retain, and will retain for a long time much that is peculiar to them—language, habits, ways of thought, etc.—but the machine age and science, with swift travel, constant supply of world news, radio, cinema, etc., will make them more and more uniform. No one can fight against this inevitable tendency, and only a world catastrophe which shatters modern civilisation can really check it. There are certainly many differences between the traditional Hindu and Muslim philosophies of life. But these differences are hardly noticeable when both of them are compared to the modern scientific and industrial outlook on life, for between this latter and the former two there is a vast gulf. The real struggle today in India is not between Hindu culture and Muslim culture, but between these two and the conquering scientific culture of modern civilisation. Those who are desirous of preserving 'Muslim culture', whatever that may be, need not worry about Hindu culture, but should withstand the giant from the West. I have no doubt, personally, that all efforts, Hindu or Muslim, to oppose modern scientific and industrial civilisation are doomed to failure, and I shall watch this failure without regret. Our choice was unconsciously and involuntarily made when railways and the like came here. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan made his choice on behalf of the Indian Muslims when he started the Aligarh College. But none of us had really any choice in the matter, except the choice which a drowning man has to clutch at something which might save him.

But what is this 'Muslim culture'? Is it a kind of racial memory of the great deeds of the Arabs, Persians, Turks, etc.? Or language? Or art and music? Or customs? I do not remember any one referring to present-day Muslim art or

Muslim music. The two languages which have influenced Muslim thought in India are Arabic and Persian, and especially the latter. But the influence of Persian has no element of religion about it. The Persian language and many Persian customs and traditions came to India in the course of thousands of years and impressed themselves powerfully all over north India. Persia was the France of the East, sending its language and culture to all its neighbours. That is a common and a precious heritage for all of us in India.

Pride in the past achievements of Islamic races and countries is probably one of the strongest of Islamic bonds. Does any one grudge the Muslims this noble record of various races? No one can take it away from them so long as they choose to remember it and cherish it. As a matter of fact, this past record is also to a large extent a common heritage for all of us, perhaps because we feel as Asiatics a common bond uniting us against the aggression of Europe. I know that whenever I have read of the conflicts of the Arabs in Spain or during the Crusades, my sympathies have always been with them. I try to be impartial and objective, but, try as I will, the Asiatic in me influences my judgment when an Asiatic people are concerned.

I have tried hard to understand what this 'Muslim culture' is, but I confess that I have not succeeded. I find a tiny handful of middle-class Muslims as well as Hindus in north India influenced by the Persian Language and traditions. And looking to the masses the most obvious symbols of 'Muslim culture' seem to be: a particular type of pyjamas, not too long and not too short, a particular way of shaving or clipping the moustache but allowing the beard to grow, and a *lota* with a special kind of snout, just as the corresponding Hindu customs are the wearing of a *dhoti*, the possession of a topknot, and a *lota* of a different kind. As a matter of fact, even these distinctions are largely urban and they tend to disappear. The Muslim peasantry and industrial workers are hardly distinguishable from the Hindu. The Muslim intelligentsia seldom sports a beard,

though Aligarh still fancies a red Turkish cap with a fez (Turkish it is called, although Turkey will have none of it). Muslim women have taken to the *sari* and are emerging rather slowly from the *purdah*. My own tastes do not harmonise with some of those habits, and I do not fancy beards or moustaches or topknots, but I have no desire to impose my canons of taste on others, though I must confess, in regard to beards, that I rejoiced when Amanullah began to deal with them in summary fashion in Kabul.

I must say that those Hindus and Muslims who are always looking backward, always clutching at things which are slipping away from their grasp, are a singularly pathetic sight. I do not wish to damn the past or to reject it, for there is so much that is singularly beautiful in our past. That will endure I have no doubt. But it is not the beautiful that these people clutch at, but something that is seldom worthwhile and is often harmful.

In recent years Indian Muslims have had repeated shocks, and many of their deeply cherished notions have been shattered. Turkey, the champion of Islam, has not only ended the Khilafat, for which India put up such a brave fight in 1920, but has taken step after step away from religion. In the new Turkish Constitution an article stated that Turkey was a Moslem State, but, lest there be any mistake, Kamal Pasha said in 1927: "The provision in the Constitution that Turkey is a Moslem State is a compromise destined to be done away with at the first opportunity." And I believe he acted up to this hint later on. Egypt, though much more cautiously, is going the same way and keeping her politics quite apart from religion. So also the Arab countries, except Arabia itself, which is more backward. Persia is looking back to pre-Islamic days for her cultural inspiration. Everywhere religion recedes into the background and nationalism appears in aggressive garbs, and behind nationalism other isms which talk in social and economic terms. What of the 'Muslim nation' and 'Muslim culture'? Are they to be found in the future

only in northern India, rejoicing under the benign rule of the British?

If progress consists in the individual taking a broader view of what constitutes politics, our communalists as well as our Government have deliberately and consistently aimed at the opposite of this—the narrowing of this view.

1. Nehru, Jawaharlal. *An Autobiography*, (Allied Publishers Private Ltd., 1962), pp. 460-72.

2. Elphinstone, the Governor of Bombay, said "*Divide et impera* was the old Roman motto, and it should be ours."

Lord Ellenborough, the Governor General of India, wrote in 1843: "I cannot close my eyes to the belief that that race (Mahommedans) is fundamentally hostile to us and our policy is to reconstruct the Hindus".

Graham, referring to British policy, writes, "During and long after the Mutiny, the Mohamadans were under a cloud. To them were attributed all the horrors and calamities of the terrible time".

The Government considered Muslims "a persistently belligerent class" and "a source of permanent danger to the Empire."

Schiff quotes an army officer who "pronounced that 'our endeavour should be to uphold in full force the (for us, fortunate) separation which exists between the different religions and races; not to endeavour to amalgamate them'."

Lathe observes, "The logical result of this policy was only to accentuate differences to retard the process of unification by the obliterating of differences, to create a sense of differentness where that sense did not exist at all or only unconsciously, and to perpetuate all forces of disruption."

3. W. W. Hunter wrote, "The Mohammedan population is... shut out alike from official employ and from the recognised professions". He quotes the Calcutta Persian paper (*Durbin* of July 1869), "All sorts of employment, great and small, are being gradually snatched away from the Muhammadans, and bestowed on men of other races, particularly the Hindus. The Government... publicly singles out the Muhammadans in its Gazettes for exclusion from official posts. Recently, when several vacancies occurred in the office of the Sundarhans Commissioner, that official in advertising them in the Government Gazette, stated that the appointments would be given to none but Hindus. In short the Muhammadans have now sunk so low, that, even when qualified for Government employ, they are studiously kept out of it by Government notification". He further quotes a petition by Orissa Muhammadans to the Commissioner which reads "...that we would travel into the remotest corners of the earth, ascend the snowy peaks of the Himalayas, wander the forelorn

regions of Siberia, could we be convinced that by so travelling we would be blessed with a Government appointment of ten shillings a week".

Raikes remarked that, a "Mohammadian was another word for a rebel".

Sir William Muir noted, "To teach those rascally Mussalmans a lesson" the Nawab of Jhajjar, Ballabhgar, Farukhanagar, and twenty-four Shahzadas were hanged.

Mr. Talmiz Khaldan notes that Muslim property was either confiscated or destroyed. While Muslims were made to pay 35 per cent of their immovable property as punitive fine, Hindus were let off with only 10 per cent. After Delhi was reconquered the Hindus were allowed to return within a few months, but the Muslims could not, before 1859. He quotes C. F. Andrews saying that "decay immediately overtook the revival of learning in Delhi, from which it never recovered." Muhammad Qasim, the founder of Darul-Ulum, laying down the fundamental rules of the institution, forbade his followers to accept any government aid and banned the teaching of English.

Maulana Rashid Ahmad Gangohi, the Chief spokesman of the Darul-Ulum of Deoband, issued a Fatwa asking Muslims to associate with the Congress and against Sir Sayyad's stand against Muslims joining the Congress. The Wahabis of India had published a book of Fatwas in support of the Congress entitled *Nasrat-al-Ahrar*, comprising over one hundred Fatwas, including two from the leaders of Deoband.

Sir Theodore Morrison writes that while Hindus were experiencing an intellectual renaissance, the Muslims all over India were falling into a state of material indigence and intellectual decay." W. C. Smith observes: "All competent observers agree that the British Government singled out the Muslim community for deliberate repression for the first decade or so after the Mutiny". He further says that about 1870 the British Government began to change favourites and instead of repressing the Muslims any further or continuing to exclude them from the growing professional classes, it began to encourage Muslims to enter professional classes offering them positions and privileges in return for loyalty, in fear of the nascent Hindu power to revolt.

Sir John Strachey expressed the new policy in the following words, "The existence side by side of these hostile creeds is one of the strong points in our political position in India. The better classes of Mohammedans are a source to us of strength and not of weakness. They constitute a comparatively small but energetic minority of the population, whose political interests are identical with ours."

It was in pursuance of this policy that Bengal was partitioned, separate electorates were introduced by the Government and the policy of counter-poise of communalism against the rising tide of nationalism was followed. The policy culminated in what J. Coatman, C.I.E., said in 1932: "The creation of a strong, united India... is day by day, being made impossible, and in its place it seems there might be brought into being a powerful Mohammedan state in the North and North-West with its eye definitely turned away from India..."

4. W. C. Smith writes, "It was about 1869-70 when Sir Sayyad visited England, that he was warmly received by Lords and officials, and was decorated by the Crown. Two years later the college at Aligarh was opened with a flourish. Official circles were assuring the world that their old distrust and repression of Muslims were all a mistake".

5. One of the objects of the Aligarh College was "to make the Mussalmans of India worthy and useful subjects of the British Crown" and its founders pompously proclaimed that "the British rule in India is the most wonderful phenomenon the world has ever seen".

6. Sir Sayyad Ahmad opposed the Congress and asked the Muslims to remain aloof from it. He formed the United India Patriotic Association in 1888 to oppose the Congress. The Association included both Hindus and Muslims. The main objects of the Association were:

(1) To inform the members of Parliament and People of England through newspapers and tracts that all the communities of India, the aristocracy and the princes, were not with the Congress and to contradict its statements.

(2) To keep the Parliament and People of England informed about the opinions of Hindu and Muslim organisations which were opposed to the Congress.

(3) To help in the maintenance of law and order and the strengthening of the British rule in India and to wean away people from the Congress. He preached loyalty to the British rulers of India even if they "were compelled to pursue an unfriendly policy towards Turkey."

7. The Muslim League after 1910 was entering into a new phase. The entry of nationalist leaders like Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Hakim Ajmal Khan, Dr. Ansari and others gave it a new orientation. By 1915, the Aga Khan resigned as permanent president of the Muslim League. M. A. Jinnah and Aziz Ali with the support of Bombay Muslims were able to get control of the League and brought it near the Congress. In 1916, as a result of these efforts, the Congress and the League held annual sessions simultaneously at Lucknow. The Congress leaders attended the League session and vice versa. The Lucknow Pact was agreed to between the two organisations settling the communal question and presenting a united political demand to the British Government.

8. It was in 1920 that the Khilafat question became the main question and the Khilafat movement the major political movement in the country.

9. With the failure of the Khilafat movement and Gandhi's withdrawal after the violent incidents at Chauri Chaura of the non-co-operation movement, when it was at its peak, there spread a wave of political demoralisation and political inactivity. The constructive programme of Gandhi could not fill the political vacuum thus created. Communalists came out of the hideout and started communal riots. The Multan riot set the pace to a wave of communal riots in northern India. The political question was relegated into the background and the energies of leaders were spent either in preaching communal unity or in fighting for concessions in the form of seats for different communities in the Legislative

Councils. Till 1928, the politics in the country revolved round communal compromises, communal intransigence, unity conferences and their failures.

10. Aga Khan was made the leader of the delegation of British India at the Round Table Conference. This is how the British authorities had characterised him:

Morley: "I believe he is real friend of the Raj..."

Prince of Wales wrote to Lord Minto: "You could not precisely find a more loyal man in the whole of India and one who wishes to do all he can to help the Government in their difficulties".

Minto: "The Aga Khan agrees that India is quite unfit for popular representation in our sense of the word..."

The Aga Khan himself had written to Dunlop Smith: "In order to reach the definite objects mentioned by the deputation in the petition to H.E. the Viceroy I have asked all the members of the Simla Deputation to form into a permanent Committee and I have given to my old friend Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk, who as you know is a most loyal and zealous Mohammedan certain instructions regarding the methods by which he is to proceed during my absence. I have also asked him not to move in any matter before just finding out if the step to be taken has the full approval of the Government privately as otherwise unintentionally he might be led to do something or other that would leave the Government in an inconvenient situation. He is going to be the Hon. Secretary of this informal Committee and we cannot have a better or more trustworthy man."

11. Sir Winston Churchill resigned from the Conservative Business Advisory Committee and led a 'save India' campaign when the British Government decided to call the Round Table Conferences. He said that the Simon Commission recommendations were the absolute maximum. He said that Britain had no intention of relinquishing its Empire in India and that Gandhism and all that it stood for would have to be finally crushed. In March 1933, a new Parliamentary group was formed called the India Defence Committee. The letter of the invitation to form this Committee invited those "who are opposed to the abdication of Central Government of India and who are prepared to take any measures necessary to resist the proposal, for which there is no mandate either in Great Britain or India." Sixty Conservative M.Ps. attended the meeting. In June 1933, the India Defence League was formed for the same purpose.

Among Churchill's most loyal supporters was Lord Lloyd, a former governor of Bombay. He led a campaign against further grant of constitutional reforms and against the non-co-operation movement led by the Congress.

12. Provisions for a settlement of the communal problems put forwarded by Muslims, depressed classes, Indian Christians, Anglo-Indians and Europeans:

(1) No prejudicial treatment to any person by reason of his origin, religion, caste or creed, in any way in regard to public employment,

office of power or honour, or with regard to enjoyment of his civic rights and the exercise of any trade or calling.

(2) Statutory safeguards to be incorporated in the Constitution against any discriminatory laws affecting any community.

(3) Guarantee full religious liberty, that is full liberty of belief, worship, observances, propaganda, association and education subject to public order and morality.

(4) Right to establish, arrange and control religious, social, charitable and educational institutions with the right to exercise religion therein.

(5) Safeguard for the protection of religion, culture and personal law, due grants-in-aid to educational institutions of minorities.

(6) Prevention of full enjoyment of civil rights by citizens to be an offence punishable by law.

(7) "In the formation of cabinets in the Central Government and Provincial Governments so far as possible, members belonging to the Mussalman community and other minorities of considerable number shall be included by convention."

(8) "There shall be Statutory Departments under the Central and Provincial Governments to protect minority community and to promote their welfare."

(9) "All communities at present enjoying representation in any Legislature through nomination or election shall have representation in all Legislature through separate electorates and the minorities shall have no less than the proportion set forth in the Annexure but no majority shall be reduced to a minority or even an equality. Provided that after a lapse of ten years it will be open to Muslims in Punjab and Bengal and any minority communities in any other Provinces to accept joint electorates, or joint electorates with reservation of seats, by the consent of the community concerned. Similarly after the lapse of ten years it will be open to any minority in the Central Legislature to accept joint electorates with or without reservation of seats with the consent of the community concerned.

"With regard to the Depressed Classes no change to joint electorates and reserved seats shall be made until after 20 years' experience of separate electorates and until direct adult suffrage for the community has been established."

(10) Para ten proposed appointment of Public Service Commission in the Centre and in every Province and instructions to be issued to the Governor-General and the Governors to secure, through these Commissions, "a fair representation to the various communities consistently with the consideration of efficiency and the possession of the necessary qualifications".

Special claims of Mussalmans:

1. The N.W.F.P. to be constituted as a Governor's Province on the same footing as other Provinces.

2. Sind to be separated from Bombay and made a Governor's Province.

3. Mussalman representation in the Central Legislature shall be one-third of the total.

Special claims of the Depressed Classes:

1. Custom or usage making any discrimination against enjoyment of civic rights on account of untouchability to be declared invalid.
2. Governors' treatment in the matter of treatment of public services and opening of the Police and Military services.
3. Depressed Classes to have the benefit of the Punjab Land Alienation Act.
4. Right to Appeal to the Governor or the Governor-General against prejudicial action.
5. Representation as provided in the Annexure.

Special claims of Anglo-Indians:

1. Special consideration in the matter of employment.
2. Right to administer and control educational institutions.
3. Right to claim trial by either a European or Indian jury.

Special claims of Europeans:

1. Rights and privileges equal to those enjoyed by Indian born subjects in all industrial and commercial activities.
2. Existing rights with regard to procedure of criminal trials to continue and no change to be made without the prior consent of the Governor-General.

The memorandum was signed by:

1. His Highness the Aga Khan (Muslim), 2. Dr. Ambedkar (Depressed Classes), 3. Rao Bahadur Pannir Solvam (Indian Christians), 4. Sir Henry Gidney (Anglo Indians), and 5. Sir Hubert Carr (Europeans).

13. Mr. Gavin Jones explaining the position of the European Association as placed before the R.T.C. and the Joint Parliamentary Committee on the question of constitutional advance in India, said, "I insisted throughout the R.T.C. on every possible occasion that India is unsuited to democratic institutions as they exist in England, and I suggested a constitution such as Bismark created for Germany, or something on the American method of Government. My point as regards India has always been that the Legislature, Judicial and Executive functions must always be kept separate, so that there can be no interference by politicians in the day to day administration and in the appointment of the Judiciary.... In practice it means that the Legislature will have control of Finance but once these decisions have been made there can be no further interference. The Head of the State, the President, in India it would be the Governor General, and Governors would carry out that policy and control all the services, including the police and the Army". He was agreeable to transfer of central responsibility "only after it had been made clear that the Army and Foreign Affairs would be reserved for the Viceroy, that all the charges of the Army, Services, External debts and pensions would be a first charge on the revenues (that is about 80 per cent of the revenue). That the railways, Ports and the Currency Authority would be transferred to Executive Board independent of politics, that the judiciary would be appointed by

the Viceroy. There, therefore, only remained the Executive of Posts and Telegraphs and other minor departments with which the Legislature might interfere". He further wanted "all the executive" to be responsible to the Governor General and to preserve "Governors' power until such time as India becomes homogeneous".

The European Association wanted among other constitutional, financial, commercial and political safeguards, Law and Order to be central responsibility and that of the Governor General himself.

W. W. K. Page said: "I would, therefore, wish to see explicit powers placed in the hands of the Viceroy not only to control provincial policy and action but also—though this is a matter touching control of police as a whole, control to co-ordinate physical co-operation throughout British India of provincial police forces".

14. Memorandum by Raja Narendra Nath on Claims of the Hindu Minority of Punjab before the R.T.C. Session of 7th September, 1931, reads:

"The Hindus of Punjab have no objection to separate electorate for the Europeans and Anglo-Indians or for Christians and Depressed Classes. However, if there has been a change in their attitude and they want separate electorate in the Punjab, I have no objection...."

"*The Hindus of Punjab want reservation of seats, both in the Provincial Council and the Federal Assembly, in proportion to their population. If special constituencies are retained, as I presume they will be, only such constituencies should be reckoned in making up this proportion as have a majority of Hindu votes....*" (emphasis added)

Regarding claim of minorities in services, he said, "The Hindus want that the constitution should contain a direction indicated in para 105 of the Despatch No. 44 of the Court of Directors, dated 10th December 1834—"But the meaning of the enactment we take to be that there shall be no governing caste in India and that whatever lists of qualifications may be adopted *distinction of race and religion shall not be of the number....*" (emphasis added)

"No one, on account of caste or creed, should be prejudiced in any way for recruitment to Public Services or for promotion to any office, but a proportion, the maximum of which may now be formed, may be reserved for a certain number of years to redress communal inequalities and to suit backward classes." The memorandum proposed that 33 per cent of Provincial and Subordinate Services as in case of Imperial services be reserved for the purpose. "The fixation of proportion should not be left to the discretion of the head of the Executive or of the Public Service Commission to be appointed by him."

B. S. Moonje's memorandum presented on behalf of Hindu Mahasabha reads:

"The Muslims in India are numerically strong, well organised, vigorous and potent body with great facilities for self development. There are other minorities like the Depressed Classes, Christians, Parsees, etc., who are infinitely weaker than the Muslims in all material respects, and the Sabha

thinks it would be difficult to resist the claims of these minorities to concession similar to those demanded by the Muslims if these are granted to the Muslims...."

"The Sabha is willing that the whole of the Hindu-Muslim problem should be referred to individuals or to a body like the League of Nations, who have dealt with such questions in the past, and have experience of them in other countries...."

15. Jawaharlal Nehru refers here to the formation of a council formed by some British peers and Indian Muslim leaders.

Communalism—A Political Reaction

Gandhi and Communal Leaders at R.T.C.¹

In that gilded and crowded hall Gandhiji sat, a very lonely figure. His dress, or absence of it, distinguished him from all others, but there was an even vaster difference between his thought and outlook and that of the well-dressed fold around him. His was in an extraordinary difficult position in the Conference, and we wondered from afar how he could tolerate it. But with amazing patience he carried on, and made attempt after attempt to find some basis of agreement. One characteristic gesture he made, which suddenly showed up how communalism really covered political reaction. He did not like Muslim delegates to the Conference; he thought, and his own Muslim Nationalist colleagues thought so, that some of their demands were a bar to freedom and democracy. But still he offered to accept the whole lot of them, without question or argument, if the Muslim delegates there joined forces with him and the Congress on the political issue, that is, on independence.

That offer was a personal offer because he could not, situated as he was, bind down the Congress. But he promised to urge Congress to agree to it, and no one who knew his position in the Congress could doubt that he would succeed in getting Congress approval. The offer, however, was not accepted, and indeed it is a little difficult to imagine the Aga Khan standing for Indian Independence. This demonstrated that the real trouble was not communal, although the communal issue loomed large before the Conference. It was political reaction that barred all progress and sheltered itself behind the communal issue. By careful selection of its nominees for the Conference, the British Government had collected these reactionary elements, and by controlling the

procedure, they had made the communal issue the major issue, and an issue on which no agreement was possible between the irreconcilables gathered there.²

The British Government succeeded in its endeavour, and thereby demonstrated that it still had, not only the physical strength to uphold its Empire, but also the cunning and state-craft to carry on the imperial tradition for a while longer. The people of India failed, although the Round Table Conference neither represented them nor was it a measure of their strength. They failed because they had no ideological background of what they were striving for, and could be easily misled and side-tracked. They failed because they did not feel themselves strong enough to discard the vested interests that encumbered their progress. They failed because of an excess of religiosity, and the ease with which communal feelings could be roused. They failed, in short, because they were not advanced enough and strong enough to succeed.

*A Reply to Sir Mohammad Iqbal*³

I have read with care the frank and courteous statement that Sir Mohammad Iqbal has issued to the press and I gladly accept his invitation to answer the question he has formulated.⁴ But first I must refer to the incident during the communal negotiations at the second Round Table Conference, which has been mentioned by Sir Mohammad. I am obviously not in a position to say anything about it from my own knowledge, and others, who are in a better position, will no doubt clear up any misapprehensions that may have arisen. But when Sir Mohammad refers to any condition laid down by Gandhiji as an 'inhuman condition', I am quite sure that he is under serious misapprehension.

Sir Mohammad says that Gandhiji was prepared to accept, in his personal capacity, the demands of the Muslim delegates to the Round Table Conference, but that he could not guarantee the acceptance of his position by the Congress. It

seems to me obvious that Gandhiji, or any one else in his position, could not possibly adopt any other course. No representative of a democratic organisation could do so. Even the Working Committee of the Congress could not go behind the Congress resolutions; it could only refer the question to the All-India Congress Committee or the open session of the Congress which is the final authority. Quite apart from the general Congress attitude, it was well known that a considerable section of Muslim opinion in India, the Muslim Nationalists, were opposed to some of those demands. Gandhiji had repeatedly stated in India, prior to his departure for England, that he would accept the decision of Dr. M. A. Ansari as representing the Muslim Nationalists on this question. He had further stated that if the two Muslim groups could arrive at an agreement, he would unhesitatingly accept it. In order to facilitate this he had pressed hard for the inclusion of Dr. Ansari's name among the delegates to the Round Table Conference, but this repeated request was apparently strenuously opposed by the Muslim delegates in London. In spite of all this and as a last effort to bring about some agreement, Gandhiji went to the length of committing himself personally. It is obvious that although he could not bind the Congress, his comment and pleadings would have gone a tremendous way in converting the Congress.

The second condition said to have been laid down by Gandhiji was that Muslim delegates should not support the special claims of the depressed classes. This, according to Sir Mohammad, was "an inhuman condition" as it meant that the depressed classes should continue to be kept down. This is an extraordinary conclusion. If there is one thing more than another that Gandhiji has stood for and stands for today, it is that the depressed classes should cease to be depressed or exploited or handicapped in any way, and that they should be on a perfect level with every other group. It was because he felt that if they were placed in a separate compartment by themselves they would have a stigma

attached to them and fusion with others would become more difficult, that he opposed their separation. It is well known that a certain alliance was formed in London during the second Round Table Conference between the delegates of some minority groups and British Conservatives. Gandhiji evidently wanted the Muslim delegates not to support the demand for the separation of the depressed classes into a distinct group. So far as I know, he has never opposed the grant of special and additional representation to the depressed classes. Indeed, he holds that every facility must be given them to advance and catch up to the more advanced groups and communities. Subsequent events have demonstrated how far he is prepared to go in this direction. Socialist as I am, I fail to see any flaw or any impropriety in this reasoning.

Sir Mohammad evidently suspects a sinister design on Gandhiji's part. He hints that what Gandhiji is after is not so much the raising of the depressed classes, but the prevention of their fusion with the other communities, especially, I suppose, the Muslims in India. It is difficult to meet a suspicion and a prejudice which has little reason behind it, but any one who knows Gandhiji at all will consider the suggestion that he is working for the Harijan movement with a political motive as absurd. Personally, I am not interested in religious labels and I am sure that they will soon disappear, or, at any rate, cease to have any political significance. Sir Mohammad evidently still attaches political significance to them. Gandhiji, to my knowledge, does not, but he is certainly a man of religion and he believes in the essentials of the Hindu faith. He wants to restore these essentials and to sweep away the accretions. It is because he feels that untouchability is a degrading and a disgusting accretion that he fights against it. It is quite wrong to say that he does not want a fusion between the depressed classes and caste Hindus. Indeed he wants this as well as a fusion between both of these and the other communities in India. But, like Sir Mohammad, he is enamoured of certain basic

essentials of culture and he wants to preserve these and at the same time to give perfect freedom to other cultural forms.

Personally my outlook is different. It is not religious and I find it difficult to think of groups in terms of religion. Sir Mohammad evidently does so to the exclusion of other and more modern ways of thinking, and I am afraid he confuses religion with race and culture. Perhaps it is because of this that he advances a biological argument which I entirely fail to understand. Having condemned Gandhiji for a fancied attempt to prevent the fusion of the depressed classes with other communities he says that in his opinion a fusion of the different communities in India is a chimerical notion and the sooner the idea is given up the better.

The question whether biological fusion of different groups in India is going to take place or not raises a host of issues and is chiefly interesting from the point of view of eugenics and culture. It is not, directly, a political question and present interest in it can only be academic. I think that it is inevitable that we should go towards such fusion but I cannot say when it is likely to become an accomplished fact.

But what has this got to do with the communal issue? Are Muslims or Sikhs or Indian Christians, as religious groups, biologically different from the Hindus as a group? Are we different species of animals or of *homo sapiens*? There are racial and cultural differences in India but these differences have nothing to do with the religious divisions; they cut athwart the lines of religious cleavage. If a person is converted to another religion he does not change his biological make-up or his racial characteristics or to any great extent his cultural background. Cultural types are national not religious and modern conditions are helping in the development of an international type. Even in past times various cultures influenced each other and produced mixed types but, as a rule, the national type dominated. This has certainly been so in countries with an ancient culture, like India, Persia and China.

What is Muslim culture? Is it the Semitic Arabian culture or the Aryan Persian culture or is it a mixture of the two. Arabian culture, after a period of glory, receded into the background, but even in the height of its triumph it was powerfully influenced by Persian culture. It had little, if any, influence on India. Persian culture is essentially pre-Islamic and one of the remarkable lessons of history is the persistence, for thousands of years, of this old Iranian culture and tradition. Even to-day Persia is looking back to the pre-Islamic times for her cultural inspiration. This Persian culture certainly influenced India and was influenced by her. But even so the Indian culture dominated in India and stamped its impress on the outsiders who came to her.

To-day in India there is absolutely no cultural or racial difference between the Muslim and Hindu masses. Even the handful of upper class Muslims in North India, who perhaps think themselves apart from the rest of the country, bear the impress of India on them all over the place and are only superficially Persianized. Would any of them be more at home or more in harmony with their surroundings in Persia or Arabia or Turkey or any other Islamic country?

As a matter of fact this question has only a historical and academic interest because modern industrial conditions and rapid transport and frequent intercourse between different peoples are resulting in developing an international type of culture and obliterating to a large extent national cultural boundaries. Does Sir Mohammad Iqbal approve of what is taking place in Central Asia, Turkey, Egypt and Persia? Or does he think that Indian Muslims will remain immune from the forces that are shaping and reforming Islamic countries? Whether he approves or not, world forces will continue to act breaking up the old and out of date and building up the new. Personally I welcome this process, though I have no desire to see the world standardized and made after a single pattern. I should like to have the different world cultures keep their rich inheritance and at the same time to adapt themselves to changing conditions.

So far as India is concerned, not only do I believe that a unitary Indian Nation is possible but that, fundamentally and culturally, it exists in spite of numerous superficial differences. The present communal problem is entirely a political creation of upper-class groups in the various communities and has no relation to racial or cultural matters on the basic needs of the masses.

I now come to Sir Mohammad's straight question to me. There is a great difference in his outlook and mine and I am unable to think in terms of religious majorities or minorities. It is possible, therefore, that we may talk round each other and use words and phrases in different senses. But for the present I shall try to use these words in Sir Mohammad's sense.

I am not prepared to leave the decision of any vital matter affecting India or the Indian people to any outside authority, and certainly not to the Imperialist Power that governs us and exploits our weaknesses and differences.⁵ I agree that the majority community should 'concede the minimum safeguards necessary for the protection of a minority.' But what are these minimum safeguards and who is to decide them? The minority itself? As a general rule I am prepared to agree to this also, though there may be exceptions when vital matters affecting the nation are concerned. We may, for the present, rule out these exceptions. How then are we to know what the minority community really desires? Are we to take the opinion of any small group claiming to represent the community? And when there are several such groups, what are we to do? Neither the Muslim League nor the Muslim Conference can claim to be democratic or representative bodies and a considerable number of Muslims are opposed to their demands.⁶ The Council of the Muslim League—apparently the Council exists in the air and there is no other body behind it—is a more or less permanent, self-electing or nominating body. The Muslim Conference is dominated by its very constitution by the Muslim members of the official legislatures. How can these bodies claim to

represent the Muslims generally in India and, more specially, the Muslim masses? They may occasionally give expression to a prevailing sentiment. Then again are we to consider a group of persons, chosen by the ruling Imperialist power for the Round Table Conference, as representatives of the Muslim masses? They may be estimable persons, but they certainly have no representative capacity.

The only way to find out the wishes of the Muslims of India is to consult them and the democratic method is for them to elect representative for the purpose of as wide a franchise as possible, preferably adult franchise, I am perfectly prepared to abide by any decision of theirs so arrived at.

I should like Sir Mohammad Iqbal to consider his fourteen points which are supposed to provide the minimum safeguards necessary for the protection of the Muslims, and to spot anything in them which benefits or raises up the Muslim masses. As he knows, my chief interest in politics is the raising of the masses and the removal of barriers of class and wealth and the equalization of society. This point of view was apparently never considered by the framers and advocates of the fourteen points.⁷

It is natural that I should not feel enthusiastic about them. But if the Muslims declare for them in the democratic way I have suggested, I shall accept their demands and I am quite sure that they would be accepted by the nation as a whole. I imagine, however, that when the Muslim masses are consulted they will lay far more stress on economic demands which affect them as well as the non-Muslim masses intimately rather than on such demands as interest a handful of upper class people.

The political problem of India can only be decided by the Indian people themselves without the intervention of an outside authority, so also the communal problem. And the only way to proceed in regard to both of these is to go to the people themselves. A Constituent Assembly elected on a adult or near-adult franchise alone can decide the poli-

tical issue. I am personally prepared to have elections for this Assembly by separate electorates for those minorities who so desire it. The representatives of these minorities, so elected, will have every right to speak for them and no one can say that the majority community has influenced their election. Let these people consider the communal question and, as I have stated above, I shall accept the demand put forward by the Muslim representatives.

Sir Mohammad will observe that I am placing before him a democratic and feasible solution of the problem and I am even keeping the Congress out of it. I am sure the Congress will gladly efface itself if this solution is put forward.

My answer to Sir Mohammad Iqbal's question, therefore, is this. I do not think that these are the only two alternatives he mentions. There are many other avenues. In any event he ought to know full well, that if any community, majority or minority, seeks an alliance with imperialism, it will have to face the unrelenting and continuous opposition and hostility of Indian nationalism. As a matter of fact, no community or minority, can do so. Only a few leaders and upper class people may do so, for every community as a whole suffers from it. The masses can never compromise with imperialism for their only hope lies in freedom from its shackles.

Nor do I believe in the religious distribution of India. Such divisions are most undesirable and cannot take place in the modern world. But I am not against redistribution or reshaping of different provinces which will give different cultural groups the fullest opportunity for self-development.

The Solidarity of Islam⁸

Some time back I read with great interest an article by Sir Mohammad Iqbal on the Solidarity of Islam.⁹ Sir Mohammad's writings always attract me, for they give me some insight into a world which I find difficult to understand. So far as religion and the religious outlook are con-

cerned, I live in the utter darkness, but, in spite of this deficiency in me, I am sufficiently interested in the historical, cultural and even the philosophical aspects of religion.

In his article Sir Mohammad dealt with the issue created between the Qadianis and the orthodox Muslims and considered this as 'extremely important' and affecting the integrity of the parent community. The Qadianis, according to him, had discarded the basic idea of Islam—the finality of prophethood—and had reverted to some extent to early Judaism and the pre-Islamic Magian culture. He was therefore of opinion that this 'rebellious group' should not be allowed to carry on its subversive propaganda and, in any event, should not be permitted to masquerade as Muslims. Qadiani leaders did not accept Sir Mohammad's argument and vigorously repelled some of his statements.

Sir Mohammad's article raises a host of issues and makes one furiously to think in many directions. I hope that he will develop some of his points in future writings, for they deserve a full discussion. For the moment I am concerned with one aspect of his argument only. It would be impertinent of me to discuss the validity or otherwise of this argument from the point of view of Islam. That is a matter for erudite Muslims. For me Sir Mohammad is an authority on Islam worthy of respect and I must assume that he represents the orthodox view-point correctly.

If that is so, I presume that Turkey under the Ataturk Kemal has certainly ceased to be an Islamic country in any sense of the word. Egypt has been powerfully influenced by religious reformers who have tried to put on new garments on the ancient truths, and, I imagine, that Sir Mohammad does not approve of this modernist tendency. The Arabs of Syria and Palestine more or less follow Egyptian thought-currents and are partly influenced by Turkey's example. Iran is definitely looking for its cultural inspiration to pre-Islamic Magian days. In all these countries, indeed in every country of western and middle Asia, nationalist ideas are rapidly growing, usually at the expense

of the pure and orthodox religious outlook. Islam, as Sir Mohammad tells us, repudiates the race idea (and of course the geographical idea) and found itself on the religious idea alone. But in the Islamic countries of western Asia we find today the race and geographical ideas all-powerful. The Turk takes pride in the Turanian race; the Iranian in his own ancient racial traditions; the Egyptian and Syrian (as well as the people of Palestine, Trans-Jordan and Iraq) dream of Arab unity in which the Muslim and Christian Arabs will share.

All this clearly shows that these nations have fallen away from the ideal of Islamic solidarity which Sir Mohammad lays down. Where then does this solidarity exist at present? Not in Central Asia, for in the Soviet parts the breakaway from orthodoxy is far greater; in the Chinese parts the predominant currents are probably nationalist (Turanian) and Soviet. Afghanistan and Arabia proper remain in Asia, and then there are a number of Islamic countries in North Africa, apart from Egypt. How far this orthodox outlook of religious solidarity is prevalent there I do not know, but reports indicate that nationalistic ideas have penetrated even there. And nationalism and the solidarity of Islam do not fit in side by side. Each weakens the other.

From Sir Mohammad's view-point this situation in the Islamic world must be a deplorable one. The question of the Qadianis, important as he considers it, sinks into relative insignificance before these world happenings. He stresses the need of a real leader to rise in the Punjab apparently to combat the 'Qadiani menace'. But what lead does he give in regard to the wider menace? The Aga Khan, we are told, is the leader of Indian Muslims. Does he stand for this solidarity of Islam as defined by Sir Mohammad Iqbal?

These questions are relevant even for a non-Muslim; for on the answer to them depends the political, social and economic orientation of Indian Muslims and their reactions to modern ideas and thought-currents, in which some of us

are interested. Islam being a world community, its policy must also be a world policy if it is to preserve that sense of solidarity. Sir Mohammad should give us some hint of this policy to meet the nationalist, social and economic problems that confront each country and group.

The only hint he gives in the article is a negative one: that religious reformers should be put down. In this, he tells us, he cordially agrees with the orthodox Hindus, and religious reform is supposed to include all social reform. He makes a provincial suggestion also that the distinction of rural and urban Muslims be abolished, as this interferes with the unity of Islam in the Punjab. Presumably the fact that some Muslims cultivate the fields, some are big landlords and live on rent, some are professional people living in cities, or bankers, or artisans or captains of industry, or labourers, some have an abundance of good things of life while most others starve will still remain and will not interfere with Islamic unity.

Perhaps it is the object of the recently formed "Council of Peers and Moslem Leaders", of which Sir Mohammad Iqbal is a member, to further this unity and the solidarity of Islam. To an outsider it seems a little odd that Christian members of the British House of Lords should be so interested in the progress and solidarity of Islam. But at the lunch at Claridge's in London that followed the formation of this Council, the Aga Khan, we are told, "developed the theme of Anglo-Moslem unity". Perhaps the two unities lead into one another, and build up a wider and more embracing unity. It is all very confusing, I wish Sir Mohammad would explain and enlighten us.

*His Highness the Aga Khan*¹⁰

Sir Mohammad Iqbal's earnest plea for the solidarity of Islam and his protest against fissiparous tendencies led me to wonder as to where the line should be drawn. His Highness the Aga Khan is today considered the outstanding

leader of the Indian Muslims. The Government treats him and honours him as such, orthodox Muslim leaders, whenever in trouble or faced with difficulty, seek refuge under his sheltering wings. Even Sir Mohammad might, so to speak, be said to march under his political banner. From the point of view of orthodox Islam and its unity of conception, politics, sociology and economics can hardly be separated from religion. One would think therefore that the Aga Khan was the ideal representative of this unity and solidarity of religious belief.

Whether this is so I do not know and I should welcome wiser people to inform me. I have long had a vague kind of idea, however, that he hardly belongs to the inner orthodox fold, and I have admired him for the truly wonderful way in which he manages to combine, and gracefully carry in his own person, the most contradictory qualities, and to take part in multifarious activities which appear to be mutually antagonistic and irreconcilable. He is the head and spiritual leader of a wide-spread and wealthy sect and, I am told, that almost divine attributes are assigned to him by his devoted followers. He is said to derive a vast ecclesiastical revenue from the faithful, and one of his sources of income is supposed to be the granting of spiritual favours and indulgence. It is interesting to find these old-world practices being continued today in an intensive form. But the really remarkable fact is that the spiritual head who supports and encourages these practices is a modern of moderns, highly cultured in western ways, a prince of the turf, most at home in London and Paris. Only a remarkable personality could successfully carry this double burden. The Aga Khan not only does so with supreme ease, but he adds to it many public and political activities as well as the leadership of the Indian Muslims. That is an astonishing feat which, even though one may disagree with the Aga Khan, fills one with admiration for him.

But the question that is troubling me, as a result of read-

ing Sir Mohammad Iqbal's statement on the solidarity of Islam, is how all this fits in with that solidarity. It may be perfectly justifiable to spend the money of the faithful on racing; that after all is a minor matter. But is the Aga Khan's sect a partner in that Islamic solidarity or not? I remember reading long ago Mark Twain's account of a visit paid by the Aga Khan to him in Bombay. Mark Twain's Indian servant burst into his hotel room one day in a state of extreme excitement and announced that God had come to pay a call on him. Many pray to God daily—and Mark Twain was a religious type of man—and each one of us, according to his early teaching or mental and spiritual development, has his own conception of God. But the best of us are apt to be taken aback by a sudden visitation of the Almighty. Mark Twain, after he had recovered from his initial surprise, discovered that God had come to him in the handsome and corporeal shape of the Aga Khan.

This characterization of the Aga Khan as God was no doubt a foolish error of Mark Twain's servant—and the Aga Khan cannot be held responsible for it. So far I know, he does not claim divinity. But there seems to be a large number of foolish persons about who ascribe certain divine or semi-divine attributes to him. Some of the propagandists of the sect describe him as an AVATAR or incarnation of the divinity. They have every right to do so if they believe in it. I have absolutely no complaint. But how does this all fit in with the solidarity of Islam?

A story that has long fascinated me is the account of the Aga Khan giving CHITS or notes of introduction for the Archangel Gabriel to his followers, or some of them. This, so the tale runs, is to ensure their comfort and happiness in the next world. I cannot vouch for the truth of this story, but I do hope that it is based on fact. There is little of romance left in this drab and dreary world, and to correspond with an Archangel is a captivating idea. It seems to bring heaven nearer, and even our life here down below assumes a rosier hue.

Then there is another story, not so attractive, but nevertheless extraordinary enough. I had heard of it previously and lately I read an account in a book by an American traveller. Colonel E. Alexander Powell in his *The Last Home of Mystery* referring to the Aga Khan says:

“His sanctity is so great, indeed, in the eyes of his followers, that the water in which he bathes is carefully conserved and sold annually to the representatives of the various Mohammadan sects at a ceremony held once each year at Aga Hall in Bombay. The price paid for this holy water is the Aga Khan’s weight in gold, the scales used for the weighing ceremony being adjusted to the fraction of an ounce troy. As the Aga Khan is a plump little man, the price paid for his used bath water is a high one.”

Colonel Powell has probably added some journalistic and fancy touches of his own to this account. But the story is an old and oft-repeated one and, to my knowledge, has never been contradicted. If the Aga Khan can find a profitable use for his bath water and at the same time serve and exalt faith, surely it is no one’s business to object. Tastes differ and it takes all sorts to make this world of ours. But again I am led to wonder if all this furthers the solidarity and ‘democracy of Islam’.

Another incident comes to my mind. It was after the War when Kemal Pasha had driven out the Greeks and established himself firmly in power in Turkey. His casual treatment of the new Caliph, appointed by him, drew forth a protest—a very polite protest—from the Aga Khan and Mr. Amir Ali. Kemal Pasha scented an English conspiracy and suddenly started a fierce attack on England, the Aga Khan, the Caliph and some Constantinople journalists.

He was not very polite to the Aga Khan and drew all manner of unjust inferences from his long and intimate association with the British Government and ruling classes. He pointed out that the Aga Khan had not been keen on

following the previous Caliph's religious mandate when war had broken out between Turkey and England. He even stressed that the Aga Khan was no true Muslim, or at any rate not an orthodox one, for did he not belong to a heretical sect? All this and much more he said, keen on gaining his end, which was to discredit the Aga Khan and make him out to be an accomplice of British foreign policy. And making the Aga Khan's move a pretext, the Ataturk put an end to the ancient Khilafat.

Kemal Pasha can hardly be said to be an authority on Islam, for he has deliberately broken away from many of its tenets. His motives were purely political, but his criticisms were not wholly without apparent force.

As I write this, another aspect of the Aga Khan's many-sided personality comes up before me. It is given in an intimate, every day account and is thus all the more valuable and revealing. It appears in the *London Bystander* and I have come across it in a quotation in the *New Statesman*. This tells us that

"although the Aga Khan loves the good things of life—he is a great gourmet and has his own cook—there is a very considerable spiritual side to his life. It is hard to pin him down exactly on this point. But he will admit to a strong feeling of the battle between good and evil. At any rate he is a wonderfully good sportsman, and when Jack Joel offered him a blank cheque the other day for Bahram, he refused because he said he wanted in his decrepit old age to be wheeled alongside his Derby winner and say, "Well, that was a jolly day!"

Much to my regret I have never met the Aga Khan. Only once have I seen him. This was in the early non-cooperation days at a Khilafat meeting in Bombay, where I sat not far from him on the platform. But this glimpse of an attractive and remarkable personality was hardly satisfying, and I have often wanted to find out what curious quality he possesses which enables him to fill with distinction so

many and such varied roles, combining the thirteenth century with the twentieth, Mecca and Newmarket, this world and the next, spirituality and racing, politics and pleasure. Wide indeed must be the range of Islam to include all this in its unity and solidarity.

But looking at Sir Mohammad Iqbal's statement I am again led to doubt, for Sir Mohammad seems to have little love for the non-conformists. He believes in the straight and narrow path of true orthodoxy and those who stray from this must forthwith remove themselves from his ken. How then am I to remove this doubt and difficulty? Will Sir Mohammad help in solving the riddle?

Orthodox of all Religions, Unite !

Some years ago I happened to be in Benares and as I was driving through the narrow city streets, my car was held up by a crowd. A procession was passing through. . . . We saw Brahmans, the most orthodox of their kind, with all manner of caste-marks proudly displayed on their foreheads, marching shoulder to shoulder with bearded Moulvies; the priests from the *Ghats* fraternized with the mullas from the mosques, and one of the standards they carried in triumph bore the flaming device: *Hindu-Musalman ekta Ki Jai*—Victory to Hindu-Muslim Unity! Very gratifying, we thought. But still what was all this about?

We soon found out from their cries and the many other standards they carried. This was a joint protest by the orthodox of both religions against the Sarda Act (or perhaps it was a Bill at the time) which prohibited marriages of girls under fourteen. The pious and the holy of both faiths had joined ranks and hands to declare that they would not submit to this outrage on their deepest convictions and most cherished rights. Were they going to be bullied by the threats of so-called reformers into giving up their right to marry child-wives? Never! Law or no law they would continue to marry little immature girls—for was not post-

puberty marriage a sin?—and thus enhance the glory of religion. Had not a noted *Vaidya* (physician) of Benares stated that in order to proclaim his adherence to the ancient *dharma* and his abhorrence of new-fangled notions like the Sarda Act, he, even he, although he was round about sixty years of age, would marry afresh a girl under the prescribed legal age? Faith and religion had built up their great structure on the sacrifices of their votaries. Surely the movement against the Sarda Act would not lack its martyrs.

We mixed with the crowd and marched along for some distance by the side of the procession. Devadas Gandhi was with me and some Benares friends and soon we were recognized by the processionists. They did not welcome us or shower greetings on us, and I am afraid we did not encourage them to do so. Our looks and attire separated us from the ranks of the faithful—we had neither beards nor caste marks—and we carried on an irreverent and somewhat aggressive commentary on the procession and its sponsors. Offensive slogans were hurled at us and there was some jostling about. Just then the procession arrived at the Town Hall and for some reason or other started stone throwing. A bright young person thereupon pulled some crackers and this had an extraordinary effect on the serried ranks of the orthodox. Evidently thinking that the police or the military had opened fire, they dispersed and vanished with exceeding rapidity.

A few crackers were enough to put the procession to flight, but not even a cracker was required to make the British Government in India a surrender on this issue. A little shouting, in which oddly enough the Muslims took the leading share, was enough to kill and bury the Sarda Act. It was feeble enough at birth with all manner of provisions which hindered its enforcement, and then it gave six months' grace which resulted in a very spate of child marriages. And then, after the six months were over? Nothing happened; child marriage continued as before and

Government and magistrates looked the other way while the Sarda Act was torn to shreds and cast to the dogs. In some instances the person who ventured to bring a breach to a court, himself got into trouble for his pains and was fined. True, in one instance a Punjab villager who had given his ten-year daughter in marriage and deliberately broken the provisions of the Sarda Act despite warning, was sentenced to one month's imprisonment. But this error on the part of the magistrate was soon rectified by the Punjab Government who hastened to send a telegram ordering the release of the offender against the Act. (This case has been taken from Miss E. G. Rathbone's interesting little book: *Child Marriage*).

What were we doing all this time? We were in prison. For six years now we have been mostly in prison, sometimes as many as sixty or seventy thousand at a time. Outside, a strict censorship prevailed, meetings were forbidden and an attempt to enter a rural area was almost certain to lead to prison, if not worse. The various emergency laws and denial of civil liberties were certainly not aimed at preventing support of the Sarda Act. But in effect they left the field clear to the opponents of that measure. And Government, in its distress at having to combat a great political movement directed against it, sought allies in the most reactionary of religious and social bigots. To obtain their goodwill the Sarda Act was sat upon, extinguished. *Hindu Musalman Ekta ki Jai*—Victory to Hindu-Muslim Unity!

The Muslims deserve their full share in this victory. Most of us had thought that the child-wife evil was largely confined to Hindus. But whatever the early disproportion might have been, Muslims were evidently determined not to be outdistanced, in this matter, as in others, by Hindus. So while on the one hand they claimed more seats in the councils, more jobs as policemen, deputy collectors, tahsildars, chaprasis and the like, they hurried on with the work of increasing their child-wives. From the most noted

taluqdars in Oudh to the humble worker, they all joined in this endeavour, till at last the 1931 census proclaimed that victory had come to them. The report of the Age of Consent Committee had previously prepared us to revise our previous opinion but the census went much further than had been expected. It told us that Muslims had actually surpassed the Hindus in the proportion of their child-wives. In Assam "Muslims have now far the largest proportion of child-wives in all the early age groups"; in Behar and Orissa the census tells us that "Whereas the proportion of Hindu girl-wives (including widows) below the age of ten has increased since 1921 from 105 to 160, among Muslims it has increased from 76 to 202." Truly a triumph for the Sarda Act and the Government that is supposed to enforce it.

Lest it be said that our enlightened Indian States lag behind on this issue, the Government of Mysore has recently made its position clear. A venturesome member sought to introduce a Child Marriage Restraint Bill, on the lines of the Sarda Act, in the Mysore Council. The motion was stoutly opposed by a Dewan Bahadur on behalf of orthodox Brahmins and a Khan Bahadur on behalf of Muslims. The Government generously permitted the official members to vote as they liked, but, oddly enough, the entire official *bloc*, including two European members, voted against the motion and with their votes helped to defeat it. Religion was again saved.

This instance of the Sarda Act was a revealing one for it showed that all the shouting about Hindu-Muslim friction and disunity was exaggerated and, in any event, misdirected. That there was such friction nobody could deny, but it was the outcome not so much of religious differences as of economic distress, unemployment, and a race for jobs, which put on a sanctified garb and in the name of religion deluded and excited the masses. If the difference had been essentially religious one would have thought that the orthodox of the two faiths would be the farthest removed from

each other and the most hostile to each other's pretensions. As a matter of fact they combine frequently enough to combat any movement of reform—social, economic, political. Both look upon the person who wants to change the existing order in any way as the real enemy; both cling desperately and rather pathetically to the British Government for instinctively they realise that they are in the same boat with it.

Nearly twenty-two years ago, before the War, in January, 1914, the Aga Khan wrote an article in the *Edinburgh Review* on the Indian situation. He advised the Government to abandon the policy of separating Hindus from Muslims and to rally the moderate of both creeds in a common camp so as to provide a counterpoise to the radical nationalist tendencies of young India, both Hindu and Muslim. In those days extremism was confined to nationalism and did not go beyond the political plane. Even so the Aga Khan sensed that the vital division lay not along religious lines but along political—between those who more or less stood for British domination in India and others who desired to end it. That nationalist issue still dominates the field and is likely to do so as long as India remains politically unfree. But today other issues have also assumed prominence—social and economic. If radical political change was feared by the moderate and socially backward elements, much more are they terrified by the prospect of social and economic change. Indeed it is the fear of the latter that has reacted on the political issue and made many a so-called advanced politician retrace his steps. He has in some cases become frankly a reactionary in politics, or a camouflaged reactionary like the communalists, or an open champion of his class interests and vested rights, like the big zamindars and taluqdars and industrialists.

I have no doubt that this process will continue and will lead to the toning down of communal and religious animosities, to Hindu-Muslim unity—of a kind. The communalists of various groups in spite of their mutual hostility,

will embrace each other like long lost brothers and swear fealty in a new joint campaign against those who are out for radical change, politically or socially or economically. The new alignment will be a healthier one and the issues will be clearer. The indications towards some such grouping are already visible, though they will take some time to develop.

[Nehru refers to Mohammad Iqbal's argument that reforms and liberalism in religion will eliminate religion from the life of the Indian community and turn its mind to atheistic materialism.]

His [Mohd. Iqbal's] position, on this issue of suppression of all reformers, is, it should be remembered, almost the same as that of the Sanatanist Hindus. And even a party which presumes to call itself Democratic or Nationalist (or perhaps some other name—it is difficult to keep pace with the periodic transformations of half-a-dozen worthy gentlemen in western India) declared recently in its programme that it was opposed to all legislative interference with religious rights and customs. In India this covers a wide field and there are few departments of life which cannot be connected with religion. Not to interfere with them legislatively is a mild way of saying that the orthodox may continue in every way as before and no changes will be permitted.

Sir Mohammad would go further for Islam, according to him, does not believe in tolerance. Its solidarity consists in a certain uniformity which does not permit any heresy or non-conformity within the fold. Hinduism is utterly different because, in spite of a common culture and outlook, it lacks uniformity and for thousands of years has actually encouraged the formation of innumerable sects. It is difficult to define heresy when almost every conceivable variation of the central theme is held by some sect. This outlook of Islam is probably comparable to that of Roman Catholic Church; both think in terms of a world community owning allegiance to one definite doctrine and are not prepared to tolerate any deviation from it. A person belonging to an

entirely different religion is preferable to a heretic, for a heretic creates confusion in the minds of true believers. Therefore a heretic must be shown no quarter and his ideas must be suppressed. That, essentially, has always been, and still is, the belief of the Catholic Church, but its practice has been toned down to meet modern 'liberal' notions. When the practice fitted in with the theory it led to the Spanish Inquisition, the *autos da fe*, and various crusades and wars against Christian non-conformists in Europe. The Inquisition has a bad odour now and we shiver to think of its cruelties. Yet it was carried on by high-minded deeply religious men who never thought of personal gain. They believed with all the intensity of religious conviction that the heretic would go to hell if he persisted in his error, and with all their might they sought to save his immortal soul from the eternal pit. What did it matter if in this attempt the body was made to suffer?

Islam is obviously different from the Roman Catholic Church because it has no Pope, no regular priesthood, and not so many dogmas. But I imagine that the general exclusive, intolerant outlook is the same, and it would approve of heresy hunts for the suppression of the evil before it spread. Cardinal Newman denying the nineteenth century assumption of the progress of our race said that "our race's progress and perfectability is a dream, because revelation contradicts it". Further he said that "it would be a gain to this country were it vastly more superstitious, more bigoted, more gloomy, more fierce in its religion, than at present it shows itself to be". He was referring to England.

I wonder how far Sir Mohammad Iqbal would accept Cardinal Newman's dictum, applying it to Islam of course. I imagine that quite a large number of both Hindus and Muslims would agree with the Cardinal, each thinking in terms of his own religion. Indeed, I should say that most truly religious people belonging to almost any organised religion would agree with him. Personally I entirely dis-

agree with him because my outlook is not that of religion. But I think I can dimly understand the religious outlook and to some extent even appreciate it. Granting the supreme importance of certain dogmas and beliefs the rest seems to follow. If I am absolutely convinced that a thing is evil, it is absurd to talk of tolerating it. It must be suppressed, removed, liquidated. If I believe that this world is a snare and a delusion and the only reality is the next world, then the question of progress or change here below hardly arises. Because I have no such absolute convictions, and the beliefs I hold in matters of theological and metaphysical religion are negative rather than positive, I can easily pose as a 'tolerant' individual. It costs me nothing in mental suppression or anguish. It is far more difficult for me to be tolerant about other matters relating to this world in regard to which I hold positive opinions. But even then the opinion has not got the intensity of religious belief and so I am not likely to favour inquisitorial methods for the suppression of opinions and beliefs I consider harmful. Not being interested in the other world, whatever it may be, I judge largely by the effects I observe in this world. I am unable therefore to find a supernatural sanction for inflicting cruelty, physical or mental, here below. Perhaps also most of us of the modern world (Fascists and Hitlerites excluded) are far more squeamish in the matter of causing pain or even watching it with unconcern than our stout old ancestors were.

Thus we make a virtue of our indifference and call it tolerance, just as the British Government takes credit for impartiality and neutrality in matters of religion when in reality it is supremely indifferent to them so long as its secular interests are not touched. But there is no shadow of toleration when its administration is criticized or condemned. That is sedition, to be expiated by long years of prison.

Sir Mohammad Iqbal would thus like to have, so far as Muslims are concerned, a strict uniformity and conformity enforced by the power of the State. But who would lay

down the common standard which was to be followed? Would there be a kind of permanent commission of the Jamiat-ul-Ulema advising the secular arm, as the Roman Church used to advise the princes of Europe in the days of its temporal glory? Sir Mohammad, however, does not seem to approve of the present generation of moulvies and ulemas. He says that "in the modern world of Islam ambitious and ignorant mullaism, taking advantage of modern press, has shamelessly attempted to hurl the old pre-Islamic Magian outlook at the face of the twentieth century". On the other hand he expresses his sorrowful contempt for the "so-called 'enlightened' Muslims" who "have gone to the extent of preaching 'tolerance' to their brethren in faith."

The election or nomination of a competent authority to interpret the ecclesiastical law under modern conditions will be no easy matter, and it is well known that even the pious and the orthodox often disagree amongst themselves. Orthodoxy ultimately becomes one's own doxy, and the other person's doxy is heterodoxy.

If such an authority is established it will deal presumably with the Muslims alone. But Islam is a proselytising religion and questions touching other faiths will frequently arise. Even now doubtful cases arise, especially relating to girls and women who, with little thought of religion, marry a Muslim or elope with him or are abducted by him. If they slide back from the strict path of the faith are they to be subjected to the terrible punishment for apostasy?

In the purely religious sphere then we might have, if Sir Mohammad's suggestions were carried out, the institution of a kind of Inquisition with heresy hunts, excommunication, punishment for apostasy, and a general suppression of "so-called 'enlightened' Muslims" and a prohibition of the practice or preaching of 'tolerance'. Other spheres of life would be equally affected for Islam and Hinduism do not believe in confining themselves to Sunday observance.

They are week-day religions invading every department of life.

The next step is obviously one of full application of the personal law in strict accordance with the ancient texts. In theory this personal law is still applied both to Hindus and Muslims in the British courts, but in practice many changes have crept in. The criminal law at present prevailing in the country has very little, or perhaps nothing, to do with the old Muslim or Hindu codes. In civil law the divergence is not marked and inheritance, marriage, divorce, adoption, etc., are supposed to be according to the old directions. But even here some changes have crept in and attempts are constantly being made to widen their range (civil marriage, divorce among Hindus, Sarda Act, etc). In regard to inheritance there is the very curious Oudh Estates Act affecting the Oudh taluqdars which lays down a peculiar and unique rule which is applied equally to Hindu, Muslim or Christian taluqdars.

This tendency to drift away from the old personal law will have to be stopped if the orthodox have their way. An attempt to do so is now being made by the Frontier Province Council where a 'Moslem Personal Law (Shariat) Application Bill' was recently referred to a Select Committee for report. I have no idea what happened to this Bill afterwards. In the course of a debate in the Council on this Bill a speaker 'analysing the fundamental principles of Islam' said that 'if the Bill were passed they would have to see the law was carried out strictly in accordance with the *Shariat*, for no non-Muslim could administer the *Shariat*. He was opposed to the partial enforcement of the *Shariat* and wanted its full enforcement.'

The demand that only a Muslim should administer the *Shariat* seems reasonable for non-Muslims can hardly enter into its spirit. If the Muslims have their separate courts with their *qazis*, there is no valid ground for refusing the same privilege to the Hindus or any other religious group. We shall thus have a number of courts of law functioning

independently in each geographical area for each separate group. It will be something like the capitulations of semi-colonial countries but in a greatly exaggerated form for the whole population will be divided up and not merely some foreigners. Perhaps that will be a logical development of our communal separate electorates.

Each group of these separate courts will have its own laws and methods of procedure. Some difficulties will no doubt arise when the parties involved belong to different religious groups. Which court are they to go to and which law to follow? Perhaps mixed courts will grow up to deal with such cases and some kind of amalgam of laws and procedure be adopted by these courts. Criminal cases are likely to prove especially troublesome. If a Hindu steals a Muslim's property whose law is to be applied? Or in the case of adultery where the persons profess different religions. The choice between the two codes might have serious consequences for the punishments might vary greatly between them. I am not sure what punishment Manu has laid down for theft or adultery, but I have an idea (I write subject to correction) that according to the old Islamic law, following Mosaic parallels, the thief has his hand cut off and the adulterers must be stoned to death.

It seems to me that all this will produce a certain confusion in our administration of justice; there will be considerable overlapping and friction. But it may lead indirectly to one good result. Far more lawyers will be needed to unravel, or at any rate to profit by, the tangled web of laws and procedures, and thus perhaps we might lessen to some extent the wide-spread unemployment among our middle classes.

Other far-reaching consequences would follow the adoption and application of the joint views of Sir Mohammad Iqbal and the Sanatanist Hindus. The ideals aimed at will largely be (subject to some inevitable adjustment with modern conditions) there—production of the social conditions prevailing in Arabia in the seventh century (in the

case of the Muslims) or those of India two thousand or more years ago (in the case of Hindus). With all the goodwill in the world a complete return to the golden ages of the past will not be possible, but, at any rate, all avoidable deviations will be prevented and an attempt will be made to stereotype our social and economic structure and make it incapable of change. So-called reform movements will of course be frowned upon or suppressed. The long tentacles of the law of sedition may grow longer still and new crimes may be created. Thus to advocate the abolition of the purdah (veil) by women might (from the Muslim side) be made into an offence; to preach the loosening of caste restrictions or interdining might (from the Sanatanist side) be also made criminal. Beards may become *de rigueur* for Muslims; caste-marks and top-knots for Hindus. And of course all the orthodox of all shapes and hues would join in the worship and service of Property, especially the extensive and wealthy properties and endowments belonging to religious or semi-religious bodies.

Perhaps all this is a somewhat exaggerated picture of what might happen under the joint regime of the Sanatanists and Ulemas, but it is by no means a fanciful picture, as any one who has followed their recent activities can demonstrate. Only two months ago (in June 1935) a Sanatana Dharma Conference was held in Bezwada. The holy and learned Swamy who opened the Conference told us that "co-education, divorce, and postpuberty marriages would mean the annihilation of Hinduism." I had not realised till then that these three, or rather the absence of them, were the main props of Hinduism—this is rather involved but I suppose my meaning is clear. The chairman of the Reception Committee of that Conference further told us that he "viewed with grave concern the growth of the Indian women's movement and asserted that the women who were fighting for equal rights with men did not represent the real women of India. . . . They are merely agitators who have thrown modesty—the outstanding

quality of Indian women—to the winds.”

I am afraid I cannot bring myself to agree with Sir Mohammad Iqbal and the Sanatanists. Partly the reason perhaps is a personal and selfish one. I do not think I shall get on at all under their joint regime; I may even land myself in prison. I have spent a long enough period of my life in prison under the British Government and I see no particular reason why I should add to it under the new dispensation. But my personal fate is of little account; what matters is the larger theme of India and her millions. It is an astonishing thing to me that while our millions starve and live like beasts of the field, we ignore their lot and talk of vague metaphysical ideas and the good of their souls; that we shirk the problems of today in futile debate about yesterday and the day before yesterday; that when thoughtful men and women all over the world are considering problems of human welfare and how to lessen human misery and stupidity, we, who need betterment and raising most, should think complacently of what our ancestors did thousands of years ago, and for ourselves should continue to grovel on the ground. It astonishes me that a poet like Sir Mohammad Iqbal should be insensitive to the suffering that surrounds him; that a scholar and thinker like Sir Mohammad should put forward fantastic schemes of States within States, and advocate a social structure which may have suited a past age but is a hopeless anachronism today. Does his reading of history not tell him that nations fell because they could not adapt themselves to changing conditions, and because they stuck too long to that very structure which he wants to introduce in a measure in India today? We were not wise enough in India and the other countries of the East in the past and we have suffered for our folly. Are we to be so singularly foolish as not even to profit by our and others' experience?

Bertrand Russel says somewhere: “If existing knowledge were used and tested methods applied, we could in a generation produce a population almost wholly free from

disease, malevolence and stupidity. In one generation, if we choose, we could bring in the millennium." It is the supreme tragedy of our lives that this millennium should be within our reach, so tantalisingly near us, and yet so far as almost to seem unattainable. I do not know what the future has in store for India and her unhappy people, what further agonies, what greater humiliation and tortures of the soul. But I am confident of this that whatever happens we cannot go back inside the shell from out of which we have emerged.

1. Nehru, Jawaharlal. *An Autobiography* (Allied Publishers Private Ltd., 1962) pp. 294-95.

2. After the Delhi Pact of 1931 was concluded and the Karachi Congress of 1931 had met and reiterated the demand for complete independence and adopted the resolution on fundamental rights, Gandhiji went to attend the Second Round Table Conference at London as the sole representative of the Congress. The delegation from British India was headed by the Aga Khan. Instead of considering the question of grant of independence to India, the British Government had made the communal issue the major issue before the conference besides the question of forming a Federal Union between British India and Indian States. A minorities sub-committee was formed to deal with the question of communal settlement. It contained the leaders of the Hindu Mahasabha, Muslim Conference, the Muslim League and other communal organisations. Gandhi was representing the Congress in this body. Ramsay MacDonald was the chairman. These leaders could not agree because their main concern was to get maximum concessions for their respective community or obstruct the other community from securing similar concessions. None of them was concerned with the main political question of 'independence'. The situation was made more complicated by the presence of the British Prime Minister who could promise more concessions to one group against the other. Gandhi insisted with these leaders to consider the primary question of independence and made the offer of accepting all the communal demands of Muslim leaders led by the Aga Khan if these leaders agreed to make with Gandhi and the Congress a joint demand for independence. The communal leaders became a prey to the British conspiracy and reached neither an agreement on the political issue nor on the communal and the sub-committee presented the report to the plenary session of the Conference that it could not arrive at a communal settlement. Consequently, the British Prime Minister announced the Communal Award.

This offer of Gandhi to communal leaders led to a controversy between Nehru and Mohammad Iqbal, the material part of which is given in the following pages.

Gandhi's return from the Conference led to his arrest and the Satyagraha movement. While patriots were filling the jails, the communal leaders were vying with one another in proclaiming their loyalty to the British Crown.

3. Nehru, Jawaharlal. *Recent Essays & Writings* (Kitabistan, Allahabad, second edition, 1937), pp. 62-7.

4. Mohammad Iqbal in a statement issued on the 6th December, 1933, said:

"He [Jawaharlal Nehru] has been led to believe that Mr. Gandhi offered personally to accept all of the Muslim demands on condition that Muslims assured him of their full support in the political struggle for freedom and that reactionaryism rather than communalism prevented Muslims from accepting this condition. This is a perfectly wrong statement of what happened in London.

"Pandit Jawaharlal has described His Highness the Aga Khan as the greatest inspirer of political reactionaryism among Muslims. The truth, however, is that it was the Aga Khan himself who assured Mr. Gandhi in the presence of several Indian delegates including myself, that if the Hindus or the Congress agreed to Muslim demands, the entire Muslim community would be ready to serve as his (Mr. Gandhi's) camp-followers in the political struggle.

"Mr. Gandhi weighed the Aga Khan's words and his offer to accept Muslim demands came later and was hedged with conditions. The first condition was that Mr. Gandhi would accept the Muslim demands in his personal capacity and would try to assure, but not guarantee, the acceptance of his position by the Congress. I asked him to wire to the Congress Executive and secure its consent to his offer. He said he knew that the Congress would not make him their plenipotentiary on the question. . . .

"Mr. Gandhi's second and most un-righteous condition was that Muslims should not support the special claims of untouchables, particularly their claim to special representation. It was pointed out to him that it did not lie in the mouth of Muslims to oppose those very claims on the part of untouchables which they were advocating for themselves and that if Mr. Gandhi could arrive at a mutual understanding with the untouchables, the Muslims would certainly not stand in their way. Mr. Gandhi, however, insisted on the condition. I should like to know how far Pandit Jawaharlal with his well-known socialist views would sympathise with such an inhuman condition. This is the inner history of the negotiations between Mr. Gandhi and Muslim delegates. . . .

"Another accusation which Pandit Jawaharlal brings against Muslims is that some of them are definitely anti-national. If by 'nationalism' he means a fusion of the communities in a biological sense, I should personally plead guilty to the charge of anti-nationalism. The building up of nation in this sense is, in my opinion, neither possible nor perhaps desirable in the peculiar circumstances of India. In this sense perhaps the greatest anti-national leader in India of today is Mr. Gandhi who has made it a life-mission to prevent the fusion of untouchables with other communities and to retain them in the fold of Hinduism without any real fusion even between them and the caste Hindus. As far as I can

judge it, his message to the untouchables amounts to this 'Do not leave Hinduism, remain in it without being of it'...

"The sooner Indian leaders of political thought get rid of the idea of a unitary Indian nation based on something like a biological fusion of the communities, the better for all concerned.

"Pandit Jawaharlal further seems to think that Muslims, while believing in democracy as a religious institution, are afraid of democracy in practice. He overlooks the fact that the communal electorates and other safeguards on which Muslims insist are only intended to prevent 80 million members of a comparatively poor and backward community from being ousted from all real advantages of democracy."

Mohammad Iqbal, in this statement, put a question to Nehru: "How is India's problem to be solved if the majority community will neither concede the minimum safeguards necessary for the protection of a minority of 80 million people nor accept the award of a third party; but continue to talk of a kind of nationalism which works out only to its own benefit?" He, then, goes on to say: "This position can admit of only two alternatives. Either the Indian majority community will have to accept for itself the permanent position of an agent of British Imperialism in the East or the country will have to be re-distributed on a basis of religious, historical and cultural affinities so as to do away with the question of electorates and the communal problem in its present form."

Earlier, Mohammad Iqbal in his presidential address to the All India Muslim Conference, had said: "It is my belief that Islam is not a matter of private opinion. It is a society, or, if you like, a civic church. It is because present-day political ideals as they appear to be shaping themselves in India, may affect its original structure and character that I find myself, interested in politics. *I am opposed to nationalism, as it is understood in Europe, not because, if it is allowed to develop in India, it is likely to bring less material gain to Muslims. I am opposed to it because I see in it the germs of atheistic materialism which I look upon as the greatest danger to modern humanity.* Patriotism is a perfectly natural virtue and has a place in the moral life of man. Yet that which really matters is a man's faith, his culture, his historical tradition. These are the things which in my eyes are worth living for and dying for, and not the piece of earth with which the spirit of man happens to be temporarily associated. In view of the visible and invisible points of contact between the various communities of India I do believe in the possibility of constructing a harmonious whole, whose unity cannot be disturbed by the rich diversity it must carry within its own bosom. The problem of ancient Indian thought was how One became many without sacrificing its oneness. Today this problem has come down from its etherial heights to the grosser plain of our political life, and we have to solve it in its reverse form, i.e., how the many can become One without sacrificing its plural character". (emphasis added) Further, he explained the political problem of India in the following words: "The present struggle in India is sometimes described as India's revolt against the West: for the people of India are demanding the very institutions which the West stands for.

Educated urban India demands democracy. The minorities feeling themselves as distinct cultural units, and fearing that their very existence is at stake, demand safeguards, which the majority community, for obvious reasons, refuses to concede. The majority community pretends to believe in a nationalism theoretically correct if we start from Western premises, belied by facts if we look to India. *Thus the real parties to present struggle in India are not England and India, but the majority community and the minorities of India which can ill-afford to accept the principle of Western democracy until it is properly modified to suit the actual conditions of life in India.*" (emphasis added)

5. Mohammad Iqbal, on the other hand, had said that the Muslim community had been so far looking to the British Government "as an impartial holder of balance in India" to guarantee the Muslim interests and posed a question whether the British Government would play that role. However, he warned the community from joining the Congress even though he felt that "the policy of trusting the government in regard to political issues seems to be rapidly losing its hold on the mind of the community".

6. Mohammad Iqbal laid down the demands of the Muslim community and asked the British Government to concede them. The essential elements of these demands were: Statutory Muslim majority in Punjab and Bengal; continuance of separate electorates; continuance of the status of the N.W.F.P.; complete provincial autonomy; transfer of power from Parliament to Indian provinces; equality of Indian units; classification of subjects, not into federal, central and provincial, but federal and provincial only; unconditional separation of Sind; one-third share of Muslims in the Centre. The Muslim Conference Leaders, with the approval of the Aga Khan, issued a Manifesto on 5th June, 1932, assuring loyalty of Muslims to the British Government. It reads, "We believe that if alternative to *British rule* were the ubiquitous supremacy of Hindu rule, the mass of the Muslim brethren would prefer *the former* not only because of the safeguards offered by its impartiality, but also because under the alternative system there would be heinous strife between the virile and martial Moslem races and those many Hindus in whom the Congress Left-wing has sown the seed of insidious conspiracy and rebellion, blood lust and lawlessness. But it is the purpose of His Majesty's Government to give India federal responsibility with an equitable and just distribution of power and some guarantee of stability. If the determination of the various communities' political rights is a matter of great complexity and delicacy, as we know it to be, and if the British people value the *friendship* of at least one-fifth of the people of India then we suggest that when the rival claims of the two great communities are weighed against one another, His Majesty's Government and the people should also weigh in the same scales the communities' relative merits of *loyalty and stability* as proved by the facts of recent Indian history".

The Manifesto laid down certain facts proving loyalty of the Muslims to the British Government: (i) The number of Muslim soldiers in the Indian army exceeded all proportions to the Muslim population of India; (ii) so

was the number of Muslims in Militia and Frontier Constabulary charged with protection of Law and Order in the N.W.F.P., Baluchistan and border areas, where they came in conflict with Muslims "while suppressing them in the interests of British rule"; (iii) the Muslims took little part in Congress campaign of 1930; (iv) the Muslims had nothing to gain from substituting Congress rule for the British rule; (v) the Muslims did not participate in or appreciate the terrorist movements.

The Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Hind and other Nationalist Muslims issued a statement in reply to this Manifesto. It described the Manifesto as humiliating and pointed out that Muslims "as a community are next to none in their love of freedom or the will to live peacefully and harmoniously and to stand shoulder to shoulder with other fellow Indians in the task of leading the country to its highest destiny." The Jamiat had "Complete Independence" as its aim. It pointed out that in 1930-31, no less than 14 thousand Muslims went to Jail, while some hundreds of them lost their lives. In the second non-co-operation movement (1932-33) also thousands of Muslims had gone to Jail including 400 Ulemas. It pointed out that there were three schools of thought among Hindus and Muslims: (1) Those who lack confidence in their inherent strength and hesitate to place any trust in the sense of justice, and toleration of other communities; and without a sense of shame declare their willingness to remain under the British rule permanently; (2) Those whose aim is to change the present system of government by argument, persuasion and negotiation; (3) Those who have the fullest confidence in the inherent powers of the people and their followers form the bulk of the population. Their aim is "self Government at the earliest opportunity" and its principles include:

i) interests of no class or community should be subordinated to the interests of any other and all should have satisfaction of governing their country;

ii) every community should have guarantees of protection of their political, religious, economic and cultural rights against every other community and should have assurance of freedom from domination by any community or country as well as from defence on any of them;

iii) the federal government should be fully responsible with freedom to determine India's relations with other countries, and the federating provinces should be fully autonomous, the N.W.F.P. being placed on the same footing as other provinces;

iv) there should be re-distribution of provinces on the principle of self-determination by people bound by ties of common language, culture and economic interests, such as the people of Sind, Orissa, and such other areas to which the above principle may apply;

v) the cost of administration be reduced;

vi) the peasants and labourers should have their proportionate representation in the Government of the country.

7. The fourteen points formulated by M. A. Jinnah in 1929 and approved by the League and the Muslim Conference were as follows:

1) the form of the future constitution should be federal, with the residuary powers vested in the provinces;

- 2) a uniform measure of autonomy should be granted to all provinces;
- 3) all legislatures in the country and other elected bodies shall be constituted on the definite principle of adequate and effective representation of minorities in every Province without reducing the majority in any Province to a minority or even equality;
- 4) in the Central Legislature, Mussalman representatives shall not be less than one-third;
- 5) representation of communal groups shall continue to be by means of separate electorates, provided it shall be open to any community, at any time, to abandon its separate electorate in favour of joint electorate;
- 6) any territorial redistribution that might at any time be necessary shall not, in any way, affect the Moslem majority in the Punjab, Bengal and N.W.F.P.;
- 7) full religious liberty, i.e., liberty of belief, worship and observance, propaganda, association and education, shall be guaranteed to all communities;
- 8) no bill or resolution or a part thereof shall be passed in any legislature or any other elected body if three-fourths of the members of any community in that particular body oppose such a bill, resolution or part thereof, on the ground that it would be injurious to the interests of that community or in the alternative such other method is devised as may be found feasible and practicable to deal with such cases;
- 9) Sind should be separated from the Bombay Presidency;
- 10) reforms should be introduced in the N.W.F.P. and Baluchistan on the same footing as in other provinces;
- 11) provisions should be made in the constitution giving Moslems an adequate share along with the other Indians in all the services of the State and in local self-governing bodies having due regard to the requirement of efficiency;
- 12) the constitution should embody adequate safeguards for the protection of Moslem culture and for the protection and promotion of Moslem education, language, religion, personal laws and Moslem charitable institutions and for their due share in the grants-in-aid given by the State and by local self-governing bodies;
- 13) no cabinet, either Central or Provincial, should be formed without there being a proportion of at least one-third Moslem ministers;
- 14) no change shall be made in the constitution by the Central Legislature except with the concurrence of the States constituting the Indian Federation.

The right to vote for election to the Central Legislative Assembly belonged to one out of 200 persons and was based on property, income tax and land revenue qualifications. Neither these fourteen points nor subsequent resolutions by the Muslim Conference demanded extension of franchise on adult suffrage basis.

8. *Modern Review*, Vol. LVIII (July to December 1935) pp. 504-5.

9. The question that Jawaharlal Nehru discusses in this article was raised by Mohammad Iqbal in a statement published under the title "Qadianism and Orthodox Muslims". The statement reads:

"The issue created by the controversy between the Qadianism and the orthodox Muslims is extremely important. . . .

"India is a land of many religious communities; and Islam is a religious community in a much deeper sense than those communities whose structure is determined partly by the religious and partly by the race ideas. Islam repudiates the race idea altogether and founds itself on the religious idea alone, a basis which is wholly spiritual and consequently far more ethical than blood relationship. Muslim society is naturally much more sensitive to forces which it considers harmful to its integrity. Any religious society historically arising from the bosom of Islam, which claims a new prophethood for its basis, and declares all Muslims who do not recognise the truth of its alleged revelation as *Kafirs*, must, therefore, be regarded by every Muslim as a serious danger to the solidarity of Islam. This must necessarily be so; since the integrity of Muslim society is secured by the idea of the Finality of Prophethood alone.

"This idea of Finality is perhaps the most original idea in the cultural history of mankind; its true significance can be understood only by those who carefully study the history of pre-Islamic Magian culture in Western and Middle Asia. The concept of Magian culture according to modern research, includes culture associated with Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Jewish Christianity, Chaldean and Sabeian religions. To these creed-communities the idea of the continuity of prophethood was essential and consequently they lived in a state of constant expectation. It is probable that the Magian man psychologically enjoyed this state of expectation. The modern man is spiritually far more emancipated than the Magian man. The result of the Magian attitude was the dis-integration of old communities and the constant formation of new ones by all sorts of religious adventurers. In the modern world of Islam ambitious and ignorant *mullaism* taking advantage of the modern press, has shamelessly attempted to hurl the old pre-Islamic Magian outlook in the face of the twentieth century. It is obvious that Islam which claims to weld all the various communities of the world into one single community cannot reconcile itself to a movement which threatens its present solidarity and holds the promise of further rifts in human society.

"Of the two forms which the modern revival of pre-Islamic Magianism has assumed, Bahaism appears to me to be far more honest than Qadianism; for the former openly departs from Islam, whereas the latter apparently retains some of the more important externals of Islam with an inwardness wholly inimical to the spirit and aspirations of Islam. . . .

"The intensity of feeling which the Indian Muslims have manifested in opposition to the Qadiani movement is, therefore, perfectly intelligible to the student of modern sociology. The average Muslim . . . is inspired in his opposition to the movement more by his instinct of self-preservation. . . . The so-called "enlightened" Muslim has seldom made an attempt to understand the real cultural significance of the idea of Finality in Islam, and a process of slow and imperceptible Westernization has further deprived him of even the instinct of self-preservation".

He could not excuse "these so-called enlightened Muslims" who "have

gone to the extent of preaching 'tolerance' to their brethren-in-faith." He further lamented the British Government's policy of non-interference in religion because it encouraged social and religious reformers and adventures and thereby endangered "the integrity of a parent community." He goes on to say: "I very much appreciate the orthodox Hindus' demand for protection against religious reformers in the new constitution. Indeed, the demand ought to have been first made by the Muslims who, unlike the Hindus, entirely eliminate the race idea from their social structure. . . .

"The encouragement in India of religious adventures on the ground of modern liberalism tends to make people more and more indifferent to religion and will eventually completely eliminate the important factor of religion from the life of Indian communities. . . ."

He referred to Punjab Muslims and decried the Government for creating the distinction between rural and urban Muslims which "cut up the Muslim community into two groups and the rural group into several such groups constantly at war with one another".

He asked the British Government to declare the Qadianis a separate community and not a part of Muslim community.

10. *Modern Review*, Vol. LVIII (July to December, 1935), pp. 505-506.

11. *Modern Review*, Vol. LVIII (July to December, 1935) pp. 625 to 631.

Religion, Man and Society

*Organised Religion*¹:

But organised religion, whatever its past may have been, today is very largely an empty form devoid of real content. Mr. G. K. Chesterton has compared it (not his own particular brand of religion, but others!) to a fossil which is the *form* of an animal or organism from which all its own organic substance has entirely disappeared, but which has kept its shape, because it has been filled up by some totally different substance. And even where something of value still remains, it is enveloped by other and harmful contents.

That seems to have happened in our Eastern religions as well as in the Western. The Church of England is perhaps the most obvious example of a religion which is not a religion in any real sense of the word. Partly that applies to all organised Protestantism, but the Church of England has probably gone further because it has long been a State political department.

(In India the Church of England has been almost indistinguishable from the Government. The officially paid (out of Indian revenues) priests and chaplains are the symbols of the imperial power just as the higher services are. The Church has been, on the whole, a conservative and reactionary force in Indian politics and generally opposed to reform or advance. The average missionary is usually wholly ignorant of India's past history and culture and does not take the slightest trouble to find out what it was or is. He is more interested in pointing out the sins and failings of the heathen. Of course, there have been many fine exceptions. India does not possess a more devoted friend than Charlie Andrews, whose abounding love and spirit of service and overflowing friendliness it is a joy to have. The Christa Seva Sangh of Poona contains some fine Englishmen, whose religion has led them to understand and serve and not to patronise, and who have devoted themselves with all their gifts to a selfless service of the Indian people. There are many other English churchmen whose memory is treasured in India.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, speaking in the House of Lords on December 12, 1934, referred to the preamble of the Montagu-Chelmsford

reforms of 1919 and said that "he sometimes thought the great declaration had been somewhat hastily made, and supposed that it was one of the hasty, generous gestures after the War, but the goal set could not be withdrawn". It is worthy of note that the head of the English Church should take such an exceedingly conservative view of Indian politics. A step, which was considered wholly insufficient by Indian opinion and which, because of this, led to non-co-operation and all its consequences, is considered by the Archbishop as "hasty and generous." It is comforting doctrine from the point of view of the English ruling classes, and, no doubt, this conviction of their own generosity, even to the point of rashness, must produce a righteous glow of satisfaction.)

Many of its votaries are undoubtedly of the highest character, but it is remarkable how that Church has served the purpose of British imperialism and given both capitalism and imperialism a moral and Christian covering. It has sought to justify, from the highest ethical standards, British predatory policy in Asia and Africa, and given that extraordinary and enviable feeling of being always in the right to the English. Whether the Church has helped in producing this attitude of smug rectitude or is itself a product of it, I do not know. Other less favoured countries on the Continent of Europe and in America often accuse the English of hypocrisy—*perfidie Albion* is an old taunt—but the accusation is probably the outcome of envy at British success, and certainly no other imperialist Power can afford to throw stones at England, for its own record is equally shady. No nation that is consciously hypocritical could have the reserves of strength that the British have repeatedly shown, and the brand of 'religion' which they have adopted has apparently helped them in this by blunting their moral susceptibilities where their own interests were concerned. Other people and nations have often behaved far worse than the British have done, but they have never succeeded, quite to the same extent, in making a virtue of what profited them. All of us find it remarkably easy to spot the mote in the other's eye and overlook the beam in our own, but perhaps the British excel at this performance.

(A recent instance of how the Church of England indirectly influences politics in India has come to my notice. At a provincial conference of the

U.P. Indian Christians held at Cawnpore on the 7th November, 1934, the Chairman of the Reception Committee, Mr. E. V. David, said: "As Christians we are bound by our religion to loyalty to the King, who is the Defender of our Faith." Inevitably that meant support of British imperialism in India. Mr. David further expressed his sympathies with some of the views of the 'diehard' Conservative elements in England in regard to the I.C.S., the police and the whole proposed constitution, which, according to them, might endanger Christian missions in India.)

Protestantism tried to adapt itself to new conditions and wanted to have the best of both worlds. It succeeded remarkably so far as this world was concerned, but from the religious point of view it fell, as an organised religion, between two stools, and religion gradually gave place to sentimentality and big business. Roman Catholicism escaped this fate, as it stuck on to the old stool; and, so long as that stool holds, it will flourish. To-day it seems to be the only living religion, in the restricted sense of the word, in the West. A Roman Catholic friend sent me in prison many books on Catholicism and Papal Encyclicals and I read them with interest. Studying them, I realised the hold it has on such large numbers of people. It offered, as Islam and popular Hinduism offer, a safe anchorage from doubt and mental conflict, an assurance of a future life which will make up for the deficiencies of this life.

I am afraid it is impossible for me to seek harbourage in this way. I prefer the open sea, with all its storms and tempests. Nor am I greatly interested in the after life, in what happens after death. I find the problems of this life sufficiently absorbing to fill my mind. The traditional Chinese outlook, fundamentally ethical and yet irreligious or tinged with religious scepticism, has an appeal for me, though in its application to life I may not agree. It is the *Tao*, the path to be followed and the way of life that interests me; how to understand life, not to reject it but to accept it, to conform to it and to improve it. But the usual religious outlook does not concern itself with this world. It seems to me to be the enemy of clear thought, for it is based not only on the acceptance without demur of certain fixed and

unalterable theories and dogmas, but also on sentiment and emotion and passion. It is far removed from what I consider spiritually and things of the spirit, and it deliberately or unconsciously shuts its eyes to reality lest reality may not fit in with preconceived notions. It is narrow and intolerant of other opinions and ideas; it is self-centred and egotistic, and it often allows itself to be exploited by self-seekers and opportunists.

This does not mean that men of religion have not been and are not still often of the highest moral and spiritual type. But it does mean that the religious outlook does not help, and even hinders, the moral and spiritual progress of a people, if morality and spirituality are to be judged by this world's standards, and not by the hereafter. Usually religion becomes an asocial quest for God or the Absolute, and the religious man is concerned far more with his own salvation than with the good of society. The mystic tries to rid himself of self, and in the process usually becomes obsessed with it. Moral standards have no relation to social needs, but are based on a highly metaphysical doctrine of sin. And organised religion invariably becomes a vested interest and thus inevitably a reactionary force opposing change and progress.

It is well known that the Christian Church in the early days did not help the slaves to improve their social status. The slaves became the feudal serfs of the Middle Ages of Europe because of economic conditions. The attitude of the Church, as late as two hundred years ago (in 1727) was well exemplified in a letter written by the Bishop of London to the slave-owners of the southern colonies of America.

"Christianity," wrote the Bishop, "and the embracing of the gospel does not make the least alteration in Civil property or in any of the duties which belong to civil relations; but in all these respects it continues Persons just in the same State as it found them. The Freedom which Christianity gives is Freedom from the bondage of Sin and Satan and from the Dominion of Men's Lusts and Passions and inordi-

nate Desires; but as to their outward condition, whatever that was before, whether bond or free, their being baptised and becoming Christians makes no manner of change in them."

No organised religion to-day will express itself in this outspoken manner, but essentially its attitude to property and the existing social order will be the same.

Words are well known to be, by themselves, very imperfect means of communication, and are often understood in a variety of ways. No word perhaps in any language is more likely to be interpreted in different ways by different people as the word 'religion' (or the corresponding words in other languages). Probably to no two persons will the same complex of ideas and images arise on hearing or reading this word. Among these ideas and images may be those of rites and ceremonial, of sacred books, of a community of people, of certain dogmas, of morals, reverence, love, fear, hatred, charity, sacrifice, asceticism, fasting, feasting, prayer, ancient history, marriage, death, the next world, of riots and the breaking of heads, and so on. Apart from the tremendous confusion caused by this immense variety of images and interpretations, almost invariably there will be a strong emotional response which will make dispassionate consideration impossible. The word 'religion' has lost all precise significance (if it ever had it) and only causes confusion and gives rise to interminable debate and argument, when often entirely different meanings are attached to it. It would be far better if it was dropped from use altogether and other words with more limited meanings were used instead, such as; theology, philosophy, morals, ethics, spirituality, metaphysics, duty, ceremonial, etc. Even these words are vague enough, but they have a much more limited range than 'religion.' A great advantage would be that these words have not yet attached to themselves, to the same extent, the passions, and emotions that surround and envelop the word 'religion'.

What then is religion (to use the word in spite of its

obvious disadvantages)? Probably it consists of the inner development of the individual, the evolution of his consciousness in a certain direction which is considered good. What that direction is will again be a matter for debate. But as far as I understand it, religion lays stress on the inner change and considers outward change as but the projection of this inner development. There can be no doubt that this inner development powerfully influences the outer environment. But it is equally obvious that the outer environment powerfully influences the inner development. Both act and interact on each other. It is a commonplace that in the modern industrial West outward development has far outstripped the inner, but it does not follow, as many people in the East appear to imagine, that because we are industrially backward and our external development has been slow, therefore our inner evolution has been greater. That is one of the delusions with which we try to comfort ourselves and try to overcome our feeling of inferiority. It may be that individuals can rise above circumstances and environment and reach great inner heights. But for large groups and nations a certain measure of external development is essential before the inner evolution can take place. A man who is the victim of economic circumstances, and who is hedged and restricted by the struggle to live, can very rarely achieve inner consciousness of any high degree. A class that is downtrodden and exploited can never progress inwardly. A nation which is politically and economically subject to another and hedged and circumscribed and exploited can never achieve inner growth. Thus even for inner development external freedom and suitable environment become necessary. In the attempt to gain this outer freedom and to change the environment so as to remove all hindrances to inner development it is desirable that the means should be such as not to defeat the real object in view. I take it that when Gandhiji says that the means are more important than the end, he has something of this kind of view. But the means should be such as lead to the

end, otherwise they are wasted effort, and they might even result in even greater degradation, both outer and inner.

"No man can live without religion," Gandhiji has written somewhere. "There are some who in the egotism of their reason declare that they have nothing to do with religion. But that is like a man saying that he breathes, but that he has no nose." Again he says: "My devotion to truth has drawn me into the field of politics; and I can say without the slightest hesitation, and yet in all humility, that those who say that religion has nothing to do with politics do not know what religion means." Perhaps it would have been more correct if he had said that most of these people who want to exclude religion from life and politics mean by that word 'religion' something very different from what he means. It is obvious that he is using it in a sense—probably moral and ethical more than any other—different from that of the critics of religion. This use of the same word with different meanings makes comprehension still more difficult.

A very modern definition of religion, with which the men of religion will not agree, is that of Professor John Dewey. According to him, religion is "whatever introduces genuine perspective into the piecemeal and shifting episodes of existence;" or again "any activity pursued in behalf of an ideal and against obstacles, and in spite of threats of personal loss, because of conviction of its general and enduring value, is religious in quality." If this is religion, then surely no one can have the slightest objection to it.

Romain Rolland also has stretched religion to mean something which will probably horrify the orthodox of organised religions. In his *Life of Ramakrishna*, he says: "...many souls who are or who believe they are free from all religious belief, but who in reality live immersed in a state of super-rational consciousness, which they term Socialism, Communism, Humanitarianism, Nationalism and even Rationalism. It is the quality of thought and not its object which determines its source and allows us to decide whether or not it emanates from religion. If it turns fearlessly towards the

search for truth at all costs with single-minded sincerity prepared for any sacrifice, I should call it religious; for it presupposes faith in an end to human effort higher than the life of existing society, and even higher than the life of humanity as a whole. Scepticism itself, when it proceeds from vigorous natures true to the core, when it is an expression of strength and not of weakness, joins in the march of the Grand Army of the religious Soul."

I cannot presume to fulfil the conditions laid down by Romain Rolland, but on these terms I am prepared to be a humble camp-follower of the Grand Army.

Religion and March of History²

... [To] know the past you must look upon it with sympathy and with understanding. To understand a person who lived long ago, you will have to understand his environment, the conditions under which he lived, the ideas that filled his mind. It is absurd for us to judge of past people as if they lived now and thought as we do. There is no one to defend slavery today, and yet the great Plato held that slavery was essential. Within recent times scores of thousands of lives were given in an effort to retain slavery in the United States. We cannot judge the past from the standards of the present. Every one will willingly admit this. But every one will not admit the equally absurd habit of judging the present by the standards of the past. The various religions have especially helped in petrifying old beliefs and faiths and customs, which may have had some use in the age and country of their birth, but which are singularly unsuitable in our present age.

If, then, you look upon past history with the eyes of sympathy, the dry bones will fill up with flesh and blood, and you will see a mighty procession of living men and women and children in every age and every clime, different from us and yet very like us, with much the same human virtues and human failings. History is not a magic show, but there is plenty of magic in it for those who have eyes to see.

Innumerable pictures from the gallery of history crowd our minds. Egypt—Babylon—Nineveh—the old Indian civilizations—the coming of the Aryans to India and their spreading out over Europe and Asia—the wonderful record of Chinese culture—Knossos and Greece—Imperial Rome and Byzantium—the triumphant march of the Arabs across two continents—the renaissance of Indian culture and its decay—the little known Maya and Aztec civilizations of America—the vast conquests of the Mongols—the Middle Ages in Europe with their wonderful Gothic cathedrals—the coming of Islam to India and the Moghal Empire—the Renaissance of learning and art in western Europe—the discovery of America and the sea routes to the East—the beginnings of Western aggression in the East—the coming of the big machine and development of capitalism—the spread of industrialism and the European domination and imperialism—and the wonders of science in the modern world.

Great empires have risen and fallen and been forgotten by man for thousands of years, till their remains were dug up again by patient explorers from under the sands that covered them. And yet many an idea, many a fancy, has survived and proved stronger and more persistent than the empire.

“Egypt’s might is tumbled down,
Down a-down the deeps of thought;
Greece is fallen and Troy town,
Glorious Rome hath lost her crown,
Venice’ pride is nought.
But the dreams their children dreamed,
Fleeting, unsubstantial, vain,
Shadowy as the shadows seemed,
Airy nothing, as they deemed,
These remain.”

So sings Mary Coleridge

The past brings us many gifts; indeed all that we have

today of culture, civilization, science, or knowledge of some aspects of the truth, is a gift of the distant or recent past to us. It is right that we acknowledge our obligation to the past. But the past does not exhaust our duty or obligation. We owe a duty to the future also, and perhaps that obligation is even greater than the one we owe to the past. For the past is past and done with, we cannot change it; the future is yet to come, and perhaps we may be able to shape it a little. If the past has given us some part of the truth, the future also hides many aspects of the truth, and invites us to search for them. But often the past is jealous of the future and holds us in a terrible grip, and we have to struggle with it to get free to face and advance towards the future.

History, it is said, has many lessons to teach us, and there is another saying that history never repeats itself. Both are true, for we cannot learn anything from it by slavishly trying to copy it, or by expecting it to repeat itself or remain stagnant, but we can learn something from it by prying behind it and trying to discover the forces that move it. Even so, what we get is seldom a straight answer. "History", says Karl Marx, "has no other way of answering old questions than by putting new ones."

The old days were days of faith, blind, unquestionable faith. The wonderful temples and mosques and cathedrals of past centuries could never have been built but for the overpowering faith of the architects and builders and people generally. The very stones that they reverently put one on top of the other, or carved into beautiful designs, tell us of this faith. The old temple spire, the mosque with its slender minarets, the Gothic cathedrals—all of them pointing upward with an amazing intensity of devotion, as if offering a prayer in stone or marble to the sky above—thrill us even now, though we may be lacking in that faith of old of which they are the embodiments. But the days of that faith are gone, and gone with them is that magic touch in stone. Thousands of temples and mosques and cathedrals continue

to be built, but they lack the spirit that made them live during the Middle Ages. There is little difference between them and the commercial offices which are so representative of our age.

Our age is a different one; it is an age of disillusion, of doubt and uncertainty and questioning. We can no longer accept many of the ancient beliefs and customs; we have no more faith in them, in Asia or in Europe or America. So we search for new ways, new aspects of the truth more in harmony with our environment. And we question each other and debate and quarrel and evolve any number of 'isms' and philosophies. As in the days of Socrates, we live in an age of questioning, but that questioning is not confined to a city like Athens; it is worldwide.

Sometimes the injustice, the unhappiness, the brutality of the world oppress us and darken our minds, and we see no way out. With Mathew Arnold, we feel that there is no hope in the world and that all we can do is to be true to one another.

"For the world which seems
To lie before us, like a land of dreams,
So various, so beautiful, so new,
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
And we are here, as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night."

And yet if we take such a dismal view we have not learnt aright the lesson of life or of history. For history teaches us of growth and progress and of the possibility of an infinite advance for man. And life is rich and varied, and though it has many swamps and marshes and muddy places, it has also the great sea, and the mountains, and snow, and glaciers, and wonderful starlit nights (specially in gaol!) and the love of family and friends, and the comradeship of workers in a common cause, and music, and books

and the empire of ideas. So that each one of us may well say:—

“Lord, though I lived on earth, the child of earth,
Yet was I fathered by the starry sky.”

It is easy to admire the beauties of the universe and to live in a world of thought and imagination. But to try to escape in this way from the unhappiness of others, caring little what happens to them, is no sign of courage or fellow-feeling. Thought, in order to justify itself, must lead to action. “Action is the end of thought”, says our friend Romain Rolland. “All thought which does not look towards action is an abortion and a treachery. If then we are the servants of thought we must be the servants of action.”

People avoid action often because they are afraid of consequences, for action means risks and danger. Danger seems terrible from distance; it is not so bad if you have a close look at it. And often it is a pleasant companion, adding to the zest at times, and we take too many things for granted and have no joy in them. And yet we appreciate these common things of life when we have lived without them for a while! Many people go up high mountains and risk life and limb for the joy of the climb and the exhilaration that comes from a difficulty surmounted, a danger overcome; and because of the danger that hovers all around them, their perceptions get keener, their joy of the life which hangs by a thread, the more intense.

All of us have our choice of living in the valleys below, with their unhealthy mists and fogs, but giving a measure of bodily security, or of climbing the high mountains, with risk and danger for companions, to breathe the pure air above, and take joy in the distant view, and welcome the rising sun.

I have given you many quotations and extracts from poets and others in this letter. I shall finish up with one more. It is from the *Gitanjali*, it is a poem, or prayer, by

Rabindra Nath Tagore:—

“Where the mind is without fear and the head is held
high;
Where knowledge is free;
Where the world has not been broken up into frag-
ments by narrow domestic walls;
Where words come out from the depth of truth;
Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards per-
fection;
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way
into the dreary desert sand of dead habit;
Where the mind is led forward by Thee into ever-
widening thought and action—
Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my
country awake.”

*Religion and Violence*³

Some of my accumulated irritation turned to religion and the religious outlook. What an enemy this was to clearness of thought and fixity of purpose, I thought; for was it not based on emotion and passion? Presuming to be spiritual, how far removed it was from real spirituality and things of the spirit. Thinking in terms of some other world, it had little conception of human values and social values and social justice. With its preconceived notions it deliberately shut its eyes to reality for fear that this might not fit in with them. It based itself on truth, and yet so sure was it of having discovered it, and the whole of it, that it did not take the trouble to search for it; all that concerned it was to tell others of it. The will to truth was not the same thing as the will to believe. It talked of peace and yet supported systems and organisations that could not exist but for violence. It condemned the violence of the sword, but what of the violence that comes quietly and often in peaceful garb and starves and kills; or worse still, without doing any outward physical injury, outrages the mind and crushes the spirit and breaks the heart?

Religion and Classes⁴

If there is one thing that history shows it is this: that economic interests shape the political views of groups and classes. Neither reason nor moral considerations override these interests. Individuals may be converted, they may surrender their special privileges, although this is rare enough, but classes and groups do not do so. The attempt to convert a governing and privileged class into forsaking power and giving up its unjust privileges has therefore always so far failed, and there seems to be no reason whatever to hold that it will succeed in the future. Reinhold Niebuhr in his book directs his argument against the moralists "who imagine that the egoism of individuals is being progressively checked by the development of rationality or the growth of a religiously inspired goodwill, and that nothing but the continuance of this process is necessary to establish social harmony between all the human societies and collectives." These moralists "disregard the political necessities in the struggle for justice in human society by failing to recognise those elements in man's collective behaviour which belong to the order of nature and can never be brought completely under the dominion of reason or conscience. They do not recognise that when collective power, whether in the form of imperialism or class domination, exploits weakness, it can never be dislodged unless power is raised against it." And again: "Since reason is always, to some degree, the servant of interest in a social situation, social justice cannot be resolved by moral or rational suasion alone... Conflict is inevitable, and in this conflict power must be challenged by power."

To think, therefore, in terms of pure conversion of a class or nation or of the removal of conflict by rational argument and appeals to justice, is to delude oneself. It is an illusion to imagine that a dominant imperialist Power will give up its domination over a country, or that a class

will give up its superior position and privileges unless effective pressure, amounting to coercion, is exercised.

*Religion, Philosophy and Science*⁵

India must break with much of her past and not allow it to dominate the present. Our lives are encumbered with the dead wood of this past; all that is dead and has served its purpose has to go. But that does not mean a break with, or a forgetting of, the vital and life-giving in that past. We can never forget the ideals that have moved our race, the dreams of the Indian people through the ages, the wisdom of the ancients, the buoyant energy and love of life and nature of our forefathers, their spirit of curiosity and mental adventure, the daring of their thought, their splendid achievements in literature, art and culture, their love of truth and beauty and freedom, the basic values that they set up, their understanding of life's mysterious ways, their toleration of other ways than theirs, their capacity to absorb other people and their cultural accomplishments, synthesize them and develop a varied and mixed culture; nor can we forget the myriad experiences which have built up our ancient race and lie embedded in our subconscious minds. We will never forget them or cease to take pride in that noble heritage of ours. If India forgets them she will no longer remain India and much that has made her our joy and pride will cease to be.

It is not this that we have to break with, but all the dust and dirt of ages that have covered her up and hidden her inner beauty and significance, the excrescences and abortions that have twisted and petrified her spirit, set it in rigid frames, and stunted her growth. We have to cut away these excrescences and remember afresh the core of that ancient wisdom and adapt it to our present circumstances. We have to get out of traditional ways of thought and living which, for all the good they may have done in a past age, and there was much good in them, have ceased to have significance today. We have to make our own all the

achievements of the human race and join up with others in the exciting adventure of Man, more exciting today perhaps than in earlier ages, realising that this has ceased to be governed by national boundaries or old divisions and in common to the race of man everywhere. We have to revive the passion for truth and beauty and freedom which gives meaning to life, and develop afresh that dynamic outlook and spirit of adventure which distinguished those of our race who, in ages past, built our house on these strong and enduring foundations. Old as we are, with memories stretching back to the early dawn of human history and endeavour, we have to grow young again, in tune with our present time, with the irrepressible spirit and joy of youth in the present and its faith in the future.

Truth as ultimate reality, if such there is, must be eternal, imperishable, unchanging. But that Infinite, eternal and unchanging truth cannot be apprehended in its fullness by the finite mind of man which can only grasp, at most some small aspect of it limited by time and space, and by the state of development of that mind and the prevailing ideology of the period. As the mind develops and enlarges its scope, as ideologies change and new symbols are used to express that truth, new aspects of it come to light, though the core of it may yet be the same. And so, truth has ever to be sought and renewed, reshaped and developed, so that, as understood by man, it might keep in line with the growth of this thought and the development of human life. Only then does it become a living truth for humanity, supplying the essential need for which it craves, and offering guidance in the present and for the future.

But if some one aspect of the truth has been petrified by dogma in a past age, it ceases to grow and develop and adapt itself to the changing needs of humanity; other aspects of it remain hidden and it fails to answer the urgent questions of a succeeding age. It is no longer dynamic but static, no longer a life-giving impulse but dead thought and ceremonial and a hindrance to the growth of the mind

and of humanity. Indeed, it is probably not even understood to the extent it was understood in that past age when it grew up and was clothed in the language and symbols of that age. For its context is different in a later age, the mental climate has changed, new social habits and customs have grown up, and it is often difficult to understand the sense, much less the spirit, of that ancient writing. Moreover, as Aurobindo Ghose has pointed out, every truth, however true in itself, yet, taken apart from others which at once limit and complete it, becomes a snare to bind the intellect and a misleading dogma; for in reality each is one thread of a complex web and no thread must be taken apart from the web.

Religions have helped greatly in the development of humanity. They have laid down values and standards and have pointed out principles for the guidance of human life. But with all the good they have done, they have also tried to imprison truth in set forms and dogmas, and encouraged ceremonials and practices which soon lose all their original meaning and become mere routine. While impressing upon the awe and mystery of the unknown that surrounds him on all sides, they have discouraged him from trying to understand not only the unknown but what might come in the way of social effort. Instead of encouraging curiosity and thought, they have preached a philosophy of submission to nature, to the established church, to the prevailing social order, and to everything that is. The belief in a supernatural agency which ordains everything has led to a certain irresponsibility on the social plane, and emotion and sentimentality have taken the place of reasoned thought and inquiry. Religion, though it has undoubtedly brought comfort to innumerable human beings and stabilised society by its values, has checked the tendency to change and progress inherent in human society.

Philosophy has avoided many of these pitfalls and encouraged thought and inquiry. But it has usually lived in its ivory tower cut off from life and its day-to-day problems,

concentrating on ultimate purposes and failing to link them with the life of man. Logic and reason were its guides and they took it far in many directions, but that logic was too much the product of the mind unconcerned with fact.

Science ignored the ultimate purposes and looked at fact alone. It made the world jump forward with a leap, built up a glittering civilization, opened up innumerable avenues for the growth of knowledge, and added to the power of man to such an extent that for the first time it was possible to conceive that man could triumph over and shape his physical environment. Men became almost a geological force, changing the face of the planet earth chemically, physically and in many other ways. Yet when this sorry scheme of things entirely seemed to be in his grasp, to mould it nearer to the heart's desire, there was some essential lack and some vital element was missing. There was no knowledge of ultimate purposes and not even an understanding of the immediate purposes, for science had told us nothing about any purpose in life. Nor did man, so powerful in his control of nature, have the power to control himself, and the monster he had created ran amuck. Perhaps new developments in biology, psychology and similar sciences, and the interpretation of biology and physics, may help man to understand and control himself more than he has done in the past. Or, before any such advances influence human life sufficiently, man may destroy the civilization he has built and have to start anew.

There is no visible limit to the advance of science, if it is given the chance to advance. Yet it may be that the scientific method of observation is not always applicable to all the varieties of human experience and cannot cross the uncharted ocean that surrounds us. With the help of philosophy it may go a little further and venture even on these high seas. And when both science and philosophy fail us, we shall have to rely on such other powers of apprehension as we may possess. For there appears to be a definite stopping place beyond which reason, as the mind is at

present constituted, cannot go...

Realizing these limitations of reason and scientific method, we have still to hold on to them with all our strength, for without that firm basis and background we can have no **grip on any kind of truth or reality**. It is better to understand a part of truth and apply it to our lives, than to understand nothing at all and flounder helplessly in vain attempt to pierce the mystery of existence. The applications of science are inevitable and unavoidable for all countries and peoples today. But something more than its application is necessary. It is the scientific approach, the adventurous and yet critical temper of science, the search for truth and new knowledge, the refusal to accept anything without testing and trial, the capacity to change previous conclusions in the face of new evidence, the reliance on observed fact and not on preconceived theory, the hard discipline of the mind—all this is necessary, not merely for the application **of science but for life itself and the solution of its many problems**. Too many scientists today, who swear by science, forget all about it outside their particular spheres. The scientific approach and temper are, or should be, a way of life, a process of thinking, a method of acting and associating with our fellow-men. That is a large order and undoubtedly very few of us, if any at all, can function in this way with even partial success. But the criticism applies in equal or even greater measure to all the injunctions which philosophy and religion have laid upon us. *The scientific temper points out the way along which man should travel. It is the temper of a free man.* (emphasis added) We live in a scientific age, so we are told, but there is little evidence of this temper in the people anywhere or even in their leaders.

Science deals with the domain of positive knowledge but the temper which it should produce goes beyond that domain. The ultimate purposes of man may be said to be to gain knowledge, to realise truth, to appreciate goodness and beauty. The scientific method of objective inquiry is not

applicable to all these and much that is vital in life seems to lie beyond its scope—the sensitiveness to art and poetry, the emotion that beauty produces, the inner recognition of goodness. The botanist and zoologist may never experience the charm and beauty of nature, the sociologist may be wholly lacking in love of humanity. But even when we go to the regions beyond the reach of the scientific method and visit the mountain tops where philosophy dwells and high emotions fill us, or gaze at the immensity beyond, that approach and temper are still necessary.

Very different is the method of religion. Concerned as it is principally with the regions beyond the reach of objective inquiry, it relies on emotion and intuition. And then it applies this method to everything in life, even to those things which are capable of intellectual inquiry and observation. Organised religion, allying itself to theology and often more concerned with its vested interests than with things of the spirit, encourages a temper which is the very opposite to that of science. It produces narrowness and intolerance, credulity and superstition, emotionalism and irrationalism. *It tends to close and limit the mind of man, and to produce a temper of a dependent, unfree person.* (emphasis added)

Even if God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent Him, so Voltaire said—‘si dieu n’existait pas, il faudrait l’inventer.’ Perhaps that is true, and indeed the mind of man has always been trying to fashion some such mental image or conception which grew with the mind’s growth. But there is something also in the reverse proposition: even if God exists, it may be desirable not to look up to Him or to rely upon Him. Too much dependence on supernatural factors may lead, and has often led, to a loss of self-reliance in man and to a blunting of his capacity and creative ability. And yet some faith seems necessary in things of the spirit which are beyond the scope of our physical world, some reliance on moral, spiritual and idealistic conceptions, or else we have no anchorage, no objectives or purpose in life.

Whether we believe in God or not, it is impossible not to believe in something, whether we call it a creative life-giving force, or vital energy inherent in matter which gives it its capacity for self-movement and change and growth, or by some other name, something that is as real, though elusive, as life is real when contrasted with death. Whether we are conscious of it or not, most of us worship at the invisible altar of some unknown god and offer sacrifices to it—some ideal, personal, national or international; some distant objective that draws us on, though reason itself may find little substance to it; some vague conception of a perfect man and a better world. Perfection may be impossible of attainment, but the demon in us, some vital force, urges us on and we tread that path from generation to generation.

As knowledge advances, the domain of religion, in the narrow sense of the word, shrinks. The more we understand life and nature, the less we look for supernatural causes. Whatever we can understand and control ceases to be a mystery. The processes of agriculture, the food we eat, the clothes we wear, our social relations, were all at one time under the dominion of religion and its high priests. Gradually they have passed out of its control and become subjects for scientific study. Yet much of this is still powerfully affected by religious beliefs and the superstitions that accompany them. The final mysteries still remain far beyond the reach of human mind and are likely to continue to remain so. But so many of life's mysteries are capable of and await solution that an obsession with the final mystery seems hardly necessary or justified. Life still offers not only the loveliness of the world but also the exciting adventure of fresh and never-ceasing discoveries, of new panoramas opening out and new ways of living, adding to its fullness and ever making it richer and more complete.

It is therefore with the temper and approach of science, allied to philosophy, and with reverence for all that is beyond, that we must face life. Thus we may develop an integral vision of life which embraces in its wide scope the

past and the present, with all their heights and depths and look with serenity towards the future. The depths are there and cannot be ignored, and always by the side of the loveliness that surrounds us is the misery of the world. Men's journey through life is an odd mixture of joy and sorrow; thus only can he learn and advance. The travail of the soul is a tragic and lonely business. External events and their consequences affect us powerfully, and yet the greatest shocks come to our minds through inner fear and conflicts. While we advance on the external plane, as we must if we are to survive, we have also to win peace with ourselves and between ourselves and our environment, a peace which brings satisfaction not only to our physical and material needs but also to those inner imaginative urges and adventurous spirit that have distinguished man ever since he started on his troubled journey in the realms of thought and action. Whether that journey has any ultimate purpose or not we do not know, but it has its compensations, and it points to many a nearer objective which appear attainable and which may again become the starting point for a fresh advance.

Science has dominated the western world and everyone there pays tribute to it, and yet the West is still far from having developed the real temper of science. It has still to bring the spirit and the flesh into creative harmony. In India in many obvious ways we have a greater distance to travel. And yet there may be fewer major obstructions on our way, for the essential basis of Indian thought for ages past, though not its later manifestations, fits in with the scientific temper and approach, as well as with internationalism. It is based on a fearless search for truth, on the solidarity of man, even on the divinity of everything living, and on the free and co-operative development of the individual and the species, ever to greater freedom and higher stages of human growth.

1. Nehru, Jawaharlal. *An Autobiography*. (Allied Publishers Private Ltd.) 1962, pp. 374-80.
2. Nehru, Jawaharlal. *Glimpses of World History*. (Lindsay Drummond Ltd.) 1949, pp. 950-54.
3. Nehru, Jawaharlal. *An Autobiography*. (Allied Publishers Private Ltd.) 1962, pp. 507-8.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 544.
5. Nehru, Jawaharlal. *The Discovery of India*. (The Signet Press, Calcutta) second edition, 1946, pp. 449-455.

Nationalism and Communalism

Brief Resume of Nationalist Movement: up to 1st World War¹

[According to Jawaharlal Nehru, the British rule brought poverty and misery to Indian people, the Indian social system lost its energy and life and began to stagnate. But under the influence of English education, it came into contact with western ideas of liberty and democracy. The English-educated middle class, though small and cut off from the masses, played an important part in religious and social reform movements. The lead in this field was taken by Raja Ram Mohan Roy in Bengal who founded Brahmo Samaj followed by D. N. Tagore and Keshab Chander Sen. In the Panjab Arya Samaj movement was founded.]

Later in the century another religious reform movement took place. This was in the Punjab, and the founder was Swami Dayananda Saraswati. Another Society was started, called the *Arya Samaj*. This also rejected many of the later growths of Hinduism and combated caste. Its cry was "Back to the Vedas!" Although it was a reforming movement, influenced no doubt by Muslim and Christian thought, it was in essence an aggressive militant movement. And so it happened, curiously, that the *Arya Samaj* which, of many Hindu sects, probably came nearest to Islam, became a rival and opponent of Islam. It was an attempt to convert the defensive and static Hinduism into an aggressive missionary religion. It was meant to revive Hinduism. What gave the movement some strength was a colouring of nationalism. It was, indeed, Hindu nationalism raising its head. And the very fact that it was Hindu Nationalism made it difficult for it to become Indian nationalism. . . .

[Then he refers to Rama Krishna Mission movement and

Swami Vivekananda whose nationalism was "Hindu nationalism" though neither anti-muslim nor narrow nationalism of the Arya Samaj.]

Thus it is interesting to note that the early waves of nationalism in India in the nineteenth century were religious and Hindu. The Muslims naturally could take no part in this Hindu nationalism. They kept apart. Having kept away from English education, the new ideas affected them less, and there was far less intellectual ferment amongst them. Many decades later they began to come out of their shell, and then, as with the Hindus, their nationalism took the shape of a Muslim nationalism, looking back to Islamic traditions and culture, and fearful of losing these because of the Hindu majority. But this Muslim movement became evident much later, towards the end of the century.

Another interesting thing to note is that these reforms and progressive movements in Hinduism and Islam tried to fit in, as far as possible, the new scientific and political ideas derived from the West with their old religious notions and habits. They were not prepared to challenge and examine fearlessly these old notions and habits; nor could they ignore the new world of science and political and social ideas which lay around them. So they tried to harmonise the two by trying to show that all modern ideas and progress could be traced back to the old sacred books of their religions. This attempt was bound to end in failure. . . .

The English-educated class grew slowly in the cities, and at the same time a new middle class arose consisting of professional people—that is, lawyers and doctors and the like and merchants and traders. . . . [This] new bourgeoisie, or middle class, was a direct outcome of British rule; in a sense they were the hangers-on of this rule. They shared to a small extent in the exploitation of the masses; they took the crumbs that fell from the richly laden table of the British ruling classes. . . .

The great majority of these people of the new bour-

geoisie were Hindus. This was due to their somewhat better economic conditions, as compared to the Muslims, and also to their taking to English education, which was a passport to government service and the professions. The Muslim were generally poorer. Most of the weavers, who had gone to the wall on account of British destruction of Indian Industries, were Muslims. In Bengal, which has the biggest Muslim population of any Indian province, they were poor tenants or small land-holders. The landlord was usually a Hindu, and so was the village *bania*, who was the moneylender and the owner of the village store. The landlord and the *bania* were thus in a position to oppress the tenant and exploit him, and they took full advantage of this position. It is well to remember this fact, for in this lies the root cause of the tension between Hindu and Muslim. . . .

Although India as a whole and the masses grew poorer, the handful of the people comprising the new *bourgeoisie* prospered to some extent because they shared in the country's exploitation. . . .

As this *bourgeoisie* grew, their appetite also grew. . . . They found the British obstructing them in every path. . . . So they began agitating and this was the origin of the nationalist movement. [This new bourgeoisie founded the Congress in 1885 and its demands were the demands of landlords and capitalists and the educated unemployed seeking jobs.] So the Congress went from year to year and gained in strength? It was not narrow in its appeal like the Hindu nationalism of an earlier day. But still it was in the main Hindu. Some leading Muslims joined it, and even presided over it, but the Muslims as a whole kept away. . . . [Sir Sayyad Ahmed Khan] advised the Muslims to keep away from the Congress. . . . [His] advice was followed by the great majority of the Muslims, who did not join the Congress. But a small minority was always with it. Remember that when I refer to majorities and minorities I mean the majority and minority of the upper middle class,

English-educated, Muslims and Hindus. The masses, both Hindu and Muslim, had nothing to do with the Congress, and very few had been heard of it in those days. Even the lower middle classes were not affected by it then.

The Congress grew, but even faster than the Congress grew the ideas of nationality and the desire for freedom. The Congress appeal was necessarily limited. . . . But because it did not go down deep to the people, it had little strength [Then came the Japanese victory over Russia in 1905 and it "was a great pick-me-up for Asia"] and lessened the feeling of inferiority of Indians. [In its wake came the partition of Bengal]. The growing nationalism of the *bourgeoisie* resented it. It suspected that the British wanted to weaken them by thus dividing them. Eastern Bengal had a majority of Muslims, so by this division a Hindu-Muslim question was also raised.² A great anti-British movement rose in Bengal. Most of the landlords joined it and so did Indian capitalists. The cry of *Swadeshi* was first raised then, and with it the boycott of British goods, which of course helped Indian industry and capital. The movement spread to the masses to some extent, and partly it drew its inspiration from Hindus. Side by side with it there arose in Bengal a revolutionary violence, and the bomb made its appearance in Indian politics³. . . .

In Western India, in the Maharashtra country, there was also a great ferment at this time and revival of aggressive nationalism, tinged also with Hinduism. A great leader arose then, but Gangadhar Tilak. . . was the first political leader of the new India who reached the masses and drew strength from them. . . [and] it changed the face of Indian politics. [This led to the policy of repression.] But repression did not succeed in crushing Bengal. So a measure of reform in the administration was hurried up to appease some people at least. The policy was then, as it was later and is now, to split up the nationalist ranks. The moderates were to be rallied and the extremists crushed. In 1908 these new reforms, called the Morley-Minto reforms, were announced.

They succeeded in "rallying the moderates", who were pleased with them. The extremists with their leaders in gaol, were demoralised and the national movement weakened. In Bengal, however, the agitation against the partition continued and ended with success. In 1911, the British Government reversed the partition of Bengal. This triumph put new heart in the Bengalis. But the movement of 1907 [Extremist] had spent itself, and India relapsed into political apathy. . . .

So stood India in 1914. . . .

*India During the War:*⁴

. . . politics were at a low ebb in India on the eve of war. The coming of the war still further diverted attention from them, and numerous war measures taken by the British Government, made real political activity difficult. . . . Yet in the background there was universal sympathy with Turkey, and a desire that Britain should get a hard knock from Germany. This impotent wish was natural enough among those who had themselves been knocked about sufficiently. But there was no public expression of it. In public, loud shouts of loyalty to British filled the air. Most of this shouting was done by the ruling princes, and some of it by the upper middle classes who came into contact with the government. To a slight extent the *bourgeoisie* was also taken in by the brave declarations of the Allies about democracy and liberty and the freedom of nationalities. Perhaps, it was thought, this might apply to India also, and it was hoped that help rendered then to Britain, in her hour of need, might meet with a suitable reward later. . . .

But there were some Indians, both in India and in foreign countries, who did not adopt this "loyal" attitude. They did not remain quiet and passive as the great majority did. . . . In particular some Indians in Germany and in other countries of Europe gathered together in Berlin to devise means to help England's enemies, and formed a committee for this purpose. The German Government was naturally eager to

accept help of every kind, and they welcomed these Indian revolutionaries. A regular written agreement was arrived at and signed by the two parties—the German Government and the Indian Committee—in which, among other things, the Indians promised to help the German Government during the war on the understanding that in the event of victory, Germany would insist on Indian Freedom. This Indian Committee thereupon worked on behalf of Germany throughout the war. They carried on propaganda among the troops that were sent abroad, and their activities spread right upto Afghanistan and the north-west frontier of India. But apart from causing a great deal of anxiety to the British, they did not succeed in doing much. An attempt to send arms to India by sea was frustrated by the British. The German defeat in the war put an end automatically to this committee and its hopes.

In India also there were some instances of revolutionary activity....

As the war proceeded a handful of people made huge profits, as elsewhere, but the great majority felt the strain more and more and discontent grew.

....But a far more fundamental change was being brought about by the war-time conditions... Indian industries grew rapidly, both the old industries, like the textile and new war-time industries. Tatas' iron and steel works, which had so far been cold-shouldered by the government, now assumed tremendous importance, as they could produce war material... the capitalists prospered greatly and accumulated huge profits, which they wanted to invest again in industry. For the first time Indian capitalists were strong enough to exert pressure on the government. Even apart from this pressure, the force of events had forced the British Government to help Indian industry during war time. The demand for further industrialisation of the country led to the importation of more machinery from abroad....

All this involved a great change in British policy in India: a century-old policy was given up and a new one adopted

in its place.

[Here Nehru divides the period of the British rule in three stages: (1) The first stage was the eighteenth century, a stage of plunder and carrying away hard cash; (2) then came the second stage when British rule was firmly established which lasted for over 100 years—right upto the war. This was to keep India as a field of raw material and a market for Britain's manufactured goods; (3) the third stage started during the war when the big industry in India is encouraged by the British Government. He gives reasons for change of policy at this third stage which could be detrimental to the interests of Lancashire and other British Industries. These were: (a) War-time demands automatically forced the issue and pushed on industrialisation in India; (b) Britain was no more in the position to ignore the Indian capitalists completely lest it alienate them and lead them to support the more extreme and revolutionary elements in the country; (c) the surplus money of the capitalist class in England also sought opportunities for investment in India and other underdeveloped countries; (d) the experience of war showed that only highly industrialised countries can carry on a war effectively and Britain feared that the next war may be a war with Soviet Russia at the Indian frontier. However, the British Government "took steps to ensure that the real control of the new industry in India would remain in the hands of British capitalists. The Indian capitalist is obligingly taken as a very junior partner in the concern". These steps included tariff duties, strict government control over the banking system of the country and introduction of "imperial preferences".]

The growing strength of the Indian capitalist classes and upper bourgeoisie during the war began to show itself in the political movement also. Politics gradually came out of the pre-war and early war lull, and various demands for self-government and the like began to be made. Lokmanya Tilak came out of prison after completing his long term. The National Congress then... was in the hands of

the moderate group, and was a small uninfluential body having little touch with the people. As the more advanced politicians were not in the Congress, they organized Home Rule Leagues. Two such leagues were started, one by Lokmanya Tilak and the other by Mrs. Annie Besant. For some years Mrs. Besant played an important part in Indian politics, and her great eloquence and powerful advocacy did much to revive interest in politics. The government considered her propaganda so dangerous that they even interned her, together with two of her colleagues, for some months. She presided over a session of the Congress in Calcutta, and was its first woman president. Some years later Mrs. Sarojini Naidu was the second woman president of the Congress.

In 1916 a compromise was arrived at between the two wings of the Congress, the Moderate and the Extremist, and both of them attended the Lucknow session held in December 1916.⁵ The compromise was of short duration, for within two years there was another split, and the Moderates, now calling themselves Liberals, walked away from the Congress, and they have kept away ever since.

The Lucknow Congress of 1916 marks the revival of the National Congress. From that time onwards it grew in strength and importance and, for the first time in its history, began to be really a national organization of the *bourgeoisie* or middle classes. It had nothing to do with the masses as such, and they were not interested in it till Gandhiji came. So that both the so-called Moderates and Extremists represented more or less the same class, the bourgeoisie. The Moderates represented, or rather were themselves, a handful of prosperous people and those on the border-line of government service; the Extremists had the sympathy of the greater part of the middle classes and had many unemployed intellectuals within their ranks. These intellectuals (and by this I mean simply more or less educated people) stiffened their ranks and also provided recruits to the ranks of the revolutionaries. There was no great differ-

ence in the objective or ideals of the Moderates or the Extremists. They both talked of self-government within the British Empire, and both were prepared to accept a part of it for the time being, the Extremist wanting more than the Moderate and using stronger language. The handful of revolutionaries of course wanted a full measure of freedom, but they had little influence with the leaders of the Congress. The essential difference between the Moderates and the Extremists was that the former were a prosperous party of the Haves and some hangers-on of the Haves, and the Extremists had a number of Have-nots also and, as the more extreme party, naturally attracted the youth of the country, most of whom thought that strong language was a sufficient substitute for action. Of course these generalizations do not apply to all the individuals on either side; for instance, there was Gopal Krishna Gokhale, a very able and self-sacrificing leader of the Moderates, who was certainly not a Have. It was he who founded the Servants of India Society. But neither the Moderates nor the Extremists had anything to do with the real Have-nots, the workers and the peasants. Tilak was, however, personally popular with the masses.

The Lucknow Congress of 1916 was notable for another reunion, a Hindu-Muslim one. The Congress had always clung to a national basis, but in effect it was predominantly a Hindu organization, because of the overwhelming majority of Hindus in it. Some years before the war the Muslim intelligentsia, egged on to some extent by the government, had organized a separate body for themselves, called the All-India Muslim League. This was meant to keep the Muslims away from the Congress, but soon it drifted towards the Congress, and at Lucknow there was an agreement between the two about the future constitution of India. This was called the Congress-League Scheme, and it laid down, among other things, the proportion of seats to be reserved for the Muslim minorities. This Congress-League Scheme then became the joint programme which was

accepted as the country's demand. It represented the views of the bourgeoisie, who were the only politically minded people at the time. Agitation grew on the basis of this scheme.

The Muslims had grown more politically minded, and had joined hands with the Congress largely because of their exasperation at the British fighting Turkey. Because of sympathy for Turkey and a vigorous expression of it, two Muslim leaders, the Maulanas Mohamad Ali and Shaukat Ali, had been interned early in the war. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was also interned because of his connections with Arab countries, where he was very popular owing to his writings. All this served to irritate and annoy the Muslims, and they turned away from the government more and more.

As the demand for self-government grew in India, the British Government made various promises and started inquiries in India which occupied the people's attention. In the summer of 1918 the then Secretary of State for India and the Viceroy presented a joint report—called, from their respective names, the Montagu-Chelmsford Report—which embodied certain proposals for reforms and changes in India. Immediately a great argument arose in the country over these tentative proposals. The Congress strongly disapproved of them and considered them insufficient. The Liberals welcomed them, and, because of this, they parted company with the Congress.

India During 1919-22⁶

For a short while after the war trade prospered and there was a period of boom, during which enormous profits were made, especially in jute in Bengal. The dividends often amounted to over 100 per cent. Prices went up, and to some extent, but comparatively little, wages increased also. With the prices rose the rent to be paid by the tenants to their *Zamindars*. Then came a slump, and trade began to languish. The condition of the industrial workers and the agriculturists

became worse and discontent grew rapidly. There were many strikes in the factories owing to increasingly hard conditions. In Oudh, where the condition of the tenancy was particularly bad under the *Taluqdari* system, a mighty agrarian movement grew almost spontaneously. Among the educated middle classes unemployment increased, and resulted in much suffering.

This was the economic background in the early days of the post-war period. There was a militant spirit in the country which was manifesting itself in a variety of ways. Industrial labour was organising itself into trade unions and later building up an All-India Trade Union Congress. Small *Zamindars* and peasant proprietors were dissatisfied with the Government and were looking favourably towards political actions; even tenants, like the proverbial worm, were trying to turn, and the middle classes, especially the unemployed, were definitely turning to politics, and a handful of them to revolutionary activities. Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and others were all equally affected by these conditions, for economic conditions pay little heed to religious changes. But Muslims had been, in addition, greatly shaken up by the war against Turkey and the expectation that the British Government would take possession of the *Jazirat-ul-Arab*, the islands of Arabia, as they are called, the holy cities of Mecca, Madina, and Jerusalem (for Jerusalem is a holy city for Jews, Christians and Muslims).

So India waited after the war; resentful, rather aggressive, not very helpful, but still expectant. Within a few months, the first fruits of the new British policy, so eagerly waited for, appeared in the shape of a proposal to pass social laws to control the revolutionary movement. Instead of more freedom, there was to be more repression. These Bills were passed on the report of a committee and were known as the Rowlatt Bills. But very soon they were called the "Black Bills" all over the country and were denounced everywhere and by every Indian, including even the most moderate. They gave powers to the government and the

police to arrest, keep in prison without trial, or to have a secret trial of, any person they disapproved of or suspected. A famous description of these Bills at the time was: *na vakil, na appeal, na dalil*. As the outcry against the Bills gained volume, a new factor appeared, a little cloud on the political horizon which grew and spread rapidly till it covered the Indian sky.

This new factor was Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. . . . He also joined his voice to the universal outcry.

But this voice was somehow different from the others. . . . Behind the language of peace and friendship there was power and the quivering shadow of action and a determination not to submit to a wrong. . . . This was politics of action, not of talk.

[Gandhi gave a call to observe *hartal* on the first Sunday, the 6th April, after the Rowlatt Bills became law. It was to inaugurate *Satyagraha* movement]. It was the first all-India demonstration of the kind, so it was a wonderfully impressive one, in which all kinds of people and communities joined. . . . For the first time the villager as well as the town worker took part in a political demonstration on a mass scale. . . . Events marched rapidly after that *Satyagraha* Day on April 6th. There was trouble in Amritsar on April 10th, when an unarmed and bareheaded crowd mourning for the arrest of its leaders, Drs. Kitchlew and Satyapal, was shot at by the military and many were killed. . . . All the world knows of the massacre that took place on April 13th at Jallianwalla Bagh in Amritsar, when thousands fell dead and wounded, in that trap of death from which there was no escape. The very word 'Amritsar' has become a synonym for massacre. . . . From that year April 13 has been a National Day for India, and the eight days from April 6 to 13 the National Week. . . . There was now a mass character about [the Congress] and, for some of the old Congressmen a disturbing, vitality.

The next year the Congress took the plunge, and adopted Gandhi's programme of non-co-operation. . . . To begin

with there were to be a number of boycotts—of titles given by the foreign government, of the official functions and the like, of law courts both by lawyers and litigants, of official schools and colleges, and of the new councils under the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms. Later the boycotts were to extend to the civil and military services and the payment of taxes. On the constructive side stress was laid on hand-spinning and *Khaddar* and on arbitration courts to take the place of the law courts. The two other most important marks were Hindu-Muslim unity and the removal of untouchability among the Hindus. . . . The growth of nationalism turned people's minds to the necessity for political freedom. Freedom was not only necessary because it was degrading to be dependent and enslaved, not only, because, as Tilak put it, it was our birth right and we must have it, but also to lessen the burden of poverty from our people. . . .

It is not surprising, therefore, that this programme of non-co-operation, coupled with remarkable personality of Gandhi, caught the imagination of the country and filled it with hope. It spread, and at its approach the old demoralisation vanished. The new Congress attracted most of the vital elements in the country and grew in power and prestige.

Meanwhile the new councils and assemblies had been put up under the Montagu-Chelmsford scheme of reforms. The Moderates, now called Liberals, had welcomed them, and had become ministers and other officials under them. They had practically merged into the government and had no popular backing. The Congress had boycotted these legislatures, and little attention was paid to them in the country. All eyes were turned to real struggle outside, in the towns and villages. . . . Matters were coming to a head and inevitably the clash occurred in December 1921. The occasion for this was the visit of the Prince of Wales to India, which had been boycotted by the Congress. Mass arrests took place all over India, and the gaols were filled with

thousands of "politicals"... Early in 1922 a collision occurred at Chauri Chaura near Gorakhpur in U.P. between a crowd of peasants and the police, and this ended in the peasants burning the police station with some policemen inside it. Gandhi was greatly shocked at this and some other incidents, which showed that the movement was becoming disorganised and violent, and at his suggestion, the Congress executive suspended the law-breaking part of non-co-operation. Soon after this Gandhi was himself arrested, tried, and sentenced to six years imprisonment. This was in March 1922, and thus ended the first phase of non-co-operation movement.

India During 1920s⁷

Let us try to understand some of the different forces and movements which were stirring India in these nineteen-twenties. Dominating almost everything else was the Hindu-Muslim question. Friction was increasing, and riots had occurred in many places in northern India over petty questions like the right of playing music before mosques. This was a strange and sudden change after the remarkable unity of the non-co-operation days. How did this occur, and what was the basis of that unity?

The basis of the national movement was largely economic distress and unemployment. This gave rise to a common anti-British Government feeling in all groups and a vague desire for Swaraj or freedom. This feeling of hostility formed the common link, and thus there was common action, but the motives of different groups were different. Swaraj had a different meaning for each such group—the unemployed middle class looked forward to employment, the peasant to a relief from the many burdens imposed on him by the landlord, and so on. Looking at this question from the point of view of religious groups, the Muslims had joined the movement, as a body, chiefly because of the *Khilafat*.⁸ This was a purely religious question affecting Muslims only, and non-Muslims had nothing to do with it.

Gandhi, however, adopted it, and encouraged others to do so, because he felt it his duty to help a brother in distress. He also hoped in this way to bring the Hindus and Muslims nearer each other. The general Muslim outlook was thus one of Muslim nationalism or Muslim internationalism, and not of true nationalism. For the moment the conflict between the two was not apparent.

On the other hand, the Hindu idea of nationalism was definitely one of Hindu nationalism. It was not easy in this case (as it was in the case of the Muslims) to draw a sharp line between this Hindu nationalism and true nationalism. The two overlapped, as India is the only home of the Hindus and they form a majority there. It was thus easier for the Hindus to appear as full-blooded nationalists than for the Muslims, although each stood for his own particular brand of nationalism.

Thirdly, there was what might be called real or Indian nationalism, which was something quite apart from these two religious and communal varieties and strictly speaking, was the only form which could be called nationalism in the modern sense of the word. In this third group there were, of course, both Hindus and Muslims and others. All these three kinds of nationalism happened to come together from 1920 to 1922, during the non-co-operation movement. The three roads were separate, but for the moment they ran parallel.

The British Government was greatly taken aback by the mass movement of 1921. In spite of the long notice they had had, they did not know how to deal with it. The usual direct way of arrest and punishment was ineffective, as this was the very thing wanted by the Congress. So their secret service evolved a technique to weaken the Congress from within. Police agents and Secret-Service men entered Congress Committees and created trouble by encouraging violence. Another method adopted was to send secret agents as *sadhus* and *faqirs* to create communal trouble.

Similar methods are, of course, always adopted by Go-

vernments ruling against the will of the people. They are the stock-in-trade of imperialist powers. The fact that these methods succeed indicates the weakness and backwardness of the people, and not so much the sinfulness of the government concerned. To be able to divide other people and make them clash with each other, and thus weaken them and exploit them, is in itself a sign of better organisation. This policy can only succeed when there are rifts and cleavages on the other side. To say that the British Government created the Hindu-Muslim problem in India would be patently wrong, but it would be equally wrong to ignore their continuous efforts to keep it alive and to discourage the coming together of two communities.

In 1922, after the suspension of the non-co-operation campaign, the ground was favourable for such intrigue. There was the reaction after a strenuous campaign which had suddenly ended without apparent results. The three different roads which had run parallel to each other began to diverge and go apart. The *Khilafat* question was out of the way. Communal leaders, both Hindu and Muslim, who had been suppressed by the mass enthusiasm of the non-co-operation days, rose again and began taking part in public life. The unemployed middle-class Muslims felt that the Hindus monopolized all the jobs and stood in their way. They demanded, therefore, separate treatment and separate shares in everything. Politically, the Hindu-Muslim question was essentially a middle class affair, and a quarrel over jobs. Its effect, however, spread to the masses.

The Hindus were on the whole the better-off community. Having taken to English education earlier, they had got most of the government jobs. They were richer also. The village financier or banker was the *bania* who exploited the small landholders and tenants and gradually reduced them to beggary and himself took possession of the land. The *bania* exploited Hindu and Muslim tenants and landholders alike, but his exploitation of the Muslims took a

communal turn, especially in provinces where the agriculturists were mainly Muslim. The spread of machine-made goods probably hit the Muslims harder than the Hindus, as there were relatively more artisans among the Muslims. All these factors went to increase the bitterness between the two major communities of India and to strengthen Muslim nationalism, which looked to the community rather than to the country.

The demands of the Muslim communal leaders were such as to knock the bottom out of all hope of true national unity in India. To combat them on their own communal lines Hindu communal organisations grew into prominence. Posing as true nationalists, they were as sectarian and narrow as the others.

The Congress, as a body, kept away from the communal organisations, but many individual Congressmen were infected. The real nationalists tried to stop this communal frenzy, but with little success; and big riots occurred.

To add to the confusion, a third type of sectional nationalism arose—Sikh nationalism. In the past the dividing line between the Sikhs and the Hindus had been rather vague. The national awakening also shook up the virile Sikhs, and they began to work for a more distinct and separate existence. Large number among them were ex-soldiers, and these gave a stiffening to a small but highly organized community, which, unlike most groups in India, was more used to action than to words. The bulk of them were peasant proprietors in the Punjab, and they felt themselves menaced by the town bankers and other city interests. This was the real motive behind their desire for a separate group recognition. To begin with, the *Akali* movement, so called because the *Akalis* formed the active and aggressive group among the Sikhs, interested itself in religious questions, or rather in the possession of property belonging to shrines. They came into conflict with the Government over this, and an amazing exhibition of courage and endurance was seen at the *Guru-ka-bagh*⁹

near Amritsar. The *Akali jathas* were beaten most brutally by the police but they never retreated a step, nor did they raise their hands against the police. The *Akalis* won in the end and gained possession of their shrines. They then turned to the political field and rivalled the other communal groups in making extreme demands for themselves.

These narrow communal feelings of different communities, or group nationalisms, as I have called them, were very unfortunate. And yet they were natural enough. Non-co-operation had stirred up India thoroughly, and the first results of this shaking-up were these group-awakenings and Hindu and Muslim and Sikh nationalisms. There were also many other smaller groups which gained self-consciousness, and especially there were the so-called "Depressed Classes". These people, long suppressed by the upper-class Hindus, were chiefly the landless labourers in the fields. It was natural that when they gained self-consciousness a desire to get rid of their many disabilities should possess them and a bitter anger against these Hindus who had for centuries oppressed them.

Each awakened group looked at nationalism and patriotism in the light of its own interests. A group or a community is always selfish, just as a nation is selfish, although individuals in the community or nation may take an unselfish view. So each group wanted far more than its share and, inevitable, there was conflict. An inter-communal bitterness increased, the more extreme communal leaders of each group came to the front, for, in moments of anger, each group chooses as its representative the person who pitches his group demands highest and curses the others most. This conflict was aggravated in a variety of ways by the Government, especially by their encouraging the more-extreme communal leaders. So the poison went on spreading, and we seemed to be in a vicious circle from which there was no obvious way out.

While these forces and disruptive tendencies were taking shape in India, Gandhi fell very ill in Yervada prison and

had to undergo an operation. He was discharged from prison early in 1924. He was greatly distressed by the communal troubles and, many months later, a big riot shocked him so much that he fasted for twenty-one days. Many "unity" conferences were held to bring about peace, but with little result.

The effect of these communal wranglings and group nationalisms was to weaken the Congress as well as the *Swaraj* Party in the Councils. The ideal of *Swaraj* went into the background, as most people thought and talked in terms of their groups. The Congress, trying to avoid siding with any group, was attacked by communalists on every side. The principal work of the Congress during these days was one of quiet organisation and cottage industries (*Khaddar*), etc., and this helped it to keep in touch with the peasant masses.

I have written at some length about our communal troubles, because they played an important part in our political life during the nineteen-twenties. And yet we must not exaggerate them. There is a tendency to give them far more importance than they deserve, and every quarrel between a Hindu boy and a Muslim boy is considered a communal quarrel, and every petty riot is given great publicity. We must remember that India is a very big country, and in tens of thousands of towns and villages Hindus and Muslims live at peace with each other, and there is no communal trouble between them. Usually this kind of trouble is confined to a limited number of cities, though sometimes it had spread to the villages. It must also be remembered that the communal question is essentially a middle-class question in India, and because our politics are dominated by the middle classes—in the Congress, in the Councils, in newspapers, and in almost every other form of activity—it assumes an undue prominence.

Gandhi & Khilafat:¹⁰

The Amritsar Congress¹¹ was the first Gandhi Congress. Lokamanya Tilak was also present and took a prominent part in the deliberations, but there could be no doubt about it that the majority of the delegates, and even more so the great crowds outside, looked to Gandhi for leadership. The slogan *Mahatma Gandhi ki jai* began to dominate the Indian political horizon. The Ali Brothers, recently discharged from internment, immediately joined the Congress, and the national movement began to take a new shape and develop a new orientation.

M. Mohammad Ali went off soon on a Khilafat deputation to Europe. In India the Khilafat Committee came more and more under Gandhiji's influence and began to flirt with his ideas of non-violent non-co-operation. I remember one of the earlier meetings of the Khilafat leaders and Moulvies and Ulemas in Delhi in January 1920. A Khilafat deputation was going to wait on the Viceroy, and Gandhiji was to join it. Before he reached Delhi, however, a draft of the proposed address was, according to custom, sent to the Viceroy. When Gandhiji arrived and read this draft, he strongly disapproved of it and even said that he could not be a party to the deputation, if this draft was not materially altered. His objection was that the draft was vague and wordy and there was no clear indication in it of the absolute minimum demands which the Muslims must have. He said that this was not fair to the Viceroy and the British Government, or to the people, or to themselves. They must not make exaggerated demands which they were not going to press, but should state the minimum clearly and without possibility of doubt, and stand by it to the death. If they were serious, this was the only right and honourable course to adopt.

This argument was a novel one in political or other circles in India. We were used to vague exaggerations and flowery language and always there was an idea of a bar-

gain in our minds. Gandhiji, however, carried his point and he wrote to the Private Secretary of the Viceroy, pointing out the defects and vagueness of the draft address sent, and forwarding a few additional paragraphs to be added to it. These paragraphs gave the minimum demands. The Viceroy's reply was interesting. He refused to accept the new paragraphs and said that the previous draft was, in his opinion, quite proper. Gandhiji felt that this correspondence had made his own position and that of the Khilafat Committee clear, and so he joined the deputation after all.

It was obvious that the Government were not going to accept the demands of the Khilafat Committee and a struggle was therefore bound to come. There were long talks with the Moulvies and the Ulemas, and non-violence and non-co-operation were discussed, especially non-violence. Gandhiji told them that he was theirs to command, but on the definite understanding that they accepted non-violence with all its implications. There was to be no weakening on that, no temporising, no mental reservations. It was not easy for the Moulvies to grasp this idea but they agreed, making it clear that they did so as a policy only and not as a creed, for their religion did not prohibit the use of violence in a righteous cause.

The political and the Khilafat movements developed side by side during that year 1920, both going in the same direction and eventually joining hands with the adoption by the Congress of Gandhiji's non-violent non-co-operation. The Khilafat Committee adopted this programme first, and August 1st was fixed for the commencement of the campaign.

Earlier in the year a Muslim meeting (I think it was the Council of the Moslem League) was held in Allahabad to consider this programme. The meeting took place in Syed Raza Ali's house. M. Mohammad Ali was still in Europe but M. Shaukat Ali was present. I remember that meeting because it thoroughly disappointed me. Shaukat Ali was,

of course, full of enthusiasm but almost all the others looked thoroughly unhappy and uncomfortable. They did not have the courage to disagree and yet they obviously had no intention of doing anything rash. Were these the people to lead a revolutionary movement, I thought, and to challenge the British Empire? Gandhiji addressed them and after hearing him they looked even more frightened than before. He spoke well in his best dictatorial vein. He was humble but also clear-cut and hard as a diamond, pleasant and soft-spoken but inflexible and terribly earnest. His eyes were mild and deep, yet out of them blazed out a fierce energy and determination. This is going to be a great struggle, he said, with a very powerful adversary. If you want to take it up, you must be prepared to lose everything, and you must subject yourself to the strictest non-violence and discipline. When war is declared martial law prevails, and in our non-violent struggle there will also have to be dictatorship and martial law on our side, if we are to win. You have every right to kick me out, to demand my head, or to punish me whenever and howsoever you choose. But so long as you choose to keep me as your leader you must accept my conditions, you must accept dictatorship and the discipline of martial law. But that dictatorship will always be subject to your goodwill and to your acceptance and to your co-operation. The moment you have had enough of me, throw me out, trample upon me, and I shall not complain.

Something to this effect he said and these military analogies and the unyielding earnestness of the man made the flesh of most of his hearers creep. But Shaukat Ali was there to keep the waverers up to the mark, and when the time for voting came the great majority of them quietly and shamefacedly voted for the proposition, that is for war!

As we were coming home from the meeting I asked Gandhiji if this was the way to start a great struggle. I had expected enthusiasm, spirited language and a flashing of

eyes; instead we saw a very tame gathering of timid, middle-aged folk. And yet these people, such was the pressure of mass opinion, voted for the struggle. Of course, very few of these members of the Moslem League joined the struggle later. Many of them found a safe sanctuary in Government jobs. The Moslem League did not represent, then or later, any considerable section of Moslem opinion. It was the Khilafat Committee of 1920 that was a powerful and far more representative body, and it was this Committee that entered upon the struggle with enthusiasm.

1. Nehru, Jawaharlal. *Glimpses of World History* (Lindsay Drummond Ltd.) 4th edition, 1949, pp. 436-42.

2. Lord Curzon divided Bengal into two provinces. Bengal, then, consisted of Assam, Bihar and East and West Bengal. It was divided ostensibly on the apparent ground of administrative inconvenience. The real aim was to create a communal cleavage. East Bengal had muslim majority and was presented to them as their 'home-land'. This step was taken to counteract and weaken the nationalist political movement in Bengal. Ronaldshay points out that the intelligentsia interpreted it "as a subtle attack upon the growing solidarity of Bengal nationalism". The partition resulted in extremist political movement. Swadeshi and boycott were, for the first time, adopted as political weapons. The anti-partition movement became an all India movement and it assumed such properties thereby that partition had to be annulled.

3. The revolutionary movement in modern India began with the murder of European officials in the Plague agitation in Bombay and Maharashtra. These murders were looked upon as patriotic acts.

However, it was in Bengal that the movement, particularly with the partition of Bengal, became vigorous and militant. The beginnings of the revolutionary movement in Bengal started with Barindra Kumar Ghosh's efforts in 1902 to organize secret political societies, but these efforts did not meet with success and he returned to Baroda in 1903. After a year, in 1904, he again came to Bengal and began to organise a volunteer movement for giving training in lathi, sword and gatra play and for teaching other gymnastic exercises. This was made possible because of the agitation going on in Bengal against the proposed partition of Bengal. The soil was prepared for revolutionary ideas. Barindra found much response to his mission of preaching the cause of independence. In association with Abinash Bhattacharya and Bhupendra Nath Datta, he started the *Yugantar* which preached revolutionary ideas.

The partition of Bengal in 1905 gave birth to the Swadeshi and boycott movement. The volunteer movement grew rapidly and out of it were born the various secret societies. The Anushilan Samiti, organised in about 1905, became the central organization among them. Other societies like the Suhrid Samiti, the Swadeshi Bandabh Samiti, the Brati Samiti, the Sandhya Samiti, and the Jubak Samiti came into existence at different places in the two Bengals. All these were proscribed in 1909. The Anushilan remained the central organization while others became either merged with it at a later stage or became extinct. Even when these Samities remained separate groups, they maintained a close contact with one another. 'Sylhet, Dacca, and Calcutta were closely associated'. In East Bengal and Assam the Anushilan had about 500 branches, with its headquarters at Dacca. It was linked with the Calcutta Anushilan Samiti. P. Mitra and Barindra Kumar in Bengal and Pulin Behari Das, Jamini Kumar Chakarvarti, Nishi Bhushan and Bhupesh Chandra Nag in East Bengal were its leaders. Pulin Behari Das was the foremost among them. It developed into a highly disciplined, secret and widely spread party. It continued its existence till the 1930's and gave birth to the Revolutionary Socialist Party of India. It had its ramifications in Madras too. In the Deccan, the revolutionary movement was carried on by the Abhinav Bharat Society and the Gwalior Nav Bharat Society. The Abhinav had its headquarters at Nasik and was founded by Ganesh and Vinayak Savarkar. A branch of the Abhinav Society existed in Satara. During 1905 to 1911, the main activity of revolutionaries was limited to Bengal, the Deccan and Madras. These organizations developed an inner circle which controlled and directed the activities of their members. Their activities were limited to the manufacture of bombs, theft of arms and ammunition, political dacoities, assassination of individual officials, informers and betrayers, physical training, development of military organization, the carrying on of violent propaganda and the teaching of the idea of revolution through pamphlets, newspapers, songs and dramas. The important newspapers that disseminated revolutionary ideas included *Kal*, *Vihari*, *Sandhya*, *Yugantar*, *Bandematram*, etc.

The most symbolic event during this period was an attempt in Ahmedabad in November, 1909, on the life of Lord Minto, the then Viceroy and Governor-General. The other events included two attempts on the life of Andrew Frazer, Lieutenant Governor of East Bengal and Assam, and on the life of the *maire* of Chandarnagor who attempted to obstruct the work of revolutionaries in that territory. Ashutosh Biswas, Allen, Nandlal Bannerjee, Shamsul Alam, Rasul Dewan, Man Mohan Ghosh, Man Mohan De, Shrish Chander Chakarvarti and Rajkumar, who were all government officials or witnesses either engaged in prosecution or conviction of revolutionaries, were murdered. Approver Narinder Gossain was murdered in jail. Two ladies, Miss and Mrs. Kennedy were killed in an effort to kill magistrate Kingsford. Khudi Ram Bose had thrown this bomb and was sent to the gallows. It was the first bomb-explosion and he became a hero of heroes. His sacrifice gave a new inspiration to the young men. Sukumar Chakrabarti, Keshab De and Annada Ghosh, members of

revolutionary samities, were killed presumably for unfaithfulness. A large number of political dacoities to get money and arms were committed. Some of the most important were the Barvali, Rajendrapur, Rajnagar, Mohanpur, Khulna, Jessore, Faridpur and Bakarganj dacoities. These dacoities were committed either in trains or in the houses of rich persons. Many deaths occurred in these dacoities.

The revolutionaries in India, particularly the Deccan organizations, had contact with London and Paris revolutionary centres. These groups were formed there by Shyamji Krishan Varma, V. D. Savarkar, Chattopadhyaya, Aiyer, Acharya, Madame Cama, S. R. S. Rana, Hardayal and others. Three journals, the *Indian Socialist* from London, the *Bande Matram* from Paris and the *Talwar* from Germany were published and smuggled into India. The London group sent manuals on the making of bombs, pistols and ammunition to India for the revolutionary activities. They also developed contacts with Egyptian revolutionaries and later on with Germany during the First World War. They formed the 'Free India Society' in London. Madan Lal Dhingra murdered Curzon Wyllie in a London Club 'as a humble protest against the inhuman transportations and hangings of Indian youths.'

A revolutionary movement developed in the Punjab with Ajit Singh, Lal Chand Falak, Sufi Amba Parshad and Dr. Dina Nath as central figures. The Bharat Mata Society was founded. A large number of books, pamphlets and newspapers were published. The situation in 1909 was described by the Governor of Punjab in the following words: 'It purports to be a scheme for the organization of revolt in the Punjab. The situation became very tense with the Colonization Bill agitation and the Governor-General had to disallow it. Similar agitation had started in Madras. It did not take very much an organized shape except that the *India* wrote inflammatory articles. It was in December 1910 that V. V. S. Aiyer of the London and Paris groups came to India and started giving training to youth in the use of revolver. Ash, District Magistrate of Tinnevely, was murdered in June 1911. A letter found on the person of Vanchi Aiyer who murdered Ash stated that 3,000 Madrasis had taken a vow to kill George V as soon as he would arrive in India.

For some time there was a lull in revolutionary activity but not for long. In fact, even the annulment of the Partition of Bengal in 1911 could not put a stop to the movement. From 1912 onwards, and particularly with the outbreak of war, the revolutionary activity assumed a new aspect. It became broad-based, centrally planned, and linked with foreign governments, particularly the German Government, through revolutionary groups abroad.

In December, 1912, a bomb was thrown at the Viceroy, Lord Hardinge, in Chandni Chowk, Delhi when he was going in a State procession to celebrate the shifting of Capital from Calcutta to Delhi. It killed one of his A.D.Cs. It was a symbolic challenge thrown by the Punjab revolutionaries to the imperial might of the British Government. Another bomb was thrown at a meeting of the civilians of Punjab being held in Lawrence Gardens of Lahore in 1913. The revolutionary movement in

the Punjab at this time was directed among others by L. Hanumant Sahai, Master Anir Chand, Avadh Behari, L. Pindi Dass and Ras Behari Bose. This was followed by a series of bomb explosions in Mymensingh, Bhadrashwar and Maulvibazar. One of the most important events of 1914 was the theft with the connivance of the clerk of that company of 50 Mauser pistols and 46,000 rounds of ammunition belonging to Rodda and Co. These were used in almost all the subsequent dacoities and murders. A wave of dacoities and murders started.

It was revealed in various subsequent trials that these bombs were manufactured by the same process and in the same factory, which goes to prove a contact between Punjab and Bengal revolutionaries. In fact, the clue to the Delhi conspiracy cases started with the recovery of papers in a raid in Calcutta.

The more active work of revolutionaries was outside India, particularly in America. It was in America that the Ghadar Party was formed. It was formed by L. Hardayal, Barkatullah and Kartar Singh in 1903. Previous to that, some revolutionary centres were established particularly in Japan and China which developed a direct link with the Anushilan Samiti of Bengal. The Ghadar Party soon increased to 12,000 members and 8,000 of them came to India in less than two years. At the first elections, S. Sohan Singh Bhakna and L. Hardayal were elected President and Secretary respectively: Pingle and Dr. Khankhoje were to look after 'Ghadar' (Marathi edition), Shri Godharam was to look after its Urdu edition, Gopal Singh after the Punjabi edition and Mr. Khem Chand after the Gujrati edition. The party had two wings, the propaganda wing and the action wing. The former was headed by L. Hardayal and the later by Dr. Khankhoje. Dr. Khankhoje writes that 'The Mexican Government had of course agreed to train the revolutionaries in military science.'

In fact, real help was given by the German Government both to the Ghadar Party in America and India, and to the Paris group of Indian revolutionaries. It was with German help that Raja Mahendra Pratap of Hathras established the first National Government of India in Kabul. Raja Sahab became the President, Barkatullah the Prime Minister and Obedullah Sindhi a minister. Their aim was to raise rebellion in India with the help of Indian princes and chiefs. It gave a call to the Muslims to revolt. The Pan-Islamic movement helped in this conspiracy known as silk-letters conspiracy. It was soon discovered by the Government of India and foiled.

The Ghadar Party in India planned a rebellion for 21st February, 1915, with Ghadar heroes reaching India. They spread over the whole of Punjab and established contact with all revolutionaries in India. By this time the leadership of Bengal Anushilan had passed into the hands of the young revolutionary Jatin Mukherjee. Sachindra Sanyal was in charge of Banaras. Ras Behari Bose became the head of the entire revolutionary movement in the country and the uprising of 21st February 1915, was to be carried out under his direction. He established his headquarters at Amritsar. Vishnu Pingle, Kanshiram, Jagat Singh and many others had returned to India and had spread over the whole of Punjab. Pingle and

Sachindra Sanyal were organizing the uprising in Punjab. They visited a large number of military cantonments and established contacts with Indian soldiers. 'There was not a single cantonment from Bannu down to Benaras that he had not visited and created revolutionary centres in'. The spark was lighted among the soldiers at Meerut, Lucknow, Faizabad, Kanpur, Allahabad and the flames reached out as far as Jabalpur and Dacca. The Indian garrisons at Rawalpindi, Ferozepur and Lahore promised to revolt. Even in distant Burma and Malaya, the Ghadar revolt was maturing with No. 16, Dufferin Street, Rangoon, as its headquarters. There was a mutiny in the 5th Light Infantry at Singapore on 15th February 1915. The revolt was to start in Punjab and spread eastwards. Factories to manufacture bombs were opened in Amritsar, Ludhiana, Zabawal, Lohat-Wadi, etc. Arms and ammunition were to be received in East Bengal from America with the help of the German Consul Maverick and Henry's ships were to carry these arms to East Bengal. M. N. Roy under the assumed name of Martin made contact with the German Consul at Batavia for the purpose. Jatin Mukherjee had established himself at Balasore. Arms were to be received at Raimangal and Balasore. Martin also sent money from Batavia to Balasore. But soon in 1915, Balasore was discovered by police, and Jatin Mukherjee and his associates died a heroic death in an encounter with the police. Jatin died in hospital. The arms never reached Bengal. The German plot was discovered in America, and the German arms intended for India were captured and confiscated.

The revolt failed. Treachery and betrayal were the immediate cause. Kirpal Singh turned betrayer and gave information to the Government. The conspiracy failed. Leaders were arrested and soldiers were court-martialled. Terror held the Punjab in its grip for two weeks. Over 200 arrests were made. The Lahore conspiracy cases were started. Ras Bihari Bose, the leader of the revolt, escaped out of India and lived in Japan. The real causes of failure lay deeper. The revolt lacked a mass-base. A pure military revolt isolated from the masses was destined to fail. Even the middle class was divided.

The revolt failed but left its deep imprint on the political life of the country. Lord Minto described the movement as a 'dangerous anarchist movement, which created a position of dangerous emergency'. Risley, the then Home Member, described it as a 'murderous conspiracy' whose aim was to subvert the Government of the country. Lord Hardinge's administration described it as 'an extensive and dangerous conspiracy.' According to Craddock, the Ghadar Party "sought to raise a second mutiny in India, with themselves as the central figures." This resulted in a two-pronged policy: (1) to conciliate the moderate politicians and organizations by introducing reforms like the 1909 and 1919 reforms; (2) to exterminate revolutionaries by repressive policies like deportation, conspiracy cases, banning of meetings and parties, gagging of press, terrorism and by establishing what might be styled 'Star Chamber Courts' in India. Risley followed the policy of 'waging war' against the revolutionaries. However, it created a new urge in the patriots to carry on the struggle. It is the

blood of patriots that gives rise to patriots, or 'Repression is school of liberty' or 'Patriots' blood is freedom's seed', was the answer given by revolutionaries to the repressive policy of the Government. In fact 'No bombs, no bones' became a joke in the country. The direction of politics in India began to pass from the hands of higher middle class aristocracy into the hands of lower middle class and peasantry and, hence, the political movement became broad and popular. The Congress had to shed off its passivity and to move with the times. This paved the way for a mass upsurge in the country. Most of the revolutionaries in the later period turned leftists and joined the communist or other left parties. The small Deccan group mainly went over to communal organizations like the Hindu Mahasabha and the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh. Many revolutionaries joined the Congress either to function from inside the Congress or out of belief of futility of armed revolt and others continued the terrorist movement. The revolutionary movement continued along with Mahatma Gandhi's non-violent politics till 1947, when it gave the last blow to the British Power in India.

4. Nehru, Jawaharlal. *Glimpses of World History* (Lindsay Drummond Ltd.), 4th edition. 1949. pp. 667-674.

5. In 1907, Congress suffered a split. The extremists led by Tilak, B. C. Pal and Lajpat Rai left the Congress. The official Congress led by Ferozeshah Mehta, S. N. Banerjee, Gokhale and others stuck to constitutional methods. Loyalty to the British Government was its keynote. Its leaders entered the Council under Morley-Minto reforms. Lajpat Rai commented that "the Congress failed to communicate high principles and lay down high ideals", and that "it failed to create the spirit of self-sacrifice, that willingness to suffer, without which no national movement can grow, prosper and inspire". By 1915, Ferozeshah Mehta, G. K. Gokhale and S. N. Banerjee died and the Congress was left with no 'Commander'. S. N. Sinha presided over its Bombay Session of 1915. As Pattabhi Sitaramaya remarked, "Leadership was almost passing from the Nation to the Bureaucracy. Power had gone out of the moderates".

In 1915, Annie Besant tried to bring about a re-union between moderates and extremists and soon after Tilak rejoined the Congress.

6. Nehru, Jawaharlal. *Glimpses of World History* (Lindsay Drummond Ltd.), 4th edition. 1949. pp. 712-19.

7. *Ibid.*, pp. 719-723.

8. The defeat of Turkey in the first World War and the treatment accorded to her by the Allied powers alienated the Muslims in India from the British. The treaty of Sevres dismembered the Ottoman Empire. The Jazirat-ul-Arab (Mesopotamia, Arabia, Syria and Palestine) were taken away from Turkey. The Khilafat of the Sultan of Turkey was in danger and the British were planning to deprive him of it. It led the Muslims of India to start a movement for restoration of the temporal and spiritual jurisdiction of the Sultan of Turkey. This developed into Khilafat movement. The Muslim League met in its annual session at Delhi in 1918 under the presidentship of Dr. Ansari, and demanded 'self-government' for India. The Ulemas under the leadership of Maulana Mohammad-ul-Hasan, formed

the Jamaat-ul-Ulema-e-Hind. The Indian Muslim youth began to leave India being then ruled by the British and started moving to Afghanistan. This is known as *Hijrat* movement. At one time 18,000 of these young people were on the move out of India.

The Khilafat movement was joined by Mahatma Gandhi and other Hindu leaders including Swami Shradhanand, the prominent Arya Samaj leader of the time. The Khilafat Committee adopted the path of non-co-operation under the guidance of Gandhi. The Congress after the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy also adopted non-co-operation on three demands: Khilafat wrong, Punjab wrong and the inadequacy of Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms. Thus the Khilafat and non-co-operation movements dominated the political scene from 1919 to 1922.

9. Guru-Ka-Bagh incident resulted in the great Akali martyrdom. It was a Sikh shrine near Amritsar. The *Mohunt* of this shrine was an immoral person. The Gurudwara Parbandhak Committee removed him from the shrine but permitted him to retain the house attached to it. There was a piece of waste land attached to the shrine. The practice was to cut wood from trees in this land for the *langar*. The *Mohunt* objected to it and claimed it as property attached to the house which he was in possession of. He invoked the protection of law. The Government sided with him and cordoned off the place with police. It led to passive resistance by the Akalis. From every corner of the country came Jathas of Sikhs to Guru-Ka-Bagh to offer passive resistance and court arrest. The Government resorted to force and beat them brutally and arrested them.

This was followed by an agitation against the 'deposition' of the Maharaja of Nabha in 1923. The agitation was conducted by the S.G.P.C. and the Akali dal, resulting into arrests, firings and lathi charges. It continued till the middle of 1924. However, such events side-tracked the issue of *Swarajya* and diverted the attention of the people to smaller sectional and religious issues.

10. Nehru, Jawaharlal. *An Autobiography* (Allied Publishers Private Ltd.), 1962, pp. 44-47.

11. The Amritsar Congress was attended by 36,000 people of whom over 6,000 were ordinary delegates, 1,200 tenant delegates and others visitors. The Liberals had left the Congress and formed separate organisation. Even individual Liberals like Sastri and C. P. Ramaswami Iyenger who attended the session left it before its deliberations were over. The session was Gandhian in the sense that it adopted 'non-violence' and 'truth' as its creed, even to the extent of condemning violence on the part of the Indians during Punjab and Gujarat events of 1918-19. Gandhi in his speech said, "The whole key to success in the future lies in your hearty recognition of the truth underlying it, and acting upto it. To the extent we fail in recognising the eternal truth that underlies it to that extent we are bound to fail". Gandhi was not yet ready for non-co-operating with the Government; a resolution of welcoming the Prince of Wales was adopted; the resolution on Reforms was passed with Gandhi's rider of offering co-operation to work the reforms with a view to an early establishment of full responsible government. It also passed a resolution adopting

'Swadeshi' and hand-spinning and hand-weaving, on liquor policy of the government, on the grievances of third and intermediate class of railway passengers, on the boycott of the Hunter Commission, etc.

Communal Disunity & Unity Conferences

Lack of Ideals and Objectives Lead to Communalism¹ :

... Far more important was the progressive deterioration of Hindu-Muslim relations, in North India especially.² In the bigger cities a number of riots took place, brutal and callous in the extreme. The atmosphere of distrust and anger bred new causes of dispute which most of us had never heard of before. Previously a fruitful source of discord had been the question of cow sacrifice, especially on the Bakr-id day. There was also tension when Hindu and Muslim festivals clashed, as, for instance, when the Moharram fell on the days when the Ram Lila was celebrated. The Moharram revived the memory of a past tragedy and brought sorrow and tears; the Ram Lila was festival of joy and the celebration of the victory of good over evil. The two did not fit in. Fortunately they came together only once in about thirty years, for the Ram Lila is celebrated according to the solar calendar at a fixed time of the year, while the Moharram moves round the seasons, following a lunar year.

But now a fresh cause of friction arose, something that was ever present, ever recurring. This was the question of music before mosques. Objection was taken by the Muslims to music or any noise which interfered with their prayers in their mosques. In every city there are many mosques, and five times every day they have prayers, and there is no lack of noises and processions (including marriage and funeral processions). So the chances of friction were always present. In particular, objection was taken to processions and noises at the time of the sunset prayer in the mosques. As it happens, this is just the time when evening worship takes place in the Hindu temples, and gongs are sounded and the temple bells ring. *Arti*, this is called, and *arti-namaz* disputes now assumed major proportions.

It seems amazing that a question which could be settled with mutual consideration for each other's feelings and a little adjustment should give rise to great bitterness and rioting. But religious passions have little to do with reason or consideration or adjustments, and they are easy to fan when a third party in control can play off one group against another.

One is apt to exaggerate the significance of these riots in a few northern cities. *Most of the towns and cities and the whole of rural India carried on peacefully, little affected by these happenings, but the newspapers naturally gave great prominence to every petty communal disturbance. It is perfectly true, however, that communal tension and bitterness increased in the city masses.* (emphasis added) This was pushed on by the communal leaders at the top, and it was reflected in the stiffening up of the political communal demands. Because of the communal tension, Muslim political reactionaries, who had taken a back seat during all these years of non-co-operation, emerged into prominence, helped in the process by the British Government. From day to day new and more far-reaching communal demands appeared on their behalf, striking at the very root of national unity and Indian freedom. On the Hindu side also political reactionaries were among the principal communal leaders, and, in the name of guarding Hindu interests, they played definitely into the hands of the Government. They did not succeed, and indeed they could not, however much they tried by their methods, in gaining any of the points on which they laid stress; they succeeded only in raising the communal temper of the country.

The Congress was in a quandary. Sensitive to and representative of national feeling as it was, these communal passions were bound to affect it. Many a Congressman was communalist under his national cloak. But the Congress leadership stood firm and, on the whole, refused to side with either communal party, or rather with any communal

group, for now the Sikhs and other smaller minorities were also loudly voicing their particular demands. Inevitably this led to denunciation from both the extremes.

Long ago, right at the commencement of non-co-operation or even earlier, Gandhiji had laid down his formula for solving the communal problem. According to him, it could only be solved by goodwill and the generosity of the majority group, and so he was prepared to agree to everything that the Muslims might demand. He wanted to win them over, not to bargain with them. With foresight and a true sense of values he grasped at the reality that was worth while; but others who thought they knew the market price of everything, and were ignorant of the true value of anything, stuck to the methods of the market-place. They saw the cost of purchase with painful clearness, but they had no appreciation of the worth of the article they might have bought.

It is easy to criticise and blame others, and the temptation is almost irresistible to find some excuse for the failure of one's plans. Was not the failure due to the deliberate thwarting of others, rather than to an error in one's own way of thinking or acting? We cast the blame on the Government and the communalists, the latter blame the Congress. Of course, there was thwarting of us, deliberate and persistent thwarting, by the Government and their allies. Of course, British governments in the past and the present have based their policy on creating divisions in our ranks. Divide and rule has always been the way of empires, and the measure of their success in this policy has been also the measure of their superiority over those whom they thus exploit. We cannot complain of this or, at any rate, we ought not to be surprised at it. To ignore it and not to provide against it is in itself a mistake in one's thought.

How are we to provide against it? Not surely by bargaining and haggling and generally adopting the tactics of the market-place, for whatever offer we make, however high our bid might be, there is always a third party which

can bid higher and, what is more, give substance to its words. If there is no common national or social outlook, there will not be common action against the common adversary. If we think in terms of the existing political and economic structure and merely wish to tamper with it here and there, to reform it, to 'Indianise' it, then all real inducement for joint action is lacking. The object then becomes one of sharing in the spoils, and the third and controlling party inevitably plays the dominant role and hands out its gifts to the prize boys of its choice. *Only by thinking in terms of a different political framework—and even more so a different social framework—can we build up a stable foundation for joint action.* (emphasis added) The whole idea underlying the demand for independence was this: to make people realise that we were struggling for an entirely different political structure and not just an Indianised edition (with British control behind the scenes) of the present order, which Dominion Status signifies. Political independence meant, of course, political freedom only, and did not include any social change or economic freedom for the masses. But it did signify the removal of the financial and economic chains which bind us to the City of London, and this would have made it easier for us to change the social structure. So I thought then. I would add now that I do not think it is likely that real political freedom will come to us by itself. When it comes it will bring a large measure of social freedom also.

But almost all our leaders continued to think within the narrow steel frame of the existing political, and of course the social, structure. *They faced every problem—communal or constitutional—with this background and, inevitably, they played into the hands of the British Government, which controlled completely that structure. They could not do otherwise, for their whole outlook was essentially reformist and not revolutionary, in spite of occasional experiments with direct action. But the time had gone by when any political or economic or communal problem in India*

could be satisfactorily solved by reformist methods. Revolutionary outlook and planning and revolutionary solutions were demanded by the situation. But there was no one among the leaders to offer these. (emphasis added)

The want of clear ideals and objectives in our struggle for freedom undoubtedly helped the spread of communalism.³ (emphasis added) The masses saw no clear connection between their day-to-day sufferings and the fight for swaraj. They fought well enough at times by instinct, but that was a feeble weapon which could be easily blunted or even turned aside for other purposes. There was no reason behind it, and in periods of reaction it was not difficult for the communalists to play upon this feeling and exploit it in the name of religion. *It is nevertheless extraordinary how the bourgeois classes, both among the Hindus and the Muslims, succeeded, in the sacred name of religion, in getting a measure of mass sympathy and support for programmes and demands which had absolutely nothing to do with the masses, or even the lower middle class. (emphasis added)* Every one of the communal demands put forward by any communal group is, in the final analysis, a demand for jobs, and these jobs could only go to a handful of the upper middle class. There is also, of course, the demand for *special and additional seats in the legislatures, as symbolising political power, but this too is looked upon chiefly as the power to exercise patronage. These narrow political demands, benefiting at the most a small number of the upper middle classes, and often creating barriers in the way of national unity and progress, were cleverly made to appear the demands of the masses of that particular religious group. (emphasis added)* Religious passion was hitched on to them in order to hide their barrenness.

In this way political reactionaries came back to the political field in the guise of communal leaders, and the real explanation of the various steps they took was not so much their communal bias as their desire to obstruct political

advance. We could only expect opposition from them politically, but still it was a peculiarly distressing feature of an unsavoury situation to find to what lengths they would go in this respect. Muslim communal leaders said the most amazing things and seemed to care not at all for Indian nationalism or Indian freedom; Hindu communal leaders, though always speaking apparently in the name of nationalism, had little to do with it in practice and, incapable of any real action, sought to humble themselves before the Government, and did that too in vain. Both agreed in condemning socialistic and such-like "subversive" movements; there was a touching unanimity in regard to any proposal affecting vested interests. Muslim communal leaders said and did many things harmful to political and economic freedom, but as a group and individually they conducted themselves before the Government and the public with some dignity. That could hardly be said of the Hindu communal leaders.

There were many Muslims in the Congress. Their numbers were large, and included many able men, and the best-known and most popular Muslim leaders in India were in it. Many of those Congress Muslims organised themselves into a group called the 'Nationalist Muslim Party', and they combated the communal Muslim leaders. They did so with some success to begin with, and a large part of the Muslim intelligentsia seemed to be with them. But they were all upper middle-class folk, and there were no dynamic personalities amongst them. They took to their professions and their businesses, and lost touch with the masses. Indeed, they never went to their masses. Their method was one of drawing-room meetings and mutual arrangements and pacts, and at this game their rivals, the communal leaders, were greater adepts. Slowly the latter drove the Nationalist Muslims from one position to another, made them give up, one by one, the principles for which they stood. Always the Nationalist Muslims tried to ward off further retreat and to consolidate their position by

adopting the policy of the 'lesser evil', but always this led to another retreat and another choice of the 'lesser evil'. There came a time when they had nothing left to call their own, no fundamental principle on which they stood except one, and that had been the very sheet-anchor of their group: joint electorates. But again the policy of the lesser evil presented the fatal choice to them, and they emerged from the ordeal minus that sheet-anchor. So to-day they stand divested of every shred of principle or practice on the basis of which they formed their group, and which they had proudly nailed to their masthead—of everything, all, except their name!

The collapse and elimination of the Nationalist Muslims as a group—as individuals they are, of course, still important leaders of the Congress—forms a pitiful story. It took many years, and the last chapter has only been written this year (1934). In 1923 and subsequent years they were a strong group, and they took up an aggressive attitude against the Muslim communalists. Indeed, on several occasions, Gandhiji was prepared to agree to some of the latter's demands, much as he disliked them, but his own colleagues, the Muslim Nationalist leaders, prevented this and were bitter in their opposition.

During the middle 'twenties many attempts were made to settle the communal problem by mutual talks and discussions—'Unity Conferences' they were called. The most notable of these was the conference convened by M. Mohamad Ali, the Congress President for the year, in 1924, and held in Delhi under the shadow of Gandhiji's twenty-one-day fast. There were many earnest and well-meaning people at these conferences, and they tried hard to come to an agreement. Some pious and good resolutions were passed, but the basic problem remained unsolved. It could not be solved by those conferences, for a solution could not be reached by a majority of votes but by virtual unanimity, and there were always extremists of various groups present whose idea of a solution was a complete submission of all

others to their views. Indeed, one was led to doubt whether some of the prominent communalists desired a solution at all. Many of them were political reactionaries, and there was no common ground between them and those who desired radical political change.

But the real difficulties went deeper and were not just the result of individual back-sliding. The Sikhs were now loudly advancing their communal demands, and an extraordinarily complicated triangle was created in the Punjab. The Punjab, indeed, became the crux of the matter, and the fear of each group of the others produced a background of passion and prejudice. In some provinces agrarian trouble—Hindu zamindars and Muslim tenants in Bengal—appeared under communal guise. In the Punjab and Sind, the banker and richer classes generally were Hindus, debtors were Muslim agriculturists, and all the feeling of the impoverished debtors against the creditor, out for his pound of flesh, went to swell the communal tide. As a rule, the Muslims were the poorer community, and the Muslim communal leaders managed to exploit the antagonism of the have-nots against the haves for communal purposes, though, strangely enough, these purposes had nothing whatever to do with the betterment of those have-nots. Because of this, these Muslim communal leaders did represent some mass elements, and gained strength thereby. The Hindu communal leaders, in an economic sense, represented the rich banker and professional classes; they had little backing among the Hindu masses although, on occasions, they had their sympathy.

The problem, therefore, is getting a little mixed up with economic groupings, though unhappily this fact is not realised. It may develop into more obvious conflicts between economic classes, but if that time comes, *the present-day communal leaders, representing the upper classes of all groups, will hasten to patch up their differences in order to face jointly the common class foe.* (emphasis added) Even under present conditions it should not be

difficult to arrive at a political solution, but only if, and it is a big if, the third party was not present.

Unity Conferences & Communalism⁴

The Delhi Unity Conference of 1924⁵ was hardly over when a Hindu-Muslim riot broke out in Allahabad. It was not a big riot, as such riots go, in so far as casualties were concerned, but it was painful to have these troubles in one's home town. I rushed back with others from Delhi to find that the actual rioting was over; but the aftermath, in the shape of bad blood and court cases, lasted a long time. I forget why the riot had begun. That year, or perhaps later, there was also some trouble over the Ram Lila celebrations at Allahabad. Probably because of restrictions about music before mosques, these celebrations, involving huge processions as they did, were abandoned as a protest. For about eight years now the Ram Lila has not been held in Allahabad, and the greatest festival of the year for hundreds of thousands in the Allahabad district has almost become a painful memory. How well I remember my visits to it when I was a child! How excited we used to get! And the vast crowds that came to see it from all over the district and even from other towns. It was a Hindu festival, but it was an open-air affair, and Muslims also swelled the crowds, and there was joy and lightheartedness everywhere. Trade flourished. Many years afterwards when, as a grown-up, I visited it I was not excited, and the procession and the tableaux rather bored me. My standards of art and amusement had gone up. But even then, I saw how the great crowds appreciated and enjoyed the show. It was carnival time for them. And now, for eight or nine years, the children of Allahabad, not to mention the grown-ups, have had no chance of seeing this show and having a bright day of joyful excitement in the dull routine of their lives. And all because of trivial dispute and conflicts! Surely religion and the spirit of religion have much to answer for. What kill-joys they have been!

*Gandhi and Communal Award*⁶

Our peaceful and monotonous routine in gaol was suddenly upset in the middle of September 1932 by a bomb-shell. News came that Gandhiji had decided to "fast unto death" in disapproval of the separate electorates given by Mr. Ramasay MacDonald's Communal Award to the Depressed Classes.⁷ What a capacity he had to give shocks to people! Suddenly all manner of ideas rushed into my head; all kinds of possibilities and contingencies rose up before me and upset my equilibrium completely. For two days I was in darkness with no light to show the way out, my heart sinking when I thought of some results of Gandhiji's action. The personal aspect was powerful enough, and I thought with anguish that I might not see him again. It was over a year ago that I had seen him last on board ship on the way to England. Was that going to be my last sight of him?

And then I felt annoyed with him for choosing a side-issue for his final sacrifice—just a question of electorate. What would be the result on our freedom movement? Would not the larger issues fade into the background, for the time being at least? And if he attained his immediate object and got a joint electorate for the Depressed Classes, would not that result in a reaction and a feeling that something has been achieved and nothing more need be done for a while?⁸ And was not his action a recognition, and in part an acceptance, of the Communal Award and the general scheme of things as sponsored by the Government? Was this consistent with Non-Co-operation and Civil Disobedience? After so much sacrifice and brave endeavour, was our movement to tail off into something insignificant?

I felt angry with him at his religious and sentimental approach to a political question, and his frequent reference to God in connection with it. He even seemed to suggest that God had indicated the very date of the fast.⁹ What a terrible example to set!

Constitutional Politics and Nationalist Party :

But,¹⁰ personalities apart, the rise of the Nationalist Party, or some such party, was inevitable owing to the growing communal temper of the country. On the one side, there were the Muslim fears of a Hindu majority; on the other side, Hindu resentment at being bullied, as they conceived it, by the Muslims. Many a Hindu felt that there was too much of the stand-up-and-deliver about the Muslim attitude, too much of an attempt to extort special privileges with the threat of going over to the other side. Because of this, the Hindu Mahasabha rose to some importance, representing as it did Hindu nationalism, Hindu communalism opposing Muslim communalism. The aggressive activities of the Mahasabha acted on and stimulated still further this Muslim communalism, and so action and reaction went on, and in the process the communal temperature of the country went up. Essentially this was a question between the majority group in the country and a big minority. But, curiously enough, in some parts of the country the position was reversed. In the Punjab and Sind the Hindus as well as the Sikhs were in a minority, the Muslims in a majority; and these provincial minorities had as much fear of being crushed by a hostile majority in those provinces as the Muslims had in the whole of India. Or, to be more accurate, the middle-class job-seekers in each group were afraid of being ousted by the other group, and to some extent the holders of vested interests were afraid of radical changes affecting those interests.

The Swaraj Party suffered because of this growth of communalism. Some of its Muslim members dropped off and joined the communal organisations, and some of its Hindu members drifted off to the Nationalist Party.¹¹ Malaviyaji and Lala Lajpat Rai made a powerful combination so far as the Hindu electorate was concerned, and Lalaji had great influence in the Punjab, the storm centre of communalism. On the side of the Swaraj Party or Con-

gress, the chief burden of fighting the elections fell on my father. C. R. Das was no longer there to share it with him. He enjoyed a fight, or at any rate never shirked it, and the growing strength of the opposition made him throw all his great energy into the election campaign. He received and gave hard blows; little grace was shown or quarter given by either party. The election left a trail of bitter memories.

The Nationalist Party met with a great measure of success, but this success definitely lowered the political tone of the Legislative Assembly. The centre of gravity moved more to the right. The Swaraj Party had itself been the right wing of the Congress. In its attempts to add to its strength, it had allowed many a doubtful person to creep in, and had suffered in quality because of this. The Nationalist Party followed the same policy, only on a lower plane, and a motley crew of title-holders, big land-holders, industrialists and others, who had little to do with politics, came into its ranks.

The end of that year 1926 was darkened by a great tragedy, which sent a thrill of horror all over India. It showed to what depths communal passion could reduce our people. Swami Shraddhanand was assassinated by a fanatic as he lay in bed. What a death for a man who had bared his chest to the bayonets of the Gurkhas and marched to meet their fire! Nearly eight years earlier he, an Arya Samajist leader, had stood in the pulpit of the great Jame Masjid of Delhi and preached to a mighty gathering of Muslims and Hindus of unity and India's freedom. And that great multitude had greeted him with loud cries of *Hindu-Musliman-ki-jai*, and outside in the streets they had jointly sealed that cry with their blood. And now he lay dead, killed by a fellow-countryman, who thought, no doubt, that he was doing a meritorious deed, which would lead him to paradise.

Always I have admired sheer physical courage, the courage to face physical suffering in a good cause, even unto death. Most of us, I suppose, admire it. Swami

Shraddhanand had an amazing amount of that fearlessness. His tall and stately figure, wrapped in a sanyasin's robe, perfectly erect in spite of advanced years, eyes flashing, sometimes a shadow of irritation or anger at the weakness of others passing over his face—how I remember that vivid picture, and how often it has come back to me!

Communalism and the Idea of a Constituent Assembly:

I¹² was glad that the Congress had adopted the idea of a Constituent Assembly for settling the constitution of the country. It seemed to me that there was no other way of solving the problem, and I am sure that sometime or other some such Assembly will have to meet. Manifestly it cannot do so without the consent of the British Government, unless there has been a successful revolution. It is equally manifest that this consent is not likely to be forthcoming under present circumstances. A real Assembly can therefore not meet till enough strength has been evolved in the country to force the pace. This inevitably means that even the political problem will remain unsolved till then. Some of the Congress leaders, while accepting the idea of the Constituent Assembly, have tried to tone it down and made it not very unlike a large All-Parties Conference after the old model. This would be an utterly futile proceeding and the same old people, self-chosen mostly, would meet and disagree. The whole idea behind the Constituent Assembly is that it should be elected on a very wide mass basis, drawing its strength and inspiration from the masses. Such a gathering will immediately face real problems, and will not remain in the communal and other ruts in which we have so often stuck.

It was interesting to watch the reactions of Simla and London to this idea. It was made known semi-officially that Government would have no objection; they gave it a patronising approval, evidently looking upon it as an old type of All-Parties Conference, foredoomed to failure, which would strengthen their hands. Later they seem to

have realised the dangers and possibilities of the idea, and they began opposing it vigorously.

Soon after the Bombay Congress came the Assembly elections. With all my lack of enthusiasm for the Congress parliamentary programme, I was greatly interested and I wished the Congress candidates success, or to put it more correctly, I hoped for the defeat of their opponents. Among these opponents was a curious assortment of careerists, communalists, renegades, and people who had staunchly supported the Government in its policy of repression. There was little doubt that most of these people would be swept away, but unfortunately the Communal Award obscured the issue and many of them took shelter under the widespread wings of the communal organisations. Despite this the Congress met with remarkable success, and I was pleased that a good number of undesirables had been kept out.

The attitude of the so-called Congress Nationalist Party struck me as particularly deplorable. One could understand their vehement opposition to the Communal Award but, in order to strengthen their position, they allied themselves with the extreme communal organisations, even the Sanatanists, than whom there is no more reactionary group in India, both politically and socially, as well as numerous political reactionaries of the most notorious kind. Except in Bengal, where for special reasons a strong Congress group supported them, many of them were largely anti-Congress in every way. Indeed they were the most prominent opponents of the Congress. In spite of this varied assortment of forces opposed to it, which included landlords, liberals and, of course, officials, the Congress candidates succeeded to a remarkable extent.

The Congress attitude to the Communal Award was extraordinary, and yet under the circumstances it could hardly have been very different. It was the inevitable outcome of their past neutral and rather feeble policy. A strong line adopted at an earlier stage and followed regardless of

immediate consequences would have been more dignified and correct. But as the Congress had been unwilling to take that up there was no other course open to it except the one it took. The Communal Award was a patent absurdity, and it was impossible of acceptance because, so long as it existed, any kind of freedom was unattainable. This was not because it gave too much to the Muslims. It was perhaps possible to give them, in a different way, almost all they wanted. As it was, the British Government divided up India into any number of mutually exclusive compartments, each balancing and neutralising the other, so that the foreign British element could remain supreme. It made dependence on the British Government inevitable.

In Bengal especially, where heavy weightage had been given to the small European element, the position was exceedingly unfair to the Hindus. Such an award or decision, or whatever it might be called (objection has been taken to its being called an award), was bound to be bitterly resented, and even though it might be imposed, or for political reasons tolerated temporarily, it is likely to be a continuing source of friction. Personally I think that its very badness is a thing in its favour, for as such it can never become the permanent basis for anything.

The Nationalist Party, and even more so the Hindu Mahasabha and other communal organisation, naturally resented this infliction, but their criticism was really based, as that of the supporters, on an acceptance of the British Government's ideology. This led them, and is leading them further, to the adoption of a strange policy, which must be very pleasing to the Government. Obsessed by the Award, they are toning down their opposition to other vital matters, in the hope of bribing or cajoling the Government into varying the Award in their favour. The Hindu Mahasabha has gone farthest in this direction. It does not seem to strike them that this is not only a humiliating position to take up, but is calculated to make any alteration of the Award most difficult, for it merely irritates the Muslims and drives them

farther away. It is impossible for the British Government to win over the nationalist elements; the distance is too great and the conflict of interests too marked. It is also impossible for them, on the narrower issue of communal interests, to please both the Hindu and the Muslim communalists. They had to choose and, from their point of view, they chose rightly in favouring Muslim communalism. Are they to upset this well-settled and profitable policy and offend the Muslims for the sake of winning over a handful of Hindu communalists?

The very fact that the Hindus, as a group, are more advanced politically and more clamant for national freedom is bound to go against them. For petty communal concessions (and they cannot be other than petty) will not make much difference to their political hostility; such concessions will however make a temporary difference to the Muslim attitude.

The Assembly elections threw a revealing light on the people at the back of the Hindu Mahasabha and the Muslim Conference—the two most reactionary communal bodies. Their candidates and supporters were drawn from the big landlords or the rich banker class. The Mahasabha also showed its solicitude to the banker class by its vehement opposition to the recent Relief from Indebtedness Bill. These small sections at the top of the Hindu social strata constitute the Hindu Mahasabha, and a fraction of them, together with some professional people, form the Liberals. They do not carry great weight among the Hindus because the lower middle class is politically awake. The industrial leaders also stand apart from them because there is some clash between the demands of rising industry and the semi-feudal elements. Industrialists, not daring to indulge in direct action or other risky methods, try to keep on good terms with both nationalism and the Government. They do not pay much attention to the liberal or communal groups. Industrial advance and profits are their governing motives.

Among the Muslims this lower middle-class awakening is

still to come, and industrially also they are backward. Thus we find the most hopelessly reactionary and feudal and ex-official elements not only controlling their communal organisations, but exercising considerable influence over the community. The Muslim Conference is quite a galaxy of knights, ex-ministers and big landlords. And yet I think that the Muslim rank and file has more potentiality in it, perhaps because of a certain freedom in social relations, than the Hindu masses, and is likely to go ahead faster in a socialist direction, once it gets moving. Just at present the Muslim intelligentsia seems to be paralysed, intellectually as well as physically, and has no push in it. It dare not challenge its old guard.

Even the leadership of the Congress, politically the most advanced big group, is far more cautious than the condition of the masses might necessitate. They ask the masses for support, but seldom ask them for their opinion or set about enquiring what ails them. Prior to the Assembly elections they made every effort to tone down their programme in an attempt to win over various moderate non-Congress elements. Even their attitude to such measures as the Temple Entry Bill was varied, and assurances were given to soothe the more orthodox in Madras. A straightforward, aggressive election programme would have created more enthusiasm and helped greatly in educating the masses. Now that the Congress has committed itself to a parliamentary programme there will be still more accommodation of politically and socially reactionary interests, in the hope of getting a few odd votes in a division, and a greater widening of the breach between the Congress leadership and the masses. Eloquent speeches will be delivered, and the best parliamentary etiquette followed, and from time to time the Government will be defeated—defeats which the Government will calmly ignore as it has previously done.

1. Nehru, Jawaharlal. *An Autobiography* (Allied Publishers Private Ltd.), 1962, pp. 134-40.

2. The withdrawal of Non-Co-operation Movement by Gandhi after the Chauri Chaura incident was followed by communal tension and riots. In fact, 1920s were dominated by communal tension, riots and unity conferences relegating the freedom struggle into background. Gandhi's arrest in 1922 and the withdrawal of the non-cooperation movement created a crisis and confusion within the Congress and a political vacuum in the country. The communal leaders came out of their nest and began to stir the waters of communal discord, particularly in Upper India. Soon after the Multan Riot in late 1922, Madan Mohan Malaviya gave the call for "Sangathan" movement of Hindus, which was followed by "Suddhi" movement led by Arya Samaj. In response, the "Tablig" and "Tanzim" movements were started by Muslims.

The communal tension became intensified in the Punjab. Riots occurred in Multan and Amritsar in 1922-23. Later these spread to Meerut, Allahabad and Moradabad. In the Punjab, soon after the withdrawal of the Non-Co-operation Movement, Mian Fazl-i-Hussain, then a Minister in the Punjab Government, followed a policy of giving 50% representation to Muslims in services, local bodies, etc. He justified this policy on the basis of Lucknow Pact which conceded such representation to Muslims. He also introduced the Gurdwara Bill in the Council in opposition to Hindu and Sikh Members of the Council in violation of the Lucknow Pact provision that no legislation on religious matters shall be passed without the agreement of 2/3rd majority of the members representing the community concerned. In all this he was supported by the Governor of the Punjab. This led to fanning of communalism and diverting the attention from national politics to sectional, local and communal interests.

Thus the demoralisation caused by the withdrawal of the Non-Co-operation Movement, the lack of secular-mindedness in Indian politics, the absence of socio-economic content in the political movement and the waning of hope of realising the so-called "Swaraj" within one year, led to a situation in which the heightened communal passions were exploited and channelised by the urban middle-classes into communal hostilities to further their sectional interests in securing for themselves the benefits of office under the 1919 Reforms. The elections to the Councils were looming large. These were to be held in 1923 on the basis of restricted educational property and urban franchise. Only 3 per cent of the population was enfranchised under the Reforms.

3. The national movement was not clear in its political objectives during 1920s, till the Congress under Nehru's presidentship adopted the resolution of complete independence in 1929. It had little socio-economic content. Mrs. Naidu presiding over the Indian National Congress (Cawnpore Session) in December, 1925 set "Dominion Status", as elaborated in the "Commonwealth of India Bill" or as elaborated in the National Demand in the Legislative Assembly, as the goal of India. In the political resolution adopted at the Session, Motilal Nehru wanted the Government to accept the 18th February resolution.

Rangachariar, on February 18, 1925, had moved a resolution demanding early steps for revising the Government of India Act so as to secure for India Self-governing Dominion Status within the British Empire and Provincial Autonomy in the Provinces. Motilal Nehru speaking in the Central Assembly in September, 1925 reiterating the demand wanted the following immediate changes to be made in the Constitution and administration of India:

- (a) The revenues and all properties vested in His Majesty be vested in the Governor-General-in-Council;
- (b) The Governor-General-in-Council to be responsible to Central Legislature; subject to such responsibility to have power to control expenditure of revenues of India except the following that shall remain vested in the Secretary of State-in-Council: (i) expenditure on military services upto a fixed limit; (ii) expenditure classified as political and foreign; (iii) payment of all foreign debts and liabilities;
- (c) Indian army to be nationalised within a reasonable and definite period;
- (d) Central and Provincial Legislatures to be entirely elected on as wide a franchise as possible;
- (e) The principle of responsibility to Legislature to be introduced in all branches of administration of Central Government subject to transitional reservation and residuary powers in the Governor-General in respect of the control of the military, foreign and political affairs for a fixed term of years, etc.;
- (f) The Indian Legislature after the expiry of the fixed term of years shall have the power to make changes in the Constitution as it may consider necessary and desirable.

Gandhi, presiding over the Belgaum Congress (December, 1924) wanted *Swaraj* retaining the British connection. The scheme of *Swaraj* set forth by him was: (i) the ruinous military expenditure to be reduced; (ii) Administration of Justice to be cheapened; (iii) revenues from intoxicant liquors and drugs to be abolished; (iv) salaries of civil and military officials to be reduced; (v) appointment of a Commission to examine all the monopolies given to foreigners and subject to its findings full guarantees to be given for all vested rights justly acquired; (vi) full guarantee of status to the Indian Chiefs without any hindrance from the Central Government; (vii) Repeal of all arbitrary powers; (viii) the highest posts to be open to all who may be otherwise fit and examinations of civil and military services to be held in India; (ix) recognition of full religious freedom, (x) redistribution of provinces on linguistic basis; (xi) regional languages to be official language of provinces and Hindustani of the Central Government.

Madan Mohan Malaviya, and other Hindu Mahasabha leaders were advocating 'responsive co-operation'. Malaviya wanted the Congress at its Cawnpore Session to drop Civil Disobedience altogether and occupy whatever posts could have been occupied in the administration. Speaking on Motilal's demand in the September Session of the Central Assembly, he said, "We have no desire to get away from the control of the Parlia-

ment. The limitations mentioned in the amendment were in themselves a clear expression of our desire, that we are willing to submit to Parliament for some time. How long it will be, would depend on my English fellow subjects of His Majesty. Let the agreement between India and Britain be honourable and profitable to both. We want you to understand us and we wish to understand you." He further said, "We will be satisfied if the decision is arrived at that responsible government must be established now in India which may take 10 years or probably 20 years to complete the arrangements when we shall be in a position to say good-bye to our English officers and administrators so far as responsibility for the administration of the country is concerned. We do not wish to part with them, we are not in a hurry to part with them."

The Muslim League at its Aligarh Session (1925) demanded a Royal Commission to formulate a scheme so as to place the Indian Constitution on a sound and permanent basis with provisions for automatic progress to establish full Responsible Government in India and thereby secure stability in the Constitution and the willing co-operation of the people. It further wanted adequate representation of all minorities without reducing a majority to minority or to an equality, separate electorates subject to the right of any community to abandon them at any time in favour of joint electorate, no redistribution of provinces that affect the Muslim majority in the Punjab, Bengal and the N.W.F.P., etc.

Thus all the parties proposed constitutional reforms which would involve the question of extension of representation and Indianization of services. The attention was fixed not on the demand of complete independence, nor on socio-economic reforms but on extracting maximum concessions for middle classes of each community. It resulted in mutual wranglings for seats and services, rather than in a united front to fight the British rule or to introduce social and economic changes to ameliorate the condition of the masses. The princely rule in the Indian states was not only assured of its continuance by all these parties and groups but of a better deal from an Indian Government.

4. Nehru, Jawaharlal. *An Autobiography* (Allied Publishers Private Ltd.), 1962, pp. 140-141.

5. The years of 1923-24 saw communal riots on a large scale particularly in Upper India. The riots occurred in Multan, Amritsar, Delhi, Nawabshah, Saharanpur, Meerut, Ajmer, Agra, Lucknow, Nagpur, Calcutta and Kohat. The causes of these riots were molestation of a girl of one community by persons belonging to another, attack of Moharrum procession or Ramlila procession, beating of a boy by adults, desecration of a Hindu Temple or a Muslim Mosque, performing of *Arti* at a particular time or playing of music before a mosque, etc. Bakr-Id day, Moharrum days and Ram Naumi or Ramlila days were the time for such riots. The Kohat riot was one of the most terrible riots. It took place because the secretary of the Sanatan Dharam Sabha wrote and circulated about 40 copies of a book which offended religious sentiments of Muslims and which, he said, was in reply to a similar book by a Muslim.

These riots led to a spate of unity conferences. One was held at Lahore and then at Delhi and Bombay. The Delhi Unity Conference was held after Gandhi went on a 21 day fast. Soon after the conference was over and Gandhi had broken his fast, a riot occurred at Allahabad. What these conferences were, what issues they discussed and how they failed is clear from the proceedings and decisions of Lahore and Delhi Conferences.

Lahore Unity Conference:

Early in December, 1924, a representative meeting of Hindu and Muslim leaders of Upper India was held at Lahore under the guidance of Gandhi. The Muslim demands at this conference were formulated as: (1) In Muslim majority provinces, they should retain their majority; (2) representation in Assemblies to be on population basis throughout India; (3) the same principle to apply to representation in local bodies; (4) on the question of separate electorates first they insisted on retaining them and later agreed to give choice to the minorities everywhere.

The Hindu leaders rejected these proposals on the ground (i) that they were opposed to extension of the principle of representation on population basis to local bodies and services and (ii) that the proposals concerned Hindus of the whole country and, therefore, the Hindu leaders present at the Conference, who represented Punjab alone except Madan Mohan Malaviya, could not take a decision and (iii) that unless the atmosphere of coercion and intimidation created by riots all over India and particularly the events of Kohat, could get smooth, no decision could be taken. The discussions proved infructuous and no compromise could be reached.

Delhi Unity Conference:

The Delhi Unity Conference was held on 26th September, 1924, being attended by about 300 delegates under the chairmanship of Motilal Nehru.

Mohamed Ali opened the proceedings and said that Hindu-Muslim quarrels were petty in the extreme and, though, were very often under the name of religion had nothing to do with it. He thought toleration was the solution for the evil. The Conference adopted a resolution requesting Gandhi to break his fast. It condemned the desecration of places of worship, the persecution or punishment of any person for adopting or reverting to any faith, the forceful conversion of any person and securing or enforcing one's own religious observances at the cost of the rights of others. By another resolution, the Conference agreed (1) that Hindus must not expect that the exercise of the right of cow-slaughter by Moslems can or will be stopped by the use of force, (2) that Muslims must not expect to stop Hindu music near or in front of mosques nor the stoppage of *Arti* or the blowing of *Sankhs* by force, (3) that every individual is at liberty to follow any faith and to change it whenever he so wishes, and shall not, by reason of such faith, render himself liable to any punishment or persecution at the hands of the followers of the faith renounced by him. Both communities were advised to depend upon the good sense

of each other. A Panchayat was to be established to arbitrate upon any dispute in such matters.

6. Nohru, Jawaharlal. *An Autobiography* (Allied Publishers Private Ltd.), 1962, p. 370.

7. The Communal Award published on the 16th August, 1932, by the British Prime Minister, MacDonald, laid down the following provision regarding representation of "Depressed Classes":

Para (9) Members of the "Depressed Classes" qualified to vote will vote in a general constituency. In view of the fact that, for a considerable period, these classes would be unlikely by this means alone, to secure any adequate representation in the Legislature, a number of special seats will be assigned to them as shown in para 24 below. These seats will be filled by election from the special constituencies in which only the members of the "depressed classes", electorally qualified will be entitled to vote. Any person voting in such a special constituency will, as stated above, be also entitled to vote in a general constituency. It is intended that these constituencies should be formed in selected areas where the "Depressed Classes" are most numerous and that except in Madras they should cover the whole area of the province.

In Bengal, it seems possible that in some general constituencies, the majority of the voters will belong to the Depressed Classes. Accordingly, pending further investigation, no number has been fixed for members to be returned from the Special Depressed Classes constituencies in that Province. It is intended to secure that the Depressed Classes should obtain not less than ten seats in the Bengal Legislature. It lays down, further, that those constituencies will be for limited period.

Para 24 laid down the representation of Depressed Classes as follows: Madras 18; Bombay including Sindh 10; Bengal blank; U.P. 12; Punjab nil; Bihar and Orissa 7; C.P. including Berar 10; Assam 4; N.W.F.P. nil.

Gandhi on reading this Award went on fast unto death on September 20, 1932 in the Yeravda Jail, Poona. Intimating this decision to the British Prime Minister, he wrote, "I need hardly reiterate all the objections I have to the creation of separate electorates for the Depressed Classes. I feel as if I was one of them. Their case stands on a wholly different footing from that of others. I am not against their representation in the legislatures. I should favour every one of their adults, male and female being registered as voters irrespective of education or property qualifications even though the franchise test may be stricter for others. But I hold that separate electorate is harmful for them, and for Hinduism, whatever it may be from a purely political standpoint. To appreciate the harm that separate electorate would do them, one has to know how they are distributed amongst the so-called caste-Hindus and how dependent they are on the latter. So far as Hinduism is concerned, separate electorate would simply vivisection and disrupt it. For me, the question of these classes is predominantly moral and religious. The political aspect, important though it is, dwindles into insignificance compared to the moral and religious issue". He called his decision a "call of conscience". On September

24, Poona Pact was signed between Caste-Hindus and Depressed Classes. The text of the agreement is as follows:

(1) "There shall be seats reserved for the Depressed Classes out of the general electorate seats in the Provincial Legislatures as follows:

Madras 30; Bombay with Sindh 15; Punjab 8; Bihar and Orissa 18; Central Provinces 20; Assam 7; Bengal 30; U.P. 20; total 148."

(2). "Election to these seats shall be by joint electorate subject, however, to the following procedure:

All the members of the Depressed Classes registered in the general electoral roll in a constituency will form an 'electoral college', which will elect a panel of four candidates belonging to the Depressed Classes for each of such reserved seats, by the method of the single vote; the four persons getting the highest number of votes in such primary election, shall be candidates for election by the general electorate".

(3) "Representation of the Depressed Classes in the Central Legislature shall likewise be on the principle of joint electorates and reserved seats by the method of primary election in the manner provided for in Clause two above, for their representation in the Provincial Legislature."

(4) "In the Central Legislature, eighteen per cent of the seats allotted to the general electorate for British India in the said Legislature shall be reserved for all Depressed Classes". . . .

(8) "There shall be no disability attaching to any one on the ground of his being a member of the Depressed Classes in regard to any elections to local bodies or appointment to Public Services. Every endeavour shall be made to secure fair representation of the Depressed Classes in these respects, subject to such educational qualifications as may be laid down for appointment to the Public Services".

The British Government declared its acceptance of this agreement on the 26th September and Mahatma Gandhi broke his fast.

8. "As your letter may give rise to misunderstanding, I wish to state, that the fact of my having isolated for special treatment the Depressed Classes question from other parts of your decision, does not in any way mean that I approve of or am reconciled to other parts of decision. In my opinion, many other parts are open to a very grave objection. Only, I do not consider them to be any warrant for calling for such self-immolation as my conscience has prompted me to in the matter of Depressed classes". He also wrote, "It is perhaps as well for me to refer to another matter that is agitating me and which may also enforce a similar fast. It is the way repression is going on. . . . Repression appears to me to be crossing what might be called legitimate. Government terrorism is spreading through the land. . . . Goondaism is being practised in the name of law and order".

Besides was the very question of communal electorates and above all the question of grant of Complete Independence for which Civil Disobedience Movement was launched. Some time after the fast the movement was withdrawn and the consequent demoralization prevailed.

9. Gandhiji in his statement to Bombay Government said: "The fast which I am approaching was resolved upon in the name of the God for

His Work and, as I believe, in all humility, at His call. Friends have urged me to postpone the date for the sake of giving the public a chance to organise itself. I am sorry it is not open to me to change even the hour except for the reason stated in my letter to the Prime Minister."

10. Nehru, Jawaharlal. *An Autobiography* (Allied Publishers Private Ltd.), 1962, pp. 159-60.

11. A split took place in the Swarajist Party in the Central Legislative Assembly after the walk-out by the Swarajists from the Assembly during the debate on budget on March 8, 1926. A convention was held on April 3 at Bombay consisting of Liberal Independents and Responsivists. It was attended, among others, by J. Baptista, Dinshaw Petit, Madan Mohan Malaviya, B. C. Pal, C. Y. Chintamani, Har Kishan Lal, M. R. Jayakar, Sir Chimanlal Setalvad, Moropant Joshi and M. A. Jinnah. It ended with the formation of an Indian National Party "to prepare for and accelerate the establishment of Swaraj or full Responsible Government in India, such as obtains in the self-governing dominions of the British Empire, with a due provision for the protection of rights and interests of minorities and the backward and depressed classes". It resolved to adopt all peaceful and legitimate means, but excluding mass civil disobedience or the general non-payment of taxes, as and when necessary and to resort inside the Legislatures to responsive co-operation. It further declared that the existing Constitution should be utilised to the fullest extent, including the acceptance of offices to accelerate the revision of the Constitution, to ameliorate the condition of the people and to advance their interests. It decided to make necessary arrangements for fighting the next elections.

Motilal Nehru regarded the formation of this party as a challenge to the Swarajists and described it as "a conglomerate in the first stage of geological formation." He did not want to lose his comrades who had joined this party. Negotiations for re-union were held at Saharmati on April 21 and compromise reached. But soon different interpretations were put on this Pact and at the A.I.C.C. meeting called to ratify the Pact, complete breach occurred.

After the general election of November, 1926, new alignments took place. The Nationalist Party, now, consisted of all the Hindu elected non-Swarajist members and was led by Madan Mohan Malaviya, M. R. Jayakar and Lajpat Rai. In the U.P., the Responsive Co-operators and orthodox Hindus joined together and established the Independent Congress Party. In the Punjab, the majority of the Hindu candidates for the November elections rallied to Lajpat Rai and called themselves Hindu-Mahasabhaites.

12. Nehru, Jawaharlal. *An Autobiography* (Allied Publishers Private Ltd.), 1962, pp. 574-578.

Muslim League Politics and Nationalism

The communal problem,¹ as it was called, was one of adjusting the claims of the minorities and giving them sufficient protection from majority action. Minorities in India, it must be remembered, are not racial or national minorities as in Europe; they are religious minorities. Racially India is a patchwork and a curious mixture, but no racial questions have arisen or can arise in India. Religion transcends these racial differences, which fade into one another and are often hard to distinguish. Religious barriers are obviously not permanent, as conversions can take place from one religion to another, and a person changing his religion does not thereby lose his racial background or his cultural and linguistic inheritance. Latterly religion, in any real sense of the word, has played little part in Indian political conflicts, though the word is often enough used and exploited. Religious differences, as such, do not come in the way, for there is a great deal of mutual tolerance for them. In political matters, religion has been displaced by what is called communalism, a narrow group mentality basing itself on a religious community but in reality concerned with political power and patronage for the group concerned.

Repeated efforts were made by the Congress as well as other organizations to settle this communal problem with the consent of the various groups concerned. Some partial success was achieved, but there was always a basic difficulty, the presence and policy of the British government. Naturally the British did not favour any real settlement which would strengthen the political movement—now grown to mass proportions—against them. It was a triangle, with the government, in a position to play off one side against the other by giving special privileges. If the

other parties had been wise enough, they could have overcome even this obstacle; but they lacked wisdom and foresight. Whenever a settlement was almost reached, the government would take some step which upset the balance. There was no dispute about the usual provisions for minority protection such as the League of Nations used to lay down. All these were agreed to and much more. Religion, culture, language, the fundamental rights of the individual and the group were all to be protected and assured by basic constitutional provisions in a democratic constitution applying equally to all. Apart from this the whole history of India was witness of the toleration and even encouragement of minorities and of different racial groups. There is nothing in Indian history to compare with the bitter religious feuds and persecutions that prevailed in Europe. So we did not have to go abroad for ideas of religious and cultural toleration; these were inherent in Indian life. In regard to individual and political rights and civil liberties, we were influenced by the ideas of the French and American revolutions, as also by the constitutional history of the British parliament. Socialistic ideas, and the influence of the Soviet revolution, came in later to give a powerful economic turn to our thoughts.

Apart from the full protection of all such rights of the individual and the group, it was common ground that every effort should be made by the state as well as by the private agencies to remove all invidious social and customary barriers which came in the way of the full development of the individual as well as any group, and that educationally and economically backward classes should be helped to get rid of their disabilities as rapidly as possible. This applied especially to the depressed classes. It was further laid down that women should share in every way with men in the privileges of citizenship.

What remained? Fear that bigger numbers might politically overwhelm a minority. Normally speaking, numbers meant the peasantry and the workers, the masses of all

religious faiths, who had long been exploited not only by foreign rule but by their own upper classes. Having assured the protection of religion and culture, etc., the major problems that were bound to come up were economic ones which had nothing to do with a person's religion. Class conflicts there might well be, but not religious conflicts, except in so far as religion itself represented some vested interest. Nevertheless people had grown so accustomed to think along lines of religious cleavage, and were continually being encouraged to do so by communal religious organizations and government action, that the fear of the major religious community, that is the Hindus, swamping others continued to exercise the minds of many Moslems. It was not clear how even a majority could injure the interests of a huge minority like the Moslems, concentrated mostly in certain parts of the country which would be autonomous. But fear is not reasonable.

Separate electorates for Moslems (and later for other and smaller groups) were introduced and additional seats were given to them in excess of their population. But even excess in representation in popular assembly could not convert a minority into a majority. Indeed separate electorates made matters a little worse for the protected groups, for the majority electorate lost interest in it and there was little occasion for mutual consideration and adjustment which inevitably take place in a joint electorate when a candidate has to appeal to every group. The Congress went further and declared that if there was any disagreement between the majority and a religious minority on any issue touching the special interests of that minority, it should not be decided by majority votes but should be referred to an impartial judicial tribunal, or even an international tribunal, whose decision should be final.

It is difficult to conceive what greater protection could be given to any religious minority or group under any democratic system. It must be remembered also that in some provinces Moslems were actually in a majority, and

as the provinces were autonomous, the Moslem majority was more or less free to function as it chose, subject only to certain all India considerations. In the central government Moslems would also inevitably have an important share. In the Moslem majority provinces this communal-religious problem was reversed, for there protection was demanded by the other minority groups (such as Hindu and Sikh) as against the Moslem majority. Thus in the Punjab there was a Moslem-Hindu-Sikh triangle. If there was a separate electorate for Moslems, then others claimed special protection for themselves also. Separate electorates having once been introduced, there was no end to the ramifications and compartments and difficulties that arose from them. Obviously the granting of weightage in representation to one group could only be done at the cost of some other group, which had its representation reduced below its population figures. This produced a fantastic result, especially in Bengal, where chiefly because of excessive European representation, the seats allotted to the general electorate were absurdly reduced. Thus the intelligentsia of Bengal, which had played a notable part in Indian politics and the struggle for freedom, suddenly realized that it had a very weak position in the provincial legislature, and this fixed and limited by statute.

The Congress made many mistakes, but these were in relatively minor questions of approach or tactics. It was obvious that even for purely political reasons the Congress was eager and anxious to bring about a communal solution and thus remove a barrier to progress. There was no such eagerness in the purely communal organizations, for their chief reason for existence was to emphasize the particular demands of their respective groups, and this had led to a certain vested interest in the *status quo*. Though predominantly Hindu in membership, the Congress had large numbers of Moslems on its rolls, as well as all other religious groups—Sikhs, Christians, etc. It was thus forced to think in national terms. For it the dominating issue was national

freedom and the establishment of an independent democratic state. It realized that in a vast and varied country like India, a simple type of democracy, giving full powers to a majority to curb or overrule minority groups in all matters, was not satisfactory or desirable, even if it could be established. . . .

We failed in finding a solution for the communal problem agreeable to all parties concerned, and certainly we must share the blame as we have to shoulder the consequences for this failure. But how does one get everybody to agree to any important proposition or change? There are always feudal and reactionary elements who are opposed to all change, and there are those who want political, economic and social change; in between these are varying groups. If a small group can exercise a veto on change then surely there can never be any change. When it is the policy of the ruling power to set up such groups and encourage them, even though they might represent an infinitesimal proportion of the population, then change can only come through successful revolution. It is obvious that there are any number of feudal and reactionary groups in India, some native to the soil and some created and nurtured by the British. In numbers they may be small but they have the backing of the British Power.

Among the Moslems various organizations grew up apart from the Moslem League. One of the older and more important ones was the Jamiat-ul-Ulema which consisted of divines and old fashioned scholars from all over India. Traditional and conservative in its general outlook, and necessarily religious, it was yet politically advanced and anti-imperialist. On the political plane it often co-operated with the Congress and many of its members were also members of the Congress and functioned through its organization. The Ahrar organization was founded later and was strongest in the Punjab. This represented chiefly lower middle-class Moslems and had considerable influence on the masses also in particular areas. The Momins (princi-

pally the weaver class), though large in numbers, were the poorest and most backward among the Moslems and were weak and badly organized. They were friendly to the Congress and opposed to the Moslem League. Being weak they avoided political action. In Bengal there was the Krishak (peasant) Sabha. Both the Jamiat-ul-Ulema and the Ahrars often co-operated with the Congress in its normal work and its more aggressive campaigns against the British Government, and suffered for it. The chief Moslem organization which has never come into conflict, other than verbal, with the British authorities, is the Moslem League, which throughout subsequent changes and developments and even when large numbers joined it, never shed its upper class feudal leadership.

There were also the *Shia* Moslems organized separately, but rather vaguely, chiefly for the purpose of making political demands. In the early days of Islam in Arabia a bitter dispute about the succession to the Khilafat led to a schism and two groups or sects emerged—the *Sunnis* and *Shias*. That quarrel perpetuated itself and still separates the two, though the schism ceased to have any political meaning. *Sunnis* are in a majority in India and in the Islamic countries, except in Iran, where *Shias* are in a majority. Religious conflicts have sometimes taken place between the two groups. The *Shia* organization in India as such kept apart and differed from the Moslem League. It was in favour of joint electorates for all. But there are many prominent *Shias* in the League.

All these Moslem organizations, as well as some others (but not including the Moslem League) joined hands to promote the Azad Muslim Conference, which was a kind of joint Moslem front opposed to the Moslem League. The Conference held a very representative and successful first session in Delhi in 1940.

The chief Hindu communal organization is the Hindu Mahasabha, the counterpart of the Moslem League, but relatively less important. It is as aggressively communal as

the League, but it tries to cover up its extreme narrowness of outlook by using some kind of vague national terminology, though its outlook is more revivalist than progressive. It is peculiarly unfortunate in some of its leaders who indulge in irresponsible and violent diatribes, as indeed some of the Moslem League leaders also do. The verbal warfare, indulged in on both sides, is a constant irritant. It takes the place of action.

The Moslem League's communal attitude was often difficult and unreasonable in the past, but no less unreasonable was the attitude of the Hindu Mahasabha. The Hindu minorities in the Punjab and Sind and the dominant Sikh group in the Punjab, were often obstructive and came in the way of a settlement. British policy was to encourage and emphasize these differences and to give importance to communal organizations as against the Congress.

One test of the importance of a group or party, or at any rate of its hold on the people, is an election. During the general elections in India in 1937 the Hindu Mahasabha failed completely; it was nowhere in the picture. The Moslem League did better but on the whole its showing was poor, especially in the predominantly Moslem provinces. In the Punjab and Sind it failed completely, in Bengal it met with only partial success. In the North West Frontier Province Congress formed a ministry later. In the Moslem minority provinces, the League met with greater success on the whole, but there were also independent Moslem groups as well as Moslems elected as Congressmen.

Then began a remarkable campaign on behalf of the Moslem League against the Congress Government in the provinces and the Congress organization itself. Day after day it was repeated that these governments were committing 'atrocities' on the Moslems. Those governments contained Moslem Ministers also but they were not members of the Moslem League. What these 'atrocities' were it was not usually stated, or some petty local incidents, which had nothing to do with the government, were distorted and

magnified. Some minor errors of some departments, which were soon rectified, became 'atrocities.' Sometimes entirely false and baseless charges were made. Even a report was issued, fantastic in its contents and having little to do with any facts. Congress Governments invited those who made the charges to supply particulars for investigation or to come and inquire themselves with government help. No one took advantage of these offers. But the campaign continued unchecked. Early in 1940, soon after the resignation of the Congress Ministries the then Congress President Dr. Rajendra Prasad, wrote to Mr. M. A. Jinnah and also made a public statement inviting the Moslem League to place any charges against the Congress Governments before the Federal Court for inquiry and decision. Mr. Jinnah declined this offer and referred to the possibility of a Royal Commission being appointed for the purpose. There was no question of any such commission being appointed and only the British Government could do so. Some of the British Governors, who had functioned during the regime of the Congress Governments, declared publicly that they had found nothing objectionable in the treatment of minorities. Under the Act of 1935 they had been especially empowered to protect minorities if any such need arose.

I had made a close study of Nazi methods of propaganda since Hitler's rise to power and I was astonished to find something very similar taking place in India. A year later, in 1938, when Czechoslovakia had to face the Sudetenland crisis, the Nazi methods employed there were studied and referred to with approval by Moslem League spokesmen. A comparison was drawn between the position of Sudetenland Germans and Indian Moslems. Violence and incitements in speeches and in some newspapers became marked. A Congress Moslem Minister was stabbed and there was no condemnation of this from any Moslem League leader; in fact, it was condoned. Other exhibitions of violence frequently took place.

I was terribly depressed by these developments and by

the general lowering of the standards of public life. Violence, vulgarity and irresponsibility were on the increase, and it appeared that they were approved of by responsible leaders of the Moslem League. I wrote to some of these leaders and begged them to check this tendency but with no success. So far as the Congress Governments were concerned, it was obviously to their interest to win over every minority or other group and they tried hard to do so. Indeed complaints arose from some quarters that they were showing undue favour to the Moslems at the expense of other groups. But it was not a question of a particular grievance which could be remedied, or a reasonable consideration of any matter. There was a regular rampage on the part of members or sympathizers of the Moslem League to make the Moslem masses believe that something terrible was happening and that the Congress was to blame. What that terrible thing was nobody seemed to know. But surely there must be something behind all this shouting and cursing, if not here then elsewhere. During by-elections the cry raised was 'Islam in danger' and voters were asked to take their oaths on the holy book to vote for the Moslem League candidate.

All this had an undoubted effect on the Moslem masses. And yet it is surprising how many resisted it. The League won most by-elections, lost some; even when they won, there was a substantial minority of Moslem voters who went against them, being influenced more by the Congress agrarian programme. But for the first time in its history the Moslem League got a mass backing and began to develop into a mass organization. Much as I regretted what was happening, I welcomed this development in a way as I thought that this might lead ultimately to a change in the feudal leadership and more progressive elements would come forward. The real difficulty thus far had been the extreme political and social backwardness of the Moslems which made them liable to exploitation by reactionary leaders.

Mr. M. A. Jinnah himself was more advanced than most of his colleagues of the Moslem League. Indeed he stood head and shoulders above them and had therefore become the indispensable leader. From public platforms he confessed his great dissatisfaction with the opportunism, and sometimes even worse failings, of his colleagues. He knew well that a great part of the advanced, selfless and courageous element among the Moslems had joined and worked with the Congress. And yet some destiny or course of events had thrown him among the very people for whom he had no respect. He was their leader but he could only keep them together by becoming himself a prisoner to their reactionary ideologies. Not that he was an unwilling prisoner, so far as the ideologies were concerned, for despite his external modernism, he belonged to an older generation which was hardly aware of modern political thought or developments. Of economics, which overshadows the world today, he appeared to be entirely ignorant. The extraordinary occurrences that had taken place all over the world since World War I had apparently had no effect on him. He had left the Congress when that organization had taken a political leap forward. The gap had widened as the Congress developed an economic and mass outlook. But Mr. Jinnah seemed to have remained ideologically in that identical place where he stood a generation ago, or rather he had gone further back, for now he condemned both India's unity and democracy. 'They would not live,' he has stated, 'under any system of government that was based on the nonsensical notion of Western democracy.' It took him a long time to realize that what he had stood for throughout a fairly long life was nonsensical.

Mr. Jinnah is a lone figure even in the Moslem League, keeping apart from his closest co-workers, widely but distantly respected, more feared than liked. About his ability as a politician there is no doubt, but somehow that ability is tied up with the peculiar conditions of British rule in India today. He shines as a lawyer-politician, as a tactician,

as one who thinks that he holds the balance between nationalist India and the British Power. If conditions were different and he had to face real problems, political and economic, it is difficult to say how far his ability would carry him. Perhaps he is himself doubtful of this, although he has no small opinion of himself. This may be an explanation for that subconscious urge in him against change and to keep things going as they are, of an avoidance of discussion and calm consideration of problems with people who do not wholly agree with him. He fits into this present pattern; whether he or anybody else will fit into a new pattern it is difficult to say. What passion moves him, what objectives does he strive for? Or is it that he has no dominating passion except the pleasure he has in playing a fascinating political game of chess in which he often has an opportunity to say 'check'? He seems to have a hatred for the Congress which has grown with the years. His aversions and dislikes are obvious, but what does he like? With all his strength and tenacity, he is a strangely negative person whose appropriate symbol might well be a 'no'. Hence all attempts to understand his positive aspect fail and one cannot come to grips with it.

Since British rule came to India, Moslems have produced few outstanding figures of the modern type. They have produced some remarkable men but, as a rule these represented the continuation of the old culture and tradition and did not easily fit in with modern developments. This incapacity to march with the changing times and adapt themselves culturally and otherwise to a new environment was not of course due to any innate failing. It derived from certain historical causes, from the delay in the development of a new industrial middle-class, and the excessively feudal background of the Moslems, which blocked up avenues of development and prevented the release of talent. In Bengal the backwardness of the Moslems was most marked, but this was obviously due to two causes; the destruction of their upper classes during the early days of

British rule, and the fact that the vast majority were converts from the lowest class of Hindus, who had long been denied opportunities of growth and progress. In northern India the cultured upper class Moslems were tied up with their old traditional ways as well as the land system. In recent years there has been a marked change and a fairly rapid development of a new middle-class among Indian Moslems but even now they lag far behind Hindus and others in science and industry. The Hindus are backward also, sometimes even more hide-bound and tied up with traditional ways of thought and practice than the Moslems, but nevertheless they have produced some very eminent men in science, industry and other fields. The small Parsi community has also produced outstanding leaders of modern industry. Mr. Jinnah's family, it is interesting to note, was originally Hindu.

Both among Hindus and Moslems a good deal of talent and ability has in the past gone into government service, as that was the most attractive avenue open. With the growth of the political movement for freedom, that attraction became less and able, earnest and courageous persons were drawn into it. Thus many of the best types of Moslems joined the Socialist and Communist parties also. Apart from all these ardent and progressive persons, Moslems were very poor in the quality of their leaders and were inclined to look to government service alone for advancement. Mr. Jinnah was a different type. He was able, tenacious and not open to the lure of office, which had been such a failing of so many others. His position in the Moslem League, therefore, became unique and he was able to command the respect which was denied to many others prominent in the League. Unfortunately his tenacity prevented him from opening his mind to any new ideas, and his unquestioned hold on his own organization made him intolerant both of his own dissidents and of other organizations. He became the Moslem League. But a question arose: as the League was becoming a mass

organization, how long could this feudal leadership with outmoded ideas continue?...

Mr. Jinnah's demand was based on a new theory he had recently propounded—that India consisted of two nations, Hindu and Moslem. Why only two I do not know for if nationality was based on religion, then there were many nations, in India. Of two brothers one may be a Hindu, another a Moslem; they would belong to two different nations. These two nations existed in varying proportions in most of the villages of India. They were nations which had no boundaries; they overlapped. Bengali Moslem and a Bengali Hindu, living together, speaking the same language and having much the same traditions and customs belonged to different nations. All this was very difficult to grasp; it seemed a reversion to some medieval theory. What a nation is it is difficult to define. Possibly the essential characteristic of national consciousness is a sense of belonging together and of together facing the rest of mankind. How far that is present in India as a whole may be a debatable point. It may even be said that India developed in the past as a multi-national State and gradually acquired a national consciousness. But all these are theoretical abstractions which hardly concern us. Today the most powerful States are multi-national, but at the same time developing a national consciousness, like the U.S.A. or the U.S.S.R.

From Mr. Jinnah's two-nation theory developed the conception of Pakistan, or splitting up of India. That of course did not solve the problem of the 'two nations,' for they were all over the place. But that gave body to a metaphysical conception. This again gave rise to a passionate reaction among many in favour of the unity of India. Ordinarily national unity is taken for granted. Only when it is challenged or attacked or attempts are made to disrupt it, is unity really appreciated, and a positive reaction to maintain it takes place. Thus sometimes attempts at disruption actually help to weld that unity.

There was a fundamental difference between the outlook of the Congress and that of the religious-communal organizations. Of the latter the chief were the Moslem League and its Hindu counterpart, the Hindu Mahasabha. These communal organizations, while in theory standing for India's independence, were more interested in claiming protection and special privileges for their respective groups. They had thus inevitably to look to the British Government for such privileges and this led them to avoid conflict with it. The Congress outlook was so tied up with India's freedom as a united nation that everything else was secondary, and this meant ceaseless conflict or friction with the British Power. Indian nationalism, as represented by the Congress, opposed British imperialism. The Congress had further developed agrarian, economic and social programmes. Neither the Moslem League nor the Hindu Mahasabha had ever considered any such question or attempted to frame a programme. Socialists and Communists were of course intensely interested in such matters and had their own programmes which they tried to push in the Congress as well as outside.

There was yet another marked difference between Congress policy and work and those of the religious-communal organizations. Quite apart from its agitational side and its legislative activity, when such existed, the Congress laid the greatest stress on certain constructive activities among the masses. These activities consisted in organising and developing cottage industries, in raising the depressed classes, and later in the spread of Basic Education. Village work also included sanitation and some simple forms of medical relief. Separate organizations for carrying on these activities were created by the Congress, which functioned apart from the political plane, and which absorbed thousands of whole-time workers and a much larger number of part-time helpers. This quite non-political constructive work was carried on even when political activities were at a low ebb, but even this was suppressed by government when

there was open conflict with the Congress. The economic value of some of these activities was questioned by some people but there could be no doubt of their social importance. They trained a large body of whole-time workers in intimate touch with the masses and produced a spirit of self-help and self-reliance among the people. Congressmen and women also played an important part in trade union and agrarian organizations, actually building up many of these. The largest and best organized trade union—that of the Ahmedabad textile industry—was started by Congressmen and worked in close co-operation with them.

All these activities gave a solid background to Congress work, which was completely lacking in the religious-communal organizations. These latter functioned on the agitational plane only with fits and starts, or during elections. In them also was lacking that ever-present sense of risk and personal danger from government action which Congressmen had almost always to face. Thus there was a far greater tendency for careerists and opportunists to enter these organizations. The two Moslem organizations, the Ahrars and the Jamiat-ul-Ulema, however, suffered greatly from governmental repression because politically they often followed the same line as the Congress.

The Congress represented not only the nationalist urge of India, which had grown with the growth of the new bourgeoisie, but also, to a large extent, proletarian urges for social change. In particular, it stood for revolutionary agrarian changes. This sometimes produced inner conflicts within the Congress, and the landlord class and the big industrialists, though often nationalistic, kept aloof from it for fear of socialistic changes. Within the Congress, Socialists and Communists found a place and could influence Congress policy. The communal organizations, whether Hindu or Moslem, were closely associated with the feudal and conservative elements and were opposed to any revolutionary social change. The real conflict had, therefore, nothing to do with religion, though religion often masked

the issue, but was essentially between those who stood for a nationalist-democratic-socially revolutionary policy and those who were concerned with preserving the relics of a feudal regime. In a crisis, the latter inevitably depend upon foreign support which is interested in preserving the *status quo*. . . .

Letter to M. A. Jinnah, October 18, 1939²

I entirely agree with you that it is a tragedy that the Hindu-Muslim problem has not so far been settled in a friendly way. I feel terribly distressed about it and ashamed of myself, in so far as I have not been able to contribute anything substantial towards its solution. I must confess to you that in this matter, I have lost confidence in myself, though I am not usually given that way. But the last two or three years have had a powerful effect on me. My own mind moves on a different plane and most of my interests lie in other directions. And so, though I have given much thought to the problem and understand most of its implications, I feel as if I was an outsider and an alien in spirit. Hence my hesitation.

But that does not come in the way of my trying utmost to find a solution and I shall certainly do so. With your goodwill and commanding position in the Muslim League that should not be so difficult as people imagine. I can assure you with all earnestness that all the members of the Working Committee are keenly desirous of finding a solution. It is a matter of enormous surprise and regret to me that we have so far failed in this endeavour. For, after all, the actual matters in dispute should be, and indeed are, easily capable of adjustment. . . .

At the present moment, as you will no doubt appreciate, my mind is full of the rapid developments that are taking place. I do not know where they will land us in the course of the next few weeks. The Viceroy's statement has been astonishing in its imperialist challenge to all of us. As far as I can see there is no course open to the Congress except to

reject his suggestions in their entirety, and this will necessarily have far-reaching consequences for us as well as others. I do not know what you and your colleagues in the Muslim League will decide, but I earnestly trust that you will also express your strong disapproval of the Viceroy's statement and refuse to co-operate with him on the lines he has suggested. I feel strongly that our dignity and self-respect as Indians have been insulted by the British Government. They take us for granted as hangers-on of their system, to be ordered about when and where they will.

*Letter to Asaf Ali, November 16, 1939*³

I do not know what exactly you envisage in regard to communal talks with Jinnah. I am perfectly ready, as I told Jinnah, and I wait to hear from him. *But essentially there is no communal difficulty in the way as between Jinnah and us. It is the political difficulty.* (emphasis added) He cannot reconcile himself to any action of the kind that the Congress is used to. Therefore to talk in terms of united political action on the basis of the settlement of the communal problem is to ignore this basic reality. I do not mean that the Hindus and Muslims cannot have united action. I think they can and they will to a large extent. But this at the present moment does not depend on any communal issue.

*Letter to M. A. Jinnah, December 14, 1939*⁴

I sent you my last letter from Allahabad after reading and giving full thought to your statement about the celebration of "a day of deliverance and thanksgiving" by the Muslims. This statement had distressed me greatly as it made me realize that the gulf that separated us in our approach to public problems was very great. In view of this fundamental difference, I wondered what common ground there was for discussion and I put my difficulty before you. That difficulty remains.

In your letter you have emphasized two other prelimi-

nary conditions before any common ground for discussion can arise. The first is that the Congress must treat the Muslim League as the authoritative and representative organization of the Mussalmans of India. The Congress has always considered the League as a very important and influential organization of the Muslims and it is because of this that we have been eager to settle any difference that may exist between us. But presumably what you suggest is something more and involves some kind of repudiation by us of or dissociation from other Muslims who are not in the League. There are, as you know, a large number of Muslims in the Congress, who have been and are our closest colleagues. There are Muslim organizations like the Jamait-ul-Ulema, the All India Shia Conference, the Majlis-e-Ahrar, the All-India Momin Conference, etc., apart from trade unions and peasant unions which have many Muslims as their members. As a general rule many of these organizations and individuals have adopted the same political platform as we have done in the Congress. We cannot possibly dissociate ourselves from them or disown them in any way.

You have rightly pointed out on many occasions that the Congress does not represent everybody in India. Of course not. It does not represent those who disagree with it, whether they are Muslims or Hindus. . . [But] the Congress constitutionally has a national basis and it cannot give that up without putting an end to its existence. There are many Hindus, as you know in the Mahasabha, who oppose the idea of the Congress representing the Hindus as such. Then there are the Sikhs and others who claim that they should be heard when communal matters are considered.

I am afraid, therefore, that if your desire is that we should consider the League as the sole organization representing the Muslims to the exclusion of all others, we are wholly unable to accede to it. It would be equally at variance with facts if we made a similar claim for the Congress, in spite of the vastness of the Congress organization. But I

would venture to say that such a question does not arise when two organizations deal with each other and consider problems of mutual interest.

Your second point is that the Muslim League cannot endorse the Congress demand for a declaration from the British Government. I regret to learn this for this means that, apart from communal questions, we differ entirely on purely political grounds. The Congress demand is essentially for a declaration of Indian people to frame their own constitution without external interference. If the Muslim League does not agree to this, this means that our political objectives are wholly dissimilar. The Congress demand is not new. It is inherent in article one of the Congress Constitution and all our policy for many years past has been based on it. It is inconceivable to me how the Congress can give it up or even vary it. Personally I would be entirely opposed to any attempt at variation. But this is not a personal matter. There is resolution of the All-India Congress Committee, endorsed by a thousand meetings all over India, and I am powerless to ignore it.

It thus seems that politically we have no common ground and that our objectives are different. That in itself makes discussion difficult and fruitless. What led me to write my last letter to you also remains—the prospect of a celebration of day of deliverance by the Muslims, as supported by you. That raises very vital and far-reaching issues, into which I need not go now, but which must influence all of us. That approach to the communal problem cannot be reconciled with an attempt to solve it.

I feel therefore that it will serve little purpose for us to meet at this stage and under these conditions with this background. I shall like to assure you however that we are always prepared to have free and frank discussions of the communal or other problems as between the Congress and the League.

*Letter to Syed Mohamad, February 2, 1942*⁵

Essentially, I think, the attitude of Jinnah and the Muslim League is governed by the desire to prevent radical changes or the democratisation of India not (with emphasis) because of a Hindu majority but because the radical elements will put an end to semi-feudal privileges, etc. (emphasis added) The whole conception of the Constituent Assembly is to bring out mass elements and urges which will not view the communal problem or other problems from the middle class point of view which has landed us into this impasse. Personally I see no solution of the problem so long as the third (the British) is not eliminated. We shall inevitably come near a solution when we are forced to agree by circumstances, the alternative being conflict on a big scale. That can only happen when it is clear that neither party can seek the help of the British, or any other alien authority.

The correct course for both Congress and the Muslim League (as well as others) would have been to agree to one thing only retaining, if necessary, all their other differences, including if you like Pakistan. That one thing is to join forces against all alien authority and intervention. Once this alien authority is excluded we fall back upon ourselves and either we agree or fight. In all likelihood we then agree for the prospect of a real struggle will not be a pleasant one for anybody.

Jinnah puts the cart before the horse. He says no political progress till his conditions are accepted. Under present circumstances that means a veto to progress. The right course would be to say: I stick to Pakistan and everything else that goes with it and I shall never be satisfied with less, but I am perfectly willing to join hands with others to push out the alien authority. After that I shall fight for my rights if necessary. It is clear that he wants present conditions to continue and his position thus becomes indefensible.

Fortunately the world is changing and our hardest problems are in a sense solving themselves through the clash of events. While the cultural approach is right and desirable, it takes time and events today rush past us and bring big changes in their train. I think we shall see these changes before very long.

Letter to Lord Lothian, January 17, 1936⁶

India has never known in the whole course of her long history the religious strife that has soaked Europe in blood. The whole background of Indian religion, culture and philosophy was one of tolerance, and even encouragement of other beliefs. Some conflicts arose when Islam came, but even that was far more political than religious, although stress is always laid on the religious side. It was the conflict between the conquerors and the conquered. In spite of recent developments I cannot easily envisage religious conflict in India on any substantial scale. The communalism of India today is essentially political, economic and middle class. . . . *It is a fact that one must never forget that communalism in India is a latter-day phenomenon which has grown up before our eyes. That does not lessen its significance and we may not ignore it, for it is at present a tremendous obstacle in our way and is likely to interfere with our future progress. And yet I think it is over-rated and over-emphasized; it does not fundamentally affect the masses although sometimes their passions are roused. With the coming of social issues to the forefront it is bound to recede into the background. Examine the communal demands of the extreme communalists and you will find that not a single one of them has the slightest reference to the masses. The communal leaders of all groups are terribly afraid of social and economic questions and it is interesting to find them joining hands in their opposition to social progress.* (emphasis added)

The Parting of the Ways?

Let us be clear about it. This communal question is essentially one of protection of vested interests, and religion has always been a useful stalking-horse for this purpose. Those who have feudal privileges and vested interests fear change and become the camp-followers of British imperialism. The British Government, on the other hand, delights in using the communal argument to deny freedom, democracy, or any major change, and hold on to power and privilege in India. That is the *raison d'être* and the justification of communalism in India. Someone has recently rightly called the Indian Princes Britain's Fifth Column in India. Communalism and its champions might well be included in this column of present-day disrepute. It is surprising, therefore, that communalists and Princes get on well together and co-operate with each other. They have a common purpose to serve—to obstruct India's freedom so that vested interests might flourish.

It is not, of course, enough to dispose of communalism by this simple analysis, although this is the basic explanation. There are so many other factors, and it is perfectly true that mass elements, who may be affected by communalism, have neither vested interests to preserve, nor have they any love for British imperialism. To understand how they have been influenced by communalism and have often acted against their own interests is to understand how Hitler came to influence mass elements among the German people. The analogy is not complete, but it helps. People are swept away by slogans which appeal to them, and then they are used for entirely different purposes. There has been a strange similarity in the recent development of communalist technique in India to Nazi methods.

Communalism began in India by a demand for a specified share in services and in representation in the Legislatures. It has now developed into an openly anti-national, anti-democratic movement, demanding the partition of

India. For a long time it had no programme, constructive or otherwise. It lived on invective, violence, and general offensiveness. It is amazing how it vulgarized our public life. It discovered that what it had valued most in the past—separate electorates—brought little good. In fact, they weakened minority groups. Then by the very force of the logic of hatred and separation that it had pursued, it had to go to the extreme of demanding a partition of India. The medieval theory of religious groups constituting a political community, which collapsed before an advancing nationalism in Europe, was revived. An idea similar to that of the Crusades, of Christendom versus Islam, suddenly appeared (it is said with British inspiration) in India. It was an astonishing throw-back. Whoever else benefited or suffered from it, it was clear that British imperialism was the gainer.

It is curious that even in early and medieval India this theory never functioned in the Western way. Other religions were welcomed and accommodated. The early Christians came in the first century and found a home. Jews were accommodated, Muslims were welcome to spread their religion and settle down (till invasion brought political conflicts), Parsis came and were absorbed. Later, Muslim rulers thought in terms of building up a single nation of the Muslim newcomers and the Hindus and others. The great Akbar laid the foundations for this. The new cultural elements were absorbed and a common culture gradually developed, especially in Northern India.

And now we are told to go back to the pre-Akbar days, to reverse the process of history, to think in terms of medievalism. When nationalism is giving place to internationalism an even narrower creed than nationalism is advanced, and this finds favour and protection with our British rulers. When the world is groping blindly towards a real Federation of Nations, it is suggested that India should be split up into various parts.

Muslim countries—Turkey, Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Persia—have long discarded this medieval theory. They are in-

tensely nationalist and are proud of their ancient culture. Some of them deliberately go to their pre-Islamic days to find cultural inspiration. The Chinese Muslims are proud of their Chinese culture and fight for China's freedom. That is the course of history. Indeed, it is a course that has already been run, and the mighty revolution that is taking place in the world today will lay down another course—the way to world federation based on national freedom and a juster economic system. Privilege and vested interest will have to go.

That is the goal of India—a united, free, democratic country, closely associated in a world federation with other free nations.

*Communalism and Democracy*⁸

There is one more matter concerning the Constitution Act which has given rise to much controversy. This is the communal decision. Many people have condemned it strongly and, I think rightly, few have a good word for it. My own view point is, however, somewhat different from that of others. I am not concerned so much with what it gives to this group or that, but more so with the basic idea behind it. It seeks to divide into numerous separate compartments, chiefly on a religious basis, and thus makes the development of democracy and economic policy very difficult. Indeed the communal decision and democracy can never go together. We have to admit that, under present circumstances, and so long as our politics are dominated by middle class elements, we cannot do away with communalism altogether. But to make a necessary exception in favour of our Muslim or Sikh friends is one thing, to spread this evil principle to numerous other groups and thus to divide up the electoral machinery and the legislature into many compartments, is a far more dangerous position. If we wish to function democratically the proposed communal arrangement will have to go, and I have no doubt that it will go. But it will not go by the methods adopted by the aggres-

sive opponents of the decision. These methods result inevitably in perpetuating the decision, for they help in continuing a situation which prevents any reconsideration.

I have not been enamoured of the past Congress policy in regard to the communal question and its attempts to make pacts and compromises. Yet essentially I think it was based on a sound instinct. First of all the Congress always put independence first and other questions, including the communal one, second, and refused to allow any of those other questions to take pride of place. Secondly, it argued that the communal problem had arisen from a certain set of circumstances which enabled the third party to exploit the other two. In order to solve it, one had either to get rid of the third party (and that meant independence), or get rid of that set of circumstances, which meant a friendly approach by the parties concerned and an attempt to soften the prejudice and fear that filled them. Thirdly, that the majority community must show generosity in the matter to allay the fear and suspicion that minorities, even though unreasonably, might have.

That analysis is, I think, perfectly sound. I would add that, in my opinion, a real solution of the problem will only come when economic issues, affecting all religious groups and cutting across communal boundaries, arise. . . .

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These⁹ are only some odd suggestions for you to consider. Many others will suggest themselves to you. *My present object is to impress you that we can no longer make any progress by the cry of Swaraj only. We must make it clear that we aim at economic and social Swaraj as well as political and for this purpose we must lay down a definite economic and social programme.* (emphasis added) Only thus can you bring your movement for freedom in touch with reality and make it a dynamic and irresistible force. This is also the surest way of killing communalism.

Communalism cannot go by pious resolutions or endless

talks of unity. If you will examine it, you will find that in essence it is the desire amongst intellectuals for the loaves and fishes of office. It has nothing to do with the masses but the masses are deluded and misled and made to forget their real troubles. If you direct their attentions to economic facts which matter, you will automatically turn them away from communalism and the pseudo-religious mentality.

We have the curious fact to-day that some of our prominent politicians talk fondly of independence and yet claim all manner of communal rights and privileges. We are told repeatedly that the heart of the community on that is sound. I have no doubt that the heart of every community is sound, but this strange mixture of communalism and independence makes me doubt if the heads of those who combine the two are sound. For there is nothing in common between these two and you cannot build up the noble edifice of a free India on the shifting and sandy foundations of communalism. The All-Parties Conference has made a number of suggestions on the communal issue. These do not put an end to all communalism but they go a very long way in that direction and should, therefore, be cordially welcomed. Under the circumstances I believe they are the best solution of this problem and I trust this conference will fully endorse them and work for them.

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With¹⁰ regard to the fourth question: "How far is the communal problem due to economic causes?" This question perhaps is not properly framed (I am partly responsible for that), in the sense that the communal question is not fundamentally due to economic causes. It has an economic background which often influences it, but it is due much more to political causes. It is not due to religious causes; I should like you to remember that. *Religious hostility or antagonism has very little to do with communal question. It has something to do with the communal ques-*

tion in that there is a slight background of religious hostility which has in the past sometimes given rise to conflict and sometimes to broken heads, in the case of processions and so forth, but the present communal question is not a religious one, although sometimes it exploits religious sentiment and there is trouble. It is a political question of the upper middle classes which has arisen partly because of the attempts of the British Government to weaken the national movement or to create rifts in it, and partly because of the prospect of political power coming into India and the upper classes desiring to share in the spoils of office. It is to this extent economic, that the Mohammadans, the Muslims, are on the whole the poorer community as compared with the Hindus. Sometimes you find that the creditors are the Hindus and the debtors the Mohammadans; sometimes the landlords are Hindus and the tenants are Mohammadans. Of course, the Hindus are tenants also, and they form the majority of the population. It sometimes happens that a conflict is really between a money-lender and his debtors or between a landlord and his tenants, but it is reported in the Press and it assumes importance as a communal conflict between Hindus and Mohammadans. Fundamentally this communal problem is a problem of the conflict between the members of the upper middle-class Hindus and Muslims for jobs and power under the new Constitution. It does not affect the masses at all. Not a single communal demand has the least reference to any economic issues in India or has the least reference to the masses. If you examine the communal demands you will see that they refer only to seats in the Legislature or to various kinds of jobs which might be available in the future. . . .

QUESTION: In your answer to the fourth question, regarding the communal problem, you suggested, I think, that the religious element was a small part of it and that it was not primarily economic, but that it resolved itself into political jealousy and political ambitions. How do you see it resolving in the light of the national movement? Do you

feel that the central national aim would be so big that it would bring all the parties together?

NEHRU: No, first of all I said that the communal movement was not religious, but that does not mean, of course, that there is not a religious background in India, and sometimes that is exploited. It is political mainly. It is also economic in the sense that the political problem largely arises because of the problem of unemployment in the middle classes, and it is the unemployment among the middle classes that helps the communal movement to gain importance. It is there that the jobs come in. To some extent the growth of nationalism and the nationalist spirit suppresses the communal idea, but fundamentally it will go when economic issues and social issues come to the forefront and divert the attention of the masses, and even of the lower middle classes, because these issues really affect them, and inevitably then the communal leaders would have to sink into the background. That happened in 1921, at the time of the first Non-co-operation Movement, when no communal leaders in India dared to come out into the open. There was no meeting held and there was no reference to them in the papers. They disappeared absolutely, because there was such a big movement on other issues. As soon as a big political movement starts the communal leaders come to the forefront. They are always being pushed to the front by the British Government in India. Therefore the right way to deal with the communal question is to allow economic questions affecting the masses to be discussed. One of the chief objections to the India Act is that, because it divides India into seven or eight—I am not sure how many—separate religious compartments, it makes it difficult for economic and social questions to be brought up. Of course, they will come up, because there is the economic urge behind them, but still it makes it difficult.

QUESTION: Do you not think caste comes into the communal question at all—Brahman against non-Brahman?

That is a matter we know so well, in Madras.

NEHRU: I do not think the communal question is affected much by caste. In South India, of course, the question of caste comes in, and it has given rise to great bitterness. I was thinking more of Hindus *versus* Muslims. I am not personally acquainted with conditions in the South in recent years, but it used to be more a question of non-Brahman *versus* the vested interest. Taking the depressed classes, they really are the proletariat in the economic sense; the others are the better-off people. All these matters can be converted into economic terms, and then one can understand the position better. *I do not think the Brahman and the non-Brahman question as such is very important now. There is a very large number of non-Brahmans in the Congress. In the Congress the question does not rise. It has some importance in local areas in the South, because of various local factors, but I do not think the question of Brahman and non-Brahman comes into the communal question at all.*

*Indians Can Get Together*¹¹

Can Indians get together? It is an odd title yet a significant one, for it tells us much in four words. It gives us an intimate and revealing glimpse into the minds of those who framed it. It reveals to us the premises and assumptions on which they base their consideration of the Indian problem. It displays that patronizing superiority of outlook which we have come to associate with Westerners when they deal with Eastern nations. It has something of the white man's burden about it.

Because of all this, I was disinclined to write on this subject, for there is little room for argument or reasoning when premises differ. Our minds function in set grooves, and if even the impact of a world war with its attendant revolutionary changes does not pull them out from those deep hollows, how much can we expect from an appeal to reason?

This war is a stupendous military spectacle, and all over the world armies, navies and air forces clash with each other and seek to gain the mastery. These mighty conflicts already have changed the shape of the world and will undoubtedly still further change the shape of things to come. And yet greater changes are happening in the minds of men, possibly none so great as those invisible things that are affecting Asia and gradually but surely putting an end to the relations between Asia and Europe that subsisted for 200 years. However this war may develop, whatever the end may be, whatever the peace is going to be, it is certain that the Western world can no longer dominate over Asia. If this is not realized and if the attempt is made to continue the old relationship in any form, this means the end of the peace and another disastrous conflict.

Yet this is not realized by those who shape the policies of Western nations, least of all by Britain. The France of Vichy, grovelling before Germany, still talks of the French Empire; the Netherlands, having lost already many of her vast possessions, still speaks the offensive language of empire and endeavours to cling to what is left. The nineteenth century is dead and gone but the minds of Britain's rulers still think in terms of that dead past. That way lies no hope for the world or for the peace that must inevitably come sometime or other. Unless London and Washington begin to think in terms of to-day and of free and equal Asia, they will never reach a solution of the problems that confront them.

What a mess the nations of Europe made of this world with their perpetual conflicts, their eternal hates, their grabbing violence and cut-throat opportunism, with the misery they brought to their colonial territories, with two world wars in the course of a single generation!

Not being able to look after their own houses, they presume to dominate over others and pose as their mentors. But no one values them at their achievements in science, literature or the application of science. Behind all this

there is a lack of something which brings their achievements periodically to nought. Asia has looked at this hanging scene with the strength of ages behind her, and the past 200 years, with all their suffering and mortification, are but a brief interlude in her long history.

That interlude is over. A new chapter must begin. Asia is learning rapidly what the West has to teach of science and its applications and is trying to harmonize them with her old-time genius. She has little to learn, much to teach about the philosophy of life and the art of living.

Can the Indians get together? Yes, certainly, if impediments in their way created by foreign authority are removed, if they can face their problems without external interference. Every problem finally will be solved either by peaceful means or by conflict, though this may give rise to new problems. Independent India will solve her problems or cease to be. The past history of India shows us she has successfully tackled her problems and out of every conflict of opposing forces had produced a new synthesis. Synthesis is a dominant trait of India's civilization and history.

Except for China, there is no great country in the world which has shown such powerful unity throughout the ages as India. That unity took political shape only rarely as it could not be stabilized until relatively recent developments in transport and communications made this easy. If these developments had not taken place it is possible that the United States of America might not have been a single nation.

Britain's rule over India led to political unity and also was means to bring the industrial revolution to India. Development of that revolution was, however, hindered by the British, who encouraged feudal elements and prevented industrial growth. The continuing process of synthesis also was stopped by this rule and disruptive forces were encouraged.

For the first time in India's history, here was the rule of a foreign people who had their cultural roots elsewhere and

who could only remain as foreigners exploiting the country for their own advantage. There could be no synthesis with them, and perpetual conflict was inevitable. Yet out of this very conflict rose the powerful All-India Nationalist Movement, which became and is the symbol of political unity.

Independence, democracy and unity were the pillars of the movement. In accordance with old Indian traditions, toleration, fullest protection and autonomy were promised to all minorities subject only to the essential unity of the country and to the democratic basis of its constitution. Independence means severance from the British Empire, but in the New World it was realised that isolated national existence was not possible or desirable. So India was prepared to join any international federation on an equal basis. But that could come only after recognition of her independence and through her free will. There could be no compulsion. In particular, India wanted to associate herself closely with China.

There is now a demand on the part of some Muslims, represented by the Muslim League, for partition of India, and it must be remembered that this demand is a very recent one, hardly four years old. It must also be remembered that there is a large section of Muslims in India who oppose it. Few people take it seriously, as it has no political or economic background. Americans who fought the Civil War to keep their Union together can appreciate how a proposal to divide the country is resented by vast numbers of the Indian people.

Thirty years ago the British Government introduced the principle of separate religious electorates in India, a fatal thing which has come in the way of development of political parties. Now they have tried to introduce the idea of partitioning India, not only into two but possibly many separate parts. This was one of the reasons which led to bitter resentment of the Cripps proposals. The All-India Congress could not agree to this, yet it went far and said if any territorial unit clearly declared its desire to break

away, the Congress could not think in terms of compelling it to stay in the Union.

So far as minorities are concerned, it is accepted on common ground that they should be given fullest constitutional protection, religious, cultural, linguistic and every other way. Backward minorities or classes should in addition be given special educational and other privileges to bring them rapidly to the general level.

The real problem so often referred to is that of the Muslims. They are hardly a minority, as they number about 90,000,000 and it is difficult to see how even a majority can oppress them. As it happens, they are largely concentrated in particular provinces. It is proposed to give full provincial autonomy to every province reserving only certain all-India subjects for the Central Government, and this will give every opportunity for self-development in each cultural area. Indeed, there may even be smaller autonomous cultural areas within the province.

It is possible to devise many ways to give satisfaction to every conceivable minority claim. The Congress has said this must be done by agreement, not by a majority vote. If agreement is not possible on any point, then impartial arbitration should be accepted. Finally, if any territorial unit insists on breaking away after the experience of working in the union, there is going to be no compulsion to force it to stay, provided such severance is geographically possible.

It must be remembered that the problem of Indian minorities is entirely different from nationalities with entirely different racial, cultural and linguistic backgrounds. This is not so in India where, except for a small handful of persons, there is no difference between Hindu and Muslim in race, culture or language. The vast majority of Muslims belong to the same stock as the Hindus and were converted to Islam.

Few problems in the world to-day are basically so simple of solution as the Indian minority problem. For various

reasons it is important to-day and comes in the way of progress, yet it is essentially a superficial problem without deep roots. The real problems of India are economic, of poverty, of low standards. As soon as these are tackled aggressively, as they should be, and modern industry grows, bringing higher standards in its train, the minority problem fades away. It has been a product of unemployment of the middle classes, who had few avenues of work open to them and looked for employment to the State. As State jobs were limited, demand rose for reservation of these for particular communities.

Every attempt to save the problem thus far has failed because there was always a third party—the British Government. If that Government fades away, the whole background of this problem changes when Indians have to look to themselves. Compulsion of events forces them to face reality and to come to agreement. The only alternative is conflict, which every one is anxious to avoid, over a relatively trivial issue. But even if there is conflict, that is preferable to the present stalemate, and it will produce a solution.

The All-India Congress proposal has been that this and other problems should be considered and finally decided by a Constituent Assembly elected by adult franchise. The widest franchise is considered necessary, so the consideration of these questions should rest on those vast numbers of people who are far more interested in economic problems and who do not look for State employment.

Such economic problems cut across religious boundaries and are common to Hindu, Muslim, Christian, and Buddhist. If such an Assembly could not come to an agreement on any particular minority matters they could be referred to international arbitration. We are perfectly prepared to abide by the decision of such an international tribunal in such matters. But the question of arbitration does not arise over the question of independence. That and the allied question of self-determination must be recog-

nized and accepted before there is a possibility of arbitration over minor matters. On independence we cannot compromise.

Can the Indians get together? I have no doubt that they can and they will. Even to-day there is an amazing unity of outlook among them and whatever their internal differences might be, they stand for independence. The real obstacle in the way of real unity and progress is foreign domination. From every point of view it has become an urgent and immediate necessity that Britain should relinquish her hold in India and recognize Indian independence. There is no other way and it is certain, that India must be given complete independence.

The approach of war to India has made this an even more vital question. Independent India would treat America and Britain as allies in a common enterprise to release her vast energy and resources against every aggressor who invaded her territory. But Indians can no longer function as slaves and underlings in their own country or outside or tolerate being treated as chattels by dominant foreign authority. Submission to this is for them the worst kind of spiritual degradation.

The East will put up with it no longer. Asia will come back to her own through whatever travail and suffering fate may have in store for her. China has poured out her heart's blood in defence of freedom. India would do likewise if the opportunity came to her to fight for her freedom. She seeks no domination over others, but she will put up with no domination over herself. Only independence will release her from long bondage and allow her to play her part fittingly in the terrible drama of the world to-day.

1. Nehru, Jawaharlal. *The Discovery of India* (The Signet Press, Calcutta) 1946, pp. 332-343.

2. Nehru, Jawaharlal. *A Bunch of Old Letters* (Asia Publishing House Pvt. Ltd.) 1958. pp. 392-3.

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 397-8.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 405-07.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 463-64.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 144-45.

7. Nehru, Jawaharlal. *The Unity of India* (Lindsay Drummond, London), 1948, p. 386.

8. Extracts from Nehru's Presidential Address to the Lucknow Session of the Congress held in April, 1936.

9. Extract from Nehru's Presidential Address to U.P. Conference held at Jhansi in October, 1938.

10. Extracts from Nehru's replies to questions put to him at a meeting in London held under the auspices of the Indian Conciliation Group, on February 4, 1936, reproduced from *Before and After Independence*, edited by J. S. Bright (Published by the Indian Printing Works, New Delhi), pp. 302 and 312-17.

11. Bright, J. S. (Ed.) — *Before and After Independence*, New Delhi, pp. 370-75.

Communal Menace in Independence India

*Gandhi's Murder and Communalism*¹

"Gandhiji has gone but his flaming spirit envelops us. The burden is upon us now and the immediate need is that we should endeavour, to the utmost of our ability, to discharge that burden," said Nehru, in a Broadcast to the nation from Delhi.

He called upon the people to work all-out against communalism,² which "has killed the greatest man of our age", and pleaded for tolerance and co-operation in public life to make India a great and progressive nation. He added, "His last few months and his very death symbolize to us this message of large hearted tolerance and unity. A little before he died, we pledged ourselves to this before him. We must keep that pledge and remember that India is a common home to all those who live here, to whatever religion they may belong. They are equal sharers in our great inheritance and they have equal rights and obligations. Ours is a composite nation, as all great nations must necessarily be. Any narrowness in outlook, any attempt to confine the bounds of this great nation, will be a betrayal of his final lesson to us and will surely lead to disaster and to the loss of that freedom for which he laboured and which he gained for us in large measure. . . .

"Gandhiji has gone but his flaming spirit envelopes us. The burden is upon us now and the immediate need is that we should endeavour, to the utmost of our ability, to discharge that burden. We have to hold together and fight that terrible poison of communalism that has killed the greatest man of our age. We must root this out not in any spirit of ill-will to misguided individuals but in militant opposition to the evil itself, wherever it may be. That evil has not ended with the killing of Gandhiji. It was even

more shameful thing for some people to celebrate this killing in various ways.³ Those who did so or feel that way have forfeited their rights to be called Indians”.

* * * *

... His assassination⁴ was the first challenge thrown out by the Hindu Mahasabha in its bid to seize power and bringing about a change in the Government by violence. He [Nehru] thought it foolish to imagine that a new order could be established by such methods. It pained him deeply to find that there were misguided youths who could sink to such depths.

He said that at times he felt like giving up office to meet the challenge in the open. Communalism was diametrically opposed to democracy and usually relied on Nazi and Fascist methods. He did not believe Pakistan could even succeed in establishing an Islamic State as India could never be a Hindu State. World conditions were such today that religious or communal States were out of place.

Communalism To Be Eliminated from National Life⁵

The Prime Minister on Saturday accepted a resolution in the Indian Parliament declaring that no communal organization should be permitted to engage in any activities other than those essential for the bona fide religious, cultural, social and educational needs of the community. It recommends legislative and administrative steps to prevent such activities.

Nehru made it clear that so far as the implementation of it was concerned, more especially in regard to the legislative aspect of it, it would have to be very carefully considered and it would ultimately have to come up before the House.

The resolution was moved by Mr. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar. The resolution, as amended, reads:

“Whereas it is essential for the proper functioning of democracy and the growth of national unity and solidarity

that communalism should be eliminated from Indian life, this Assembly is of opinion that no communal organisation which by its constitution or by the exercise of the discretionary power vested in any of its officers or organs, admits to exclude from its membership persons on grounds of religion, race and caste, or any of them, should be permitted to engage in any activities other than those essential for the bona fide religious, cultural, social and educational needs of the community and that all steps, legislative and administrative, necessary to prevent such activities should be taken".

In accepting the resolution, the Prime Minister, in a speech punctuated with cheers, said: "When the country is functioning independently today there is no alternative except to follow the resolution. The alternative would be civil conflict."

Nehru hoped that "we shall rapidly have more and more democracy and more and more unity in this country", and added: "It is incumbent on us to raise those people who are low down in social, economic and other activities and give them every opportunity of growth and progress, educational and otherwise. That has been a generally accepted policy in the country and it is the accepted policy of this Government".

The Government of India, said Nehru, would do everything in their power to achieve the objective which lay behind the resolution. After the mover's eloquent speech, he had not had much to say about the desirability of such a resolution. As a matter of fact it was the inevitable policy which an independent country must adopt. There might have been in the past various reasons which came in the way of such a policy being given effect to. Conditions were, however, different today.

"We have as a matter of fact seen how far communalism in politics has led us—the grave dangers through which we have passed and the terrible consequences we have seen. We must have it clearly in our minds and in the mind of

the country that the alliance of religion and politics in the shape of communalism is almost dangerous alliance and it yields the most abnormal kind of illegitimate brood:

"We have talked a great deal about politics being allied with ethics that is something I hope we shall always stand for. During the last quarter of a century or more, Mahatma Gandhi taught us to place politics on ethical level. How far we have succeeded it is for the world to judge and future generation to decide. It was something at least that we placed that great ideal before us and tried in our own weak and halting way to give effect to it.

"But the combination of politics and of religion in the narrowest sense of the word, resulting in communal politics, there can be no doubt, is a most dangerous combination and must be put an end to. It is clear, as has been pointed out by the mover, that this combination is painful to the country as a whole, it is painful to the majority, but probably it is most harmful to any minority that seeks some advantage from it; I think even the past history of India will show that, but in any event, in an independent state a minority which seeks to isolate itself does some injury to the cause of the country.

"But most of all it injures its own interests, because inevitably it puts a barrier between itself and the others, a barrier not on the religious plane, but on the political plane; sometimes even to some extent on the economic plane, and it can never exercise the influence which it legitimately ought to aspire to exercise if it functions in that way".

The future constitution of India, [Nehru] continued, was being hammered out by the Constituent Assembly and no doubt it would give shape to it in the next two or three months and finalize it and any resolution that the House might pass was not going to alter that constitution as it was finally adopted.

He said, "But after all the constitution making body is more or less this body, and, if this House thinks in terms of

this resolution I have no doubt that the constitution making body will also think in terms of this resolution. Further, from such evidence as we have got of the work of that constitution making body, it has already gone a long way in terms of this resolution. It has put aside many of the dangerous features of our old constitution which led to communalism, whether any other remaining features will remain or not I cannot obviously guarantee, but so far as I am concerned I hope that the less we have any form of communalism the better in our constitution and in the practical working of our Government."

Referring to the administrative and legislative measures to be taken as mentioned in the resolution to give effect to it, Nehru said, "Exactly what those administrative or legislative measures might be it is impossible to say straight off. It will require the closest scrutiny, certainly the legislative part of it, and presumably the right course will be for the Government to consider this matter and to see what administrative, and more especially what legislative measures are necessary to gain this end and then later, when this House meets in another session, to consider any recommendations to that effect so far as legislative measures are concerned. Meanwhile, no doubt our new constitution will have taken shape also and it will help us then to consider those legislative measures in terms of the new constitution. But we need not wait till then. The point is that so far as the Government is concerned we should function as closely as possible in accordance with the spirit of this resolution.

"Further the purpose of this resolution is also to give a lead to the country in this matter so that the country may realize as clearly as possible that the only right way for us to function is to do away with communalism in its political aspect in every shape and form. That we accept.

"There are at the present moment in the draft constitution that has been proposed certain definite communal elements. For instance, I believe that there is a proposal

that although there should be joint and common electorates still there might be some reservation of seats for minorities, for the Scheduled Classes, on more or less, I take it, the population basis. What the final decision will be I cannot say. I hope personally that the less reservation there is the better. That is so, even more from the point of view of the group or the minority that might have that reservation, than from the view point of any other group or the majority.

“There is another aspect of this matter which must be remembered. We talk about democracy and unity and all that and I hope that we shall rapidly have more and more democracy and more and more unity in this country. Democracy is not purely a political affair. The nineteenth century conception of democracy, that is, each person having a vote was a good enough conception in those days. But it was incomplete. People think in terms of a larger and deeper democracy today. After all there is no equality between the pauper who has a vote and the millionaire who has a vote. There are a hundred ways of exercising the influence of the millionaire which the pauper has not got. After all there is no equality between the person who has got tremendous educational advantages and the person who has had none. So educationally, economically and otherwise people differ greatly. People I suppose will differ to some extent always—all human beings are not equal in the sense of ability or capacity—but the whole point is that people should have equality of opportunity and they should be able to go as far as they can go.

“It is patent that in India today there are vital differences between certain groups, classes and individuals. There is a big hiatus between those who are at the top and those who are at the bottom. If we are to have democracy it becomes necessary and essential for us not merely to bridge the gap but lessen it very greatly, in fact to bring them closer together as far as opportunities are concerned, so far ultimately as general living conditions are concerned, so far as necessi-

ties of life are concerned—leaving out for the moment luxuries and the rest though ultimately there seems to me no particular reason why any particular group or class should be favoured even in regard to the luxuries of life. But that is perhaps a rather distant picture.

“Because there are such great differences in India, it becomes incumbent on us not only for humanitarian reason but from the standpoint of fulfilment of democracy, to raise up these people who are low down in the social, economic and other levels, to give them every opportunity of growth and progress, educational and other. That has been a generally accepted policy in the country and it is the accepted policy of this government.

“In pursuance of that policy, certain reservation of seats, various scholarship and educational amenities have been granted to the Scheduled Classes and no doubt will be granted still more not only to the Scheduled Classes but there may be other backward groups in the country, tribal people and others, who require every help. It is no good for us to say that if we give a vote to a member of a tribal folk we have done our duty to him having for hundreds of thousands of years not done our duty to him. By giving a vote we consider ourselves absolved of all further duty. We have to think always in terms of raising the level of all those who have been denied opportunity in the past. I do not personally think that the best way to do that on the political plane is reservation of seats and the rest.

“I think the best way and the more basic and fundamental way is to advance them rapidly in the economic and educational spheres and then they will stand on their own feet. There is a great danger, whether you deal with an individual or group or community in giving certain props. They give a certain false sense of strength to that community which does not belong to it, which does not come out of its own strength but is external to it, and which, when removed, suddenly makes it weak.

“...Reservation of seats and the rest may occasionally

be helpful, possibly in the case of backward groups, but they produce a false sense of the political relation, a false sense of strength and ultimately, therefore, they are not as important as real educational, cultural and economic advance which gives them inner strength to face any difficulty or any opponent.

"However, I can concede that in the present context of affairs in regard to these unfortunate countrymen of ours, who have not had these opportunities in the past, special attempts should be made, of course in the educational and economic field, even in the political field, to see that they have a proper place till they find their own legs to stand upon without external aid."

Communalism More Dangerous than a Foreign Armed Attack⁶

A secular State does not, of course, mean that people should give up their religion. A secular State means a State in which the State protects all religions, but does not favour one at the expense of others and does not itself adopt any religion as State religion.

As a matter of fact nearly every State in the world is secular in practice even though it may have some old forms attached to it, because no modern civilized State can be other than a secular State. It is a sign of going back some hundreds of years if you think of anything but a secular State. Any other ideal means encouragement of that fatal weakness in India, separatism. Yet communal organizations and communal parties talk in terms of communalism. They say something which probably is more dangerous for the future of India than any armed attack from any foreign country. We can meet an attack from a foreign country because we know exactly that that foreign country is attacking us and is the enemy. We fight it with all our strength. But the other attack is vicious, because it gradually creeps into our minds without our understanding its full significance or its full danger.

We in India have suffered from communalism. It began in a big way from the Muslim League. The result was the partition of India. The Muslim League type of communalism is now more or less outside India. Some odd, foolish individual may indulge in it here, but that does not count and nothing can happen in India today from that source.

But that poison has, by some reverse process, entered other people's minds and we have Hindu and Sikh communal organisations as communal as the Muslim League ever was. Of course, these talk of themselves as nationalists. They can say that because after all they are in the nation. But if you examine the gospel of communalism even under the cloak of nationalism you will find that it is the most dangerous thing and breaks up that essential and fundamental unity of India without which we cannot progress. It does not matter where you see it. Whether it is Brahmin, non-Brahmin or any other trouble, whether it is this caste or that caste, it does not matter. We have to be wary of it. It is an obvious thing that I lay stress on it because it is of the highest importance.

Pakistan has been built on that communal theory. They sometimes call it two-nation theory. If the two-nation theory is right then there is no reason why you should not have a 10-nation theory or a 20-nation theory or a 100-nation theory. Anyhow, Pakistan is built on that communal basis. Personally I think it is very bad thing for Pakistan. I think that in the long run Pakistan is bound to suffer, as every country which follows that policy, must suffer, suffer not because of us but because of the internal forces that it creates and which perhaps, have already begun there, because it is such an out-of-date and fantastically wrong basis for a nation to progress.

A country that adopts it cannot go ahead. But then, after all, what Pakistan does or does not do, is none of my concern provided it does not come in my way and in my country's way. It is not for me to impose my wishes on Pakistan, though I am sorry that it should go wrong. But the most amazing thing is that some sections in this country should

try to rival Pakistan in this communal business, and the most amazing thing is that some young men and young women should be misled by these communal cries and this communal approach. Sometimes people tell me that one of my weaknesses is that I see the other man's point of view too much and, perhaps, that is so. I do understand the other man's point of view even if I disagree with him. But I just cannot understand how any person with any intelligence can encourage the communal way of thinking or acting.

That way lies danger for India. That way lies our becoming to be a static people always looking backwards. I do not think any country can go ahead by merely becoming a copyist or imitator of any other country. A country and a people must have their roots in their own soil and history and culture. If you uproot them from there, they become rootless and superficial. At the same time a country cannot be all root, it has to come out of that soil and go up to the skies and have branches and flowers and leaves and fruit. There is a tendency in this land to look backwards and think only of the roots.

It has become for practical reasons of essential importance that we should put ourselves in the van of progress, whether it is scientific, cultural or other matters, not losing our roots but taking advantage of whatever is worthwhile in the countries of the world. Nobody is going to tell me that we should have an army fighting with bows and arrows. Nobody is going to tell me that our army should have bullock carts instead of tanks. Nobody is going to tell me that we should travel in a bullock cart from Bangalore to Delhi. But some gentlemen who will not tell me these things, nevertheless, still continue to have a bullock-cart mind.

He had no doubt, Nehru concluded, that the human material in India was magnificent and "if we get rid of that feeling of ours which promotes separatism and faction, we will go ahead fast."

Congressmen and Communalism?

India is a secular State. That is the very basis of our Constitution and we must understand it with all its complications. That, of course, is the only modern and civilised approach. That approach is in keeping with the whole growth of our national movement. It is not only in consonance with our ideology but also with practical considerations. Any other approach is fraught with disaster and would be negation of all that we have stood for.

I am laying stress on this because there has been some flabbiness in this matter even in Congress circles. I feel that on this subject there can be no compromise of any kind. Unfortunately there are some communal groups in the country which challenge this secular aspect of the State and which nourish narrow and reactionary ideals. It is necessary for us, therefore, to be perfectly clear on this issue and to be prepared to stand or fall by it. As a consequence we have to give special care to all such minorities, such as Muslims, Sikhs, Christians and others. This fact has always to be remembered and in the forthcoming elections it should, more especially, be borne in mind.

[During the debate in the AICC session at Bangalore on Nehru's report, Algurai Shastri did not approve of the above paragraph relating to the secular State and Nehru replied to him as follows:] "It is my misfortune to disagree with him on the subject and on the consequences that flow from a secular State." Further, "Let us be clear about it without a shadow of doubt in any Congressman's mind. In matters of this kind we cannot speak with two voices or with any voice that produces an impression other than this, that we stand till death for a secular State.

"There has been enough of wrong talk and dubious talk and nonsense talked about it. Let us give it up if you like. But what is this business of saying one thing and acting in a different way? It is nobody's fault except ours if we did not stick to our principles. Our principles are our principles and not somebody else's principles. It is somebody else's

business to distort us, to upset us and to push us down, but that is no excuse for us to fall from our principles. That would mean that our principles depend on what somebody else does. That is not the usual description of a principle to which either an individual or a party is attached.

[On question being put to him as to the basis on which minorities are named and whether that is in consonance with the idea of a secular State, Nehru said:] I confess to a feeling of surprise at this question. A minority does not disappear or become a majority in a secular State, nor does a person give up his religion or customs or culture in a properly run secular State or any civilized State. No State can be civilized except a secular State.

There is no country in the wide world where there are so many barriers as in India between group and group in the social structure. We want them to disappear, but we cannot shut our eyes to them. We still function in narrow communal ways. We talk about Brahmins and non-Brahmins. It is communalism. We hope to get rid of it. We have given up separate electorates, but we have to see that what we have done is justified by results.

Ultimately there should be no majority or minority. We are all just human beings. But today, during this transitional period, we have to see that the minorities do not suffer. The responsibility inevitably rests on the majority.

* * * *

[Nehru resigned from the Congress Working Committee and the Congress Election Committee and gave reasons for this at the Congress Parliamentary Party meeting held on August 21, 1951 stating that the Congress had lost a good deal of its past idealism and said:]

A great⁹ organisation like the Congress should have a certain vision, a certain tolerance of minor variations. Nevertheless it is not right for a great organisation to speak or act in two ways in regard to important matters.

This attitude is most unfortunate when the country is faced

with problems like the Indo-Pakistan crisis. There are certain organisations which are continually talking against the Congress, some of them are communal parties. It is not good for us to remain completely silent nor is it good to speak in an equivocal way which might be interpreted in two ways. In regard to certain problems we have to take up a strong attitude. We cannot adopt a compromising attitude in all things. In regard to the Indo-Pakistan crisis we have no doubt that it should not be met in a compromising way, but in a firm way.

Indo-Pak Relations and Communalism

[In July 1951, relations between India and Pakistan became strained. Indian Government moved its armed forces to border areas for defensive purposes in view of the threatened attack from Pakistan. The Pakistan Prime Minister, Liaquat Ali Khan, had threatened India with a "Mailed Fist" as new symbol of Pakistan. The communal parties in India had started a propaganda for starting a war against Pakistan. Nehru speaking at a public meeting on the day after Liaquat Ali had threatened India with his "Mailed Fist" said:]

"People¹⁰ may have read in Saturday's paper that the Pakistan Prime Minister in a passionate speech demonstrated a clenched fist and said that would be Pakistan's symbol. Of course, the Prime Minister of Pakistan was at liberty to choose any symbol he liked for his people, but India also had chosen a symbol. That was the Ashok Chakra. That was the symbol of peace—peace and the ancient culture of India. . . ."

Stressing the need for creating full communal accord in the country, the Prime Minister said that India was one country where all communities had equal rights. People had to remember that in no case could India follow Pakistan's communal policy or rival Pakistan in this "communal business."

Nehru condemned the activities of certain communal

elements in the country who raised parochial slogans. The bane of this country unfortunately had been this tendency towards separatism, which has cost the country its freedom many a time.

Pakistan today was making capital out of the talk of communalists in this country to discredit India abroad. Speeches of communalists who advocated reunion of Pakistan with India were being quoted by Pakistan's special officials in America and other countries. Although India was quite strong to defend herself from any outside aggression, it was very necessary that there should be full internal unity among the people. The communalists were the major factor in strengthening the hands of Pakistan. The activities of the communalists here amounted to their thrusting a dagger in the body politic of India. India could never progress on communal lines.

* * * *

India,¹¹ he said, naturally tried to avoid war. "We offered Pakistan a 'no war' declaration which Pakistan did not wholly accept or agree to. Even recently, a few weeks ago, this was repeated by India. Pakistan would only agree to it if India kept Kashmir apart from it.

"When we consider this question of Indo-Pakistan relations," he said, "let us look at the broad picture, not only of Kashmir on one side and West Bengal and Assam and East Bengal on the other side, but many other problems that have arisen out of past history, not only the history of the past four years, but the longer period of 20 or 30 years.

"Most of us stood then, as we stand today, for a peaceful solution of our internal problems, for a joint effort to attain our freedom and then to live together in freedom. Those who brought about Pakistan had a different gospel. They wanted not unity but disunity, not construction but destruction, not peace but, if not war, at any rate discord. I do not think that they or the people of Pakistan are any

better or any worse than we or the people of India. But it makes a difference what your ideals are.

"We have failed often enough but we have followed certain ideals for the last 20 or 30 years to some extent and in spite of everything, those ideals continue to be our guiding star. That is the major difference between India's policies, today, and Pakistan policies, which are, naturally, derived from their previous record of discord and deliberate propagation of hatred and disunity. It goes on.

"I am quite convinced that a country that follows such a policy will injure itself, but it is for them to decide. I do not want India to follow that policy. We have to think not only of today but of what tomorrow or day after tomorrow may bring. In other words you have to have some perspective, some vision, some objective and should not be influenced by the urges and passions of the moment."

Dr. Mookerjee, said Nehru, seemed to think that the Government had forgotten the people coming from East Bengal. He assured him that very, very few subjects had given the Government more anxious concern than this problem. They had not talked about it often for a variety of reasons because mere talking did no good. But obviously, this problem of East Bengal, like the Kashmir problem or anything else, was part of the single, big problem of Indo-Pakistan relations. . . .

"I hope nobody thinks here that by sending a registered communication to Pakistan this can be effected," said Nehru. "It means war. And if it means war, then let us not think of exchange of territory but of war. Let us not be confused. It is so easy to say these things and try to escape the consequences of what we say. . . ."

"Time and again efforts were made by the leaders of the Muslim League to win over Sheikh Abdullah but they did not succeed, because their view points were diametrically opposed. You heard today the approach to the questions which the member from Kashmir gave. It was an approach as diametrically opposed to communal approach as any-

thing could be, an approach which I wish some of us could equal in clarity.

"We talk a great deal about a secular State than we are at present. There are too many people in this country attacking and trying to undermine that ideal. There are too many communal minded people in this country today. Let us be clear about it. But in Kashmir there was a straight fight between communalism and the ideal that we hold. It is quite absurd to talk of India and Pakistan fighting for the possession of Kashmir as if it was a booty to be seized by the stronger person. In Kashmir the struggle has been for a very basic ideal. . . .

"The Kashmir people have fought communalism even more than our armies have. Remember that before our army went to Kashmir for three days there was no proper Government or army or police in the valley. Those who were in authority ran away. The enemy was knocking at the door step. Surely, if there had been any real sympathy for the invader, the whole valley would have been offered to the invader.

"Even apart from sympathy, if there had not been a strong feeling of national unity and consciousness, the whole place would have gone to pieces because there was no governmental apparatus. The people would have run away and there would have been panic.

"But during those days when danger threatened them, it was the people of the valley, the leaders and the volunteers of the National Conference without arms, who kept the peace. . . ."

Communalism in India and in Pakistan Feed One Another

He said¹² that the Hindu Mahasabha in India and Hindustan Hamara Party and other groups in Pakistan had repeatedly committed breaches of the provision of the Minority Pact relating to discouragement of any propaganda for the reunion of the two countries.

The pact had specially laid down, that any agitation for

undoing partition should not be tolerated by either Government. These parties or groups had been carrying on such agitation, thereby committing breaches of the relevant provision of the pact.

Replying to a supplementary question, the Prime Minister said it was likely that the formation of the Hindustan Hamara Party had been in reply to the activities of the Hindu Mahasabha.

He told the House that India had drawn the attention of the Pakistan Government to the activities of the Hindustan Hamara Party in a telegram sent in May. No reply to the telegram had yet been received from Pakistan.

Asked whether the move behind the formation of the Hindustan Hamara Party was supported by those newspapers in Pakistan which were considered mouth pieces of the Pakistan Government, Nehru said that a good deal of publicity had been given to the party by such newspapers and that one could draw an inference from this.

*Communalism Is India's Enemy No. 1*¹³

[Speaking in Lucknow on September 16, 1951, Nehru said that he had no other ambition save one, that India should progress rapidly and that he had undimmed faith in the inherent ability of the Congress to serve the nation. The main burden of his speech was to show how far communal approach would harm India's interests internally and externally, particularly India's relations with her neighbours like Afghanistan, countries of West Asia and Indonesia. He regarded communalism as India's enemy No. 1.]

He felt anxious when he discovered the communal sentiments were seeping into the Congress organization itself. . . . He denounced the idea of Hindu Rashtra and said that they must not set up in their country what they condemned in Pakistan.

He referred in detail to Indo-Pakistan relations and deprecated the propaganda being carried on by warmongers in India. "People say I appease Pakistan. I am pre-

pared to admit the charge. I have strength enough to do so. But then I am prepared to appease any country of the world provided it is not at the cost of our basic principles."

In Kashmir, he said, there was no Hindu-Muslim question. It was the people of Kashmir who had to decide their future. If they wanted to withdraw our armies, he would do so. Indian troops went there on invitation. In Kashmir Muslims would decide their future. How could India talk of a Hindu *Rashtra* when India had to maintain relations with Kashmir and other countries?

He said that when cry of *jihad* was fanned in Pakistan, India took elementary frontier precautions. India then was prepared to defend her frontiers and to repel an attack with the greatest force.

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[Addressing the AICC in Delhi Nehru put a question and answered.]¹⁴

Q: Are we now going to shake up this country or are we not? Are we going to create powerful winds in this country which will sweep out all kinds of cobwebs and internal differences and troubles, or are we ourselves going to weave those cobwebs and, like spiders, get caught in them?

A: There is only one answer—provided we act up to it—and that answer is: we shall try our utmost to create a whirl wind in the country, a whirl wind of the right type, that will sweep away all wrong ideas and wrong people in its way." [Describing internal and external dangers facing India he named communalism and communalists that need to be swept away.]

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[Nehru issued a circular to Election Committee of the Congress on dangers of communalism. It reads:]¹⁵

"The major struggle in India today, in the elections or elsewhere, is between the Congress, as representing a non-

communal and secular State, and communal bodies which have an entirely different approach on this issue. These communal bodies often talk in terms of nationalism and sometimes, even pretend to stand for social and economic progress. Essentially, however, they represent reaction in every way and they attract to themselves the socially reactionary groups and classes. Their candidates, whatever they might say, represent every kind of reaction in India—political, economic and social. With the socialist party we have some differences, but there is much in common. But there is almost nothing is common between the Congress approach and the communal approach. Therefore, Congress candidates must be chosen with particular care so that they might represent fully non-communal character and approach of the Congress. Persons who have been connected with communal organizations should, therefore, be suspects from this point of view. This is important, as there has been a certain infiltration in the past of communal elements in the Congress.

*Communalism—Very Essence of Fascism*¹⁶

[Communalism and the “great harm that it could do to a young democracy,” was the central theme of a 100-minute address by Nehru at a Gandhi Jayanti public meeting held in Delhi on Tuesday.]

[He] warned the people against “unscrupulous elements” which were spreading poison to suit their ends. In their communalism I see germs of fascism, he declared. . . . Zamindars, Taluqdars and former princely rulers, he said, were aligning themselves with the communalists and were financing their movements because in their success they saw the only chance of retaining their jagirs. [Referring to Hindu Code Bill which was postponed, he said that] he had supported the Bill and will continue to support it and work for its acceptance. [He continued to say that] even though some people were opposing it on religious and communal grounds, he thought it was a very progressive

measure and essential in as much as India could not go forward without it.

Referring to Kashmir, he said communalism in the country would only embarrass Kashmir. The doctrine of Hindu Rashtra militated against Kashmir's secular association with India.

Nehru was particularly critical of the Jan Sangh which "aims at binding the human mind within the confines of narrow and superficial religion." He had also received reports of their harassing Muslims, he said. That would not be tolerated and he would use the entire force of the Government to check it.

Nehru, added PTI, described the communal forces in India as embodying the "very essence of fascism" and said that no quarter would be given to them. As far as he was concerned, he would fight communalism till the last breath of his life both inside and if need be, outside the Government.

Nehru made a sweeping attack on communal elements in India and said that all reactionary forces and men with small petty minds had made a common front under all sorts of garbs.

Even the Hindu Mahasabha election manifesto talked of socialism. Communalism and socialism are poles apart. Those who drafted the manifesto perhaps did not know what socialism stood for, but did so only out of a desire to dupe the people. The Muslims in India, the Prime Minister reiterated, were not in a position today to indulge in communalism. But the disease of communalism started by the Muslim League had now spread among some Hindus and Sikhs. These Hindu and Sikh communal organizations were now spreading the communal poison of the Muslim League. They stood as strong champions of Hindu religion and Hindu Nation.

Such forces had reduced Hindu religion to a kitchen religion. To them religion was confined to the length of one's tuft on the head or the length of the sandal marks on the forehead.

This kitchen religion concept had dangerous possibilities of bringing about the fall of the country. It will warp people's minds and reduce the way of their thinking to that of a frog in a well.

India prospered in the olden days when people kept their minds open. Breezes from all land wafted into India. Their interaction enriched Indian culture.

It was because of this attitude that Indian scholars and seers went to other lands and spread the message of India and left an indelible mark on the life of the country and the peoples.

"Our present day champions of Hindu religion, with the mind of a frog, bent upon keeping all doors and windows of their minds shut to outside influences cannot do what earlier seers did," he said, "These supporters of Hindu Rashtra slogan are themselves incapable of understanding the real greatness of Hindu religion, past traditions of India and the vital need of always keeping a broad open mind."

The communal elements, Nehru said, exhibited the same mentality as some old "no changers" in India had done. Although the world had progressed so much these people still talked of old things. India always had to bow down before superior thought and inventiveness. He could give them many examples.

The Mahrattas when they rose to power showed tremendous courage, but they glorified themselves only in their courage, without trying to learn the technique of war as practised in other countries. It was indeed amazing that Mahrattas did not possess a single map of India when they were in possession of nearly half of it. The British with their superior technique managed to have not only maps made of all areas but bribed the Indian people to do spying work for them. The British thus succeeded in enslaving the country only because some people did not fully realise the vital need of learning from others and keeping pace with changed times.

Referring to Hindu Code Bill the Prime Minister said that the Bill had aroused opposition in certain quarters. Some people demonstrated against it outside Parliament House also. "I am very sorry that due to lack of time we could not pass the Bill in this session of Parliament," he added. "I am not saying this to just dupe the people. The Code is a pressing necessity for the progress of this country. Only through the Code can the bonds tying down women could be loosened and the way opened for social progress".

Referring to communalism, Nehru said that it was the practice of British rulers to divide the people and weaken them. The Muslim League was the creature of the British, and it was used effectively by them to create dissensions among the people, divert their energies into wrong channels and weaken the country. It was this dissension which led to a part of the country being severed from the main body.

The cry of Hindu India or Hindu Rashtra was fraught with similar peril because if this ideology gained ground, it would not be confined to Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs but would spread to the whole of India, and its different sub-castes.

It would intensify the separatist tendencies already existing, like the Brahmin and non-Brahmin feeling in South India, and lead to crumbling of Indian unity, on the strong foundation of which alone India's future could be built.

Nehru said that in Delhi of late communal forces were trying to create trouble. Members of communal organizations had threatened Muslims living in Delhi and asked them to leave the country and go to Pakistan. He warned these elements that "if any person raises his hand against another person on basis of religion, all the resources at the command of the Government will be used to put him down with an iron hand." Continuing, [Nehru] said, "So far as I am concerned and the Government I lead is concerned,

I want to make it perfectly clear that communal forces will not be given the slightest quarter to sow seeds of dissensions among the people."

Strongly condemning these communal parties, Nehru said that although these parties were usually called communal parties, they were nothing else but fascist. They were trying to exploit the sentiments of the people behind a smoke screen of religion and rouse their religious sentiments.

Such bodies sometimes did succeed in achieving a measure of success but ultimately they brought ruin to the country and to themselves. Hitler's fascism brought about the doom of Germany along with the doom of Hitler.

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[Nehru said in a statement¹⁷ on Tuesday that the activities of Jammu Praja Parishad were "misconceived and harmful."]

Nehru said: "I am informed that the Jammu Praja Parishad is carrying on agitation in opposition to the Government of Jammu & Kashmir and the National Conference. I am further informed that Shri Premnath Dogra has sometimes used my name in this connection and referred to his meeting me. I gave him an interview some time ago at his request and made it clear to him that I considered the activities of the Praja Parishad as misconceived and harmful. It was their duty to support the Jammu and Kashmir Government and co-operate with the National Conference. He promised to do so. I am surprised that instead of keeping his promise, he and his party are going contrary to it. This attitude of narrow communalism has been opposed by us throughout India and in particular in Kashmir. Any person who encourages this policy injures the interests of India and even more so of the Jammu and Kashmir State. At the present moment of crisis any such activity is peculiarly irresponsible and utterly wrong. I wish to

make it clear, therefore, that, I completely disapprove of the activities of the Jammu Praja Parishad."

*Communalism—a Disruptive and Reactionary Creed*¹⁸

I have laid great stress recently on the evil of communalism and separatism. It is this evil that brought about the division of India and it is this evil that culminated in the assassination of Gandhiji.

Communalism and separatism are not new growths in India. We had hoped, however, that the new nationalism would put an end to both. It did so in a large measure and the National Congress was largely instrumental in unifying India. Hindu communalism could not stand before the unifying appeal of nationalism. But Muslim communalism gradually grew and fed itself on hatred and separatism. It was a throwback from every point of view. Ultimately this resulted in Pakistan. We had hoped that having achieved its objective, it would give place to a broader outlook in Pakistan. We had hoped also that the essence of Muslim communalism having gone to Pakistan India would free herself of all types of communalism. We were mistaken.

In Pakistan the State itself made this its basis and gospel. In India the communal spirit, instead of subsiding, also grew in the shape of Hindu and Sikh communalism. Inevitably, both in Pakistan and India this was accompanied by the propagation of hatred against the other. It resulted in Western Pakistan in pushing out practically the entire non-Muslim population and from East Pakistan a large number of Hindus. Government policy there coincided with these narrow and bigoted sentiments and there was no check. In India there were many checks—both Government and non-official. Nevertheless, as a reaction to what was happening in Pakistan, both Hindu and Sikh communalism began to play a greater part in our public life. They try to frighten Muslims and exploited the vast number of refugees who had suffered so much already.

It is not for us to interfere with the internal conditions in Pakistan. We are interested, of course, in the fate of the minorities there. We have accepted partition and we stand by that. It is quite absurd and completely unreal for any person in India to talk about a reversal of the partition. Some people are foolish enough to do so, though it is difficult to imagine how any intelligent person can think in this way. So far as we are concerned we must oppose this fully which can only bring trouble and disaster in its train. The great majority of our people realize this and normally one would not attach any importance to it.

While we may not be much concerned over internal developments in Pakistan, we are concerned very much with what happens in India. It is our age-old policy to build-up a united India, united not only politically, but in heart and mind so that the various religious and other groups should co-operate for their mutual advantage and have full opportunities of growth.

Let us examine this question from the practical point of view. Communalism is a narrow and disrupting creed. It is out of place in the modern world. There can be no progress in India if we put up communal barriers amongst ourselves. This is not merely a question of Hindu and Muslim but also of other religious, sectarian and caste groups. Once this dangerous tendency spreads, we do not know where it will end and any dreams that we may have of rapid progress will have to be given up.

We have seen communalism at work both in Pakistan and India in its different forms. It is based on hatred and violence and the narrowest bigotry. It attracts to its fold reactionary and anti-social elements who try to prevent social progress under cover of religion or some form of extreme nationalism, which really can only be applied to one community. Therefore, it is not merely communalism that we have to deal with but social reaction in every form. It is because of this that I have laid great stress on the danger of this vague thinking on this vital issue. There

are not many who openly profess unabashed communalism, but there are a large number who unconsciously adopt its modes of thought and action. Some organizations proclaim that they are not communal and yet they have functioned in the narrowest and most dangerous communal way.

Communalism bears a striking resemblance to the various forms of fascism that we have seen in other countries. It is in fact the Indian version of fascism. We know the evils that have flown from fascism. In India we have known also the evils and disasters that have resulted from communal conflict. A combination of these two is thus something that can only bring grave perils and disasters in its train. It is degrading and vulgarizing, it plays upon the basest instincts of man. If India were to listen to its pernicious cry, then indeed India would not only have continuous trouble within her own borders, but would be isolated from the rest of the world which would look down upon her.

The issue in Kashmir must be viewed in this context, because Kashmir has become the living symbol of that non-communal and secular State which will have no truck with the two-nation theory on which Pakistan has based itself. The fate of Kashmir will, of course, be decided by the people of Kashmir. If they wish to go some way, not to our liking, we shall not come in their way. Fortunately, the mind and heart of Kashmir are firm about this basic issue and it is because of this that Kashmir has held out in spite of pressure from Pakistan or other foreign countries. . . .

It is easy for anyone to go to Kashmir and see for himself the conditions there and what the people of Kashmir want. He will see communities living peacefully together and co-operating in the defence of their country and in social progress. He will see that in some ways Kashmir has progressed more rapidly than the rest of India, more particularly in land-reform. If India had not rejected communalism, would Kashmir hold on to India and look up to her?

Therefore, it is a matter of vital importance today that we must curb and check and put an end to both conscious and unconscious communal thought in India. There can be no compromise with that and no quarter can be given. Only then can we realise true freedom and make progress. Only then can we live up to the old traditions of our country and to the heritage of our great movement for freedom.

.... There is also the cry of having what is called one culture for India whatever that might be. India has a basic cultural outlook of her own, but it has been enriched in the distant past by numerous streams coming from various parts of Asia and, in later days, from the Western world. All these are intimate parts of India now and have been woven into her rich and intricate pattern. If we try to deprive ourselves of something that has grown with us and is part of us, we grow the poorer for it and we start a process of disruption which is bad for us politically, culturally and in the domain of the spirit.

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Nehru warned¹⁹ that there was a reactionary force in the country which was only waiting to get an opportunity to come into its own. This reactionary communal element had come on the surface during the immediate post-partition period and in some parts begun to lead the country. If democratic minded people fought among themselves they would only help these elements to come up and sweep aside all progressive forces.

These Jagirdars and other moneyed people cannot come out openly and ask people to support them in keeping intact their vested interests. Nobody will agree with a Jagirdar that Jagirdari should be retained. In fact, these reactionary elements, opposed to all social and economic progress, cannot face us in the open. So all such elements have found in the communal organisations the only means of keeping intact their vested interests.

The leaders of the communal organizations always took

exceptions to his (Nehru's) calling them communal. When he called the Jan Sangh a communal body and the Hindu Mahasabha a communal organization which they certainly were, Jan Sangh and Hindu Mahasabha leaders said that they were not communal. They argued their doors were open to all communities. But people had to see what the leaders of the communal organizations stood for, all these years, what their traditions were and what their work was like. By merely saying that the doors of the Jan Sangh and the Hindu Mahasabha were open to all, the communal character of these organizations could not be hidden.

Nehru said that the Hindu Mahasabha wanted reunion between India and Pakistan. The Hindu Mahasabha talked glibly of it. But could any man with any intelligence seriously think that this was possible. The people in Pakistan, lakhs and crores of them, had little love for India. They would not agree to reunion.

How was this reunion to be achieved then? The only way left was through force. He would say even if this reunion was possible through force, it would be utterly wrong and lead to only chaos and further problems for the country. The very factor which gave rise to partition might arise again.

"I tell you that these communal elements indulge in this talk of reunion for the sake of playing to the gallery or making some people happy, but remember, most of the present day communal leaders accepted partition. Not only that; they even recommended partition and welcomed it. It is fantastic and amazing how these very leaders today talk of reunion."

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[Speaking at Bombay]²⁰ Nehru condemned the communal organizations who, he said, were doing everything to catch the imagination of the people during the elections and retarded the progress of the country. "These communal organizations in various names are rearing their dirty

heads. As long as I am the Prime Minister of India I shall fight them with all my strength. He named the Ramrajya Parishad, Jan Sangh, the RSS and said they were "reactionary parties in attractive names".

"These communal parties were helped and financed by some princes and Jagirdars, particularly in Rajasthan. They have no policy, no object and no principles. I shall not allow them to lift their heads."

Communal passion was one of the greatest contributory causes for the downfall of the nation in the past. "We were divided among ourselves in our culture, language, dress and caste or race. Our internal weakness invited foreign aggressors.

"I can never forget the disaster which the communal passion spelt in North India in the recent past. Heinous acts had been committed in the wake of partition in 1947 both in India and Pakistan. We cannot apportion the blame on Pakistan alone. Communalism in India too was responsible for the bloodshed and murders of innocent lives.

"In spite of the bitter memory communalism is being encouraged today in certain quarters and the number of such organizations is increasing."

[Nehru] appealed for unity and said no amount of economic policies and development projects would be of any use if the people were divided.

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[Speaking at Bhopal, Nehru condemned communal organizations which were trying to confuse the people's mind in the name of religion and culture.]²¹

They were, he said, really insulting Indian culture and religion. The people should understand the game of these organizations, which were backed by the big Jagirdars, big Zamindars and capitalists. These vested interests wanted to prevent common people from solving their problems, emancipating themselves from the curse of poverty and raising their standard of living.

Making special references to Hindu Mahasabha, Nehru said, "I get a bad taste in my mouth when I take the name of this organization. This is the same organization which has a big hand in the murder of Mahatma Gandhi. I am surprised when candidates standing on the Hindu Mahasabha ticket talk of civil liberties. India enjoys far greater civil liberties than many countries in the world. Even members of an organization like the Hindu Mahasabha, whose leaders gloat over the murder of Mahatma Gandhi, the greatest Indian we have produced, enjoy civil liberties here."

Nehru warned the people of the activities of these communal organisations and said the people should not let them perpetrate a fraud on them. If the people allowed themselves to be affected by this communal ideology they would enter into a jungle of castes and sub-castes and religious differences and what not. If that happened the country would go down as it had always gone down in the past when people entertained such thoughts.

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Referring²² to communal disturbances in Bharatpur and nearby places after the partition, Nehru said that certain groups had committed atrocities and created disturbances. "I consider their conduct as treacherous to the nation. They do so to destroy the unity of India, hoping that in the chaos that would result they could retain their privileges. These people did not like the freedom movement and did not want the people to come into their own. So when they saw the old pattern changing, they, under the name of religion committed acts which amount to treachery of the first order."

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[Speaking at Nagpur Nehru said:]²³ Not one of the communal organizations had any economic programme for the betterment of the people. They had always depended on wealthy patrons for funds.

He mentioned RSS, the Jan Sangh and the Hindu Mahasabha and asked people to keep themselves aloof from their activities. The RSS, an organization, which was born in Nagpur, proposed to be non-political body. But Nehru said, they all knew that it was a political body, though its leaders worked secretly. The Jan Sangh and the Hindu Mahasabha had no public support.

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[Speaking at Delhi Nehru referred to Jan Sangh and said]²⁴... its president, Dr. S. P. Mookerjee, had not put forward any concrete programme except that they should march on Lahore. He did not see how any could make such an irresponsible statement. Further Dr. Mookerjee had accused the Indian Government of entering into a secret pact with Pakistan over Kashmir without consulting him... even after he had contradicted it, Dr. Mookerjee had persisted in the statement. This was amazing because even if his (Nehru's) word was doubted it was evident that he could not dare contradict something which if true was sure to come out sooner or later. If this was the standard of their President's election propaganda, he wondered what lesser members of the Jan Sangh were saying.

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[At Karnal Nehru said:]²⁵ Partition was not only the responsibility of the Congress but also of other parties, including the Akali Dal and the Mahasabha. The consent of these organizations, now vociferous in their accusation against the Congress, had also been obtained to the partition plan in an attempt to clear the body politic of the communal virus. It was a painful operation on the body of India but the Congress tolerated it in the hope that communalism would be banished from the land. The communalism of the Muslim League pattern went away to Pakistan, but unfortunately a new type of communalism had reared its ugly head in India.

Nehru warned the people of the "Hymn of hate" sung by communal organizations and said that their harmful propaganda would compel the Government to postpone their plans for the prosperity of the country. These organizations had only one programme—that of abusing the Congress and the Government. "It is easy to say that they are protecting culture and religion but in actual practice they want to achieve their object by violent methods. We must resist communalism at all costs."

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*Jan Sangh-Hindu Mahasabha-Akali Dal Combine*²⁶

Referring to Jan Sangh, which he called an off-shot of the Hindu Mahasabha, Nehru said its president had recently talked of marching to Lahore. "Fantastic nonsense; do they want civil war in this country."

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Referring to Dr. Mookerjee's disclaimer that the Jan Sangh was not a communal organization, Nehru said, "If there is any organization in India which is really communal it is the Jan Sangh. It is a wholly reactionary organization. All the reactionary people in India—I say this deliberately—princes and Jagirdars, who are to my mind the real backward classes, are behind the Jan Sangh. They are financing it."

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Addressing²⁸ a meeting at Patiala where about 50 supporters of the Akali party demonstrated and shouted slogans in support of a Punjabi speaking State, Nehru said communalism in any form—Hindu, Muslim, Sikh—should be put down. "The Akali Party has no ideology, no programme and no aims. They say the Panth is in danger, but instead of fighting for the Panth they ally themselves with Hindu communalists".

Nehru said the Congress was not against the formation

of linguistic provinces, but so long as a demand for a linguistic province was wedded to communalism, even where it was otherwise legitimate, the Congress could not agree to it.

....People who wanted a Punjabi speaking province must first eschew communalism. Then alone the question of creating a province could be taken up....

Referring to partition he said, "Our dream of freedom materialized but the country was divided. Of course, we were forced to consent to the division. We thought, let us divide but still work together. Then communal troubles started and people went mad. Our fair name in the world was tarnished. Englishmen used to say, 'If we give you freedom, you will quarrel'. Quarrel we did. But we defeated the communal forces and saved our honour.

"I thought that after partition and the riots the poison had been removed. I am sorry to find that it still remains. If there were no communal bodies in India, there would have been no riots and no partition and we would have progressed much faster. We have not learned by our mistakes and the poison of Hindu and Sikh communalism is spreading again. There is a cry of Panth in danger."

"If the Panth was really in danger it should be defended. But if we mix religion with politics and we fight among ourselves on false communal cries, the national forces are weakened and the Panth does not become safe.

"Anyway, to say in one breath that the Panth is in danger and then to join hands with the Hindu Mahasabha does not make sense. The Akali politics changes daily. It has no principles and no ideology. Sometimes the Akalis are against the Congress and sometimes they are with it. Sometimes they were with the Muslim League and sometimes they were against it.

"Such opportunist politics will not pay. The sacred name of the Panth should not be dragged into politics."

He said the Akali Dal had alleged that the Congress was responsible for the partition. On the contrary, it was the

Akali Dal, he added, which accepted partition first and insisted that it should be implemented immediately. Now the Akalis demanded a Punjabi-speaking province. Speaking as Prime Minister, he would say that even if a legitimate demand was presented under a communal garb, he would not accept it. As long as the communal cry was raised, there would be no Punjabi speaking province. He would not allow the creation of a province which would be weak and dis-united.

Warming up, he said: "I will not allow India to be divided again. I will not allow any further trouble. If there is trouble in any part of India I would put it down with all my strength.

"If any one says the Sikhs can be suppressed, he is wrong. The Sikhs are a brave people and they have a glorious history. If the Akalis think that the Sikhs will be suppressed by the Hindus, on what basis do they join with the Jan Sangh, which stands for a Hindu Rashtra? The only thing in common between the Akalis and the Jan Sangh is narrow communalism."

Nehru described Jan Sangh as the illegitimate child of RSS and said it had raised the cry of "Akhand Bharat" which could be achieved only through war. "Can any responsible man talk such language? We do not believe in imperialist ideologies. We do not believe in conquering other countries."

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[Speaking at Lucknow Nehru²⁹] called on the people for an all-out war against communalism today.

Nehru said that behind the facade of religion, vested interests, particularly the Zamindars and the capitalists, were fighting against the economic policies of the Congress.

He said that despite this diversity of religions and communities a strong national solidarity would have to be developed among the people if India was not to fall a prey to foreign aggression. Those elements in the national life

which sabotaged this solidarity by emphasising religious, provincial, linguistic or caste differences were the enemies of the people and would have to be strongly suppressed.

The people of India, he said, must take up the challenge by communal organizations and maintain their solidarity in the face of the attack from communalists.

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Speaking at Lucknow,³⁰ Nehru said that communal parties which were dividing the people were doing a distinct disservice to the nation. He further said that considerations of caste and communities were anti-national.

*No Compromise with Communalism*³¹

[In a circular to Congressmen on the lesson from the first First General Elections, Nehru wrote:]

"One good thing that has emerged from these elections is our straight fight and success against communalism. That success is significant and heartening. But it is, by no means, a complete success and we have to be on our guard against it. There was a tendency in the past for Congress to compromise with it or to ignore it for fear of consequences. There should be no such compromise in future. Where we fight it in a straight and honest way, we win, where we temporise with it, we loose.

* * * *

[The Congress Executive Committee at its meeting held in Calcutta adopted a resolution on communalism. Nehru was the president of the Congress at that time. The resolution reads:]^{31a}

"It has been the policy of the Congress to build up the unity of India and to combat all disruptive and separatist tendencies. In furtherance of this policy it has opposed communalism. The AICC expresses its deep gratification at the overwhelming response of the electorate in favour of this policy and in rejection of communalism. This response, however, must not lead Congressmen or others to think that

the danger from communal tendencies is wholly over. Communal and separatist tendencies still exist in various forms in the country and had to be constantly watched from whatever section of the community, whether Hindu, Muslim, Sikh or any other, they might arise.

As some misunderstandings have risen on this subject the AICC declares that there should be no alliance, co-operation or understanding, explicit or implicit, between the Congress and an organization which is essentially communal in character, whatever its designation might be. While the menace of communalism has been effectively countered, another danger has come to the surface and has been very noticeable in some of the elections. This is casteism. The AICC considers this tendency to be very injurious and a danger to the community. It runs counter to the basic spirit of the Constitution of India. Any furtherance or encouragement of casteism, more especially for political purposes is violation of the object of the Congress and its basic principles and must not be permitted."

* * * *

I³² need not advance any argument before this House in regard to violence, but may I remind this House... that the predecessor of this Parliament, officially by resolution condemned communalism and has directed Government not to have anything to do with communal organizations... the Government is not going to give the slightest encouragement to any communal organization, whether it is Hindu or Muslim or Sikh or Parsi or any other. That is the official policy of Government which we intend pursuing.

* * * *

Cricket, Cow, Code and Communalism

Nehru, [speaking at Sanchi],³³ warned communal organizations that if they continued to create disruption and indulged in misguiding people, strong measures would have

to be taken. Referring to a pamphlet demanding a ban on cow slaughter given to him on his way to the public meeting Nehru said that people should not be misguided by mischievous propaganda which had political designs. Those who shouted slogans for the protection of cow wanted to rouse religious feelings of the people to serve their own purpose. He warned the people against those bent upon creating hooliganism.

He would appreciate if, instead of shouting slogans, those people would improve the deplorable condition of the cows.

Nehru referred to remarks made against him in another pamphlet and to have been distributed by Hindu Mahasabha, and said communal organizations, such as Mahasabha, RSS and the Jan Sangh, were attempting to disturb the peace of the country. The Mahasabha had been liberally treated so far, he added, but if it continued to create disruption and indulged in misguiding the people, strict measures would have to be taken.

Communal organizations claiming to be the saviours of the Hindu path, were treading on the same path which was followed by the Muslim League, ultimately leading to Partition. The activities of these organizations in India were very harmful.

* * * *

He is reported³⁴ to have said that the present Parliament was not bound by the decision of the last Parliament in regard to the Hindu Code. The agitation for the ban on cow slaughter was based on sentiment. The question was whether India was a political or a religious nation. Any step to be taken should, naturally, reflect these considerations. A constructive approach was, therefore, needed.

Certain parties, Nehru is understood to have pointed out, were taking political advantage of the East Bengal refugee situation. In Jammu, he is understood to have added, the causes of the agitation were essentially economic, like land and employment. But the Praja Parishad was creating

trouble. The Parishad had branches in Punjab and Delhi and was trying to make Jammu the base of its activities.

* * * *

Referring³⁵ to Dr. Khare's declared intention of picketing the cricket match between Pakistan and the Central Zone, Nehru said [at Sewagram], this showed nothing but 'petty mindedness' on the part of people who could not think on broad lines.

He said, that parties such as the Hindu Mahasabha, the Jan Sangh and the RSS talked of 'Bharatiya Culture' and yet were laying emphasis on things which led to the very weakening and downfall of Bharat in the past. India had in the early stages kept her doors open and prompted exchange of ideas and people. Traces of her culture were visible from Greece in the West to Indonesia in the East.

Communalism and Kashmir:

Nehru³⁶ referred to communal groups and said, "They are thinking of steps approaching war. We have therefore to be clear whether our aim and objective is war or otherwise." Continuing he said, "I am not prepared to say the position of minorities in India is wholly satisfactory. I want to be truthful. One thing reacts on the other. There is a vast difference in the way in which our Government behaves in this matter and the behaviour of the Pakistan Government. We try with a measure of success to be fair to all concerned, though we may not succeed all the time. There are, however, forces in India and Pakistan which are completely similar in their outlook, which is one of creating trouble. Are we to follow Pakistan and play into the hands of similar groups in India? Observing of a protest day will make the problem worse." Replying to a question, he said, "Responsible people in the country should try to see some distance ahead. Our relations with Pakistan are of basic importance in the long run. This follows from the past history and present geography of the two countries. A

common frontier of 2,000 miles points to that. The vast majority in Pakistan belong to the same racial and cultural stock as ourselves. Abroad, India and Pakistan hold together in most matters. Today in Pakistan and in India the vast majority of people have no ill will towards each other. They may get excited now and then. Unfortunately, organizations like the Muslim League follow a policy which creates conflicts. The common people of Pakistan are decent lot and want peace and co-operation.

* * * *

Addressing a meeting in Delhi,³⁷ Nehru strongly criticised the Jan Sangh, the Hindu Mahasabha and the Praja Parishad, who without understanding the problem of Kashmir, were trying to complicate matters by raising slogans and acting in a manner which might harm both Kashmir and India. He further said that the activities of Praja Parishad were helping Pakistan. Every thing done by Praja Parishad was published in Pakistan papers prominently. He said the Jan Sangh and the Praja Parishad by their activities wanted to destroy the ties with which we were bound with Kashmiris.

* * * *

[Speaking³⁸ on the Independence Day from the rampart of Red Fort on 15th August 1952, Nehru mentioned dangers facing the country: the cult of violence, communalism, and the selfishness and greed of profiteers and black marketeers.]

He said that the communal method was only capable of further weakening the country and that the religious bigots and communal leaders had refused to learn any lesson from the past. "We have to beware of these communal elements as well as of the selfish greedy people who, through fraud and falsehood, try to make money, and harm the country. These are the three ways which, if not checked, will destroy our country."

* * * *

[Nehru speaking at a public meeting in Delhi strongly disapproved of Praja Parishad agitation. He thought their communal outlook was helpful to Pakistan.³⁹]

Kashmir was of vital importance to India as a test case to disprove the two-nation theory on which Pakistan was created. The Parishad's stand weakened that case considerably. Pakistani papers played up their activities because Pakistan could thereby stir up Muslim communal feelings.

* * * *

[Nehru in reply to a short notice question in Lok Sabha made the following statement on the Praja Parishad agitation : ⁴⁰]

The object of it were stated to be :

- (1) Complete accession of the state to India,
- (2) The use of the Indian flag to the exclusion of the State Flag, and
- (3) Self-determination for the people of Jammu if there is no complete accession to the Union of India.

This agitation took an aggressive form immediately after the election of Yuvaraj Karan Singh as the Sadar-i-Riyasat of the State. When the Sadar-i-Riyasat came to Jammu on November 24th, the Praja Parishad asked the people to boycott his reception and to observe *hartal*. As a matter of fact, Shri Karan Singh received a warm welcome from large crowds in Jammu city. Some Praja Parishad volunteers tried to interfere with this reception by destroying some of the gates and decorations that had been erected by the people. Stones were thrown on the cars following the Sadar-i-Riyasat's car. There was defiance of authority in various ways and provocative speeches were made. The State Government, however, took no action against the demonstrators or the Parishad for two days while this continued. . . . In Jammu City and in Samba, Kathua, Akhnoor, Ranbir-singhpura and Bhadarwah, active defiance of the law, accompanied by intimidation, hooliganism and violence, continued to take place. A number of officers and police con-

stables were injured by stones being thrown at them. On the 27th November the police at Samba were stoned heavily and some were injured. Thereupon they opened fire, but there was no casualty.

On November 28th, the Additional District Magistrate of Udampur and several police constables were injured by stones being thrown at them by Praja Parishad volunteers.

On December 2nd, Praja Parishad volunteers and supporters raided a Government School at Akhnoor, destroyed the furniture and made a bonfire of papers and charts.

On December 3rd, the Magistrate on duty, the Inspector of Police and other police officials and constables at Udampur were injured, some seriously by stones being thrown at them.

On December 5th, an armed crowd led by Praja Parishad volunteers attempted to attack the Tehsil Treasury at Ranbirsinghpura. Many among this crowd carried spears, axes and lathis. The treasury guards fired, but there was no casualty.

There were many other instances of stone-throwing and destruction by Praja Parishad volunteers. According to our information, firing was resorted to by the police on two occasions, as mentioned above. On both the occasions firing appears to have been in the air and there was no casualty. . . .

Among other activities of the Praja Parishad volunteers has been to help some landlords to take possession forcibly of the lands from which they had been dispossessed under the land reform schemes. . . .

The Praja Parishad movement has been very far from peaceful. In view of the agreement between the Government of India and the Government of Jammu and Kashmir, the agitation is as much directed against the Government of India, and this Parliament which approved of the agreement and of the steps taken thereunder, as against the Government of Jammu and Kashmir State. Although demand is made for complete accession to India, the steps taken must obviously have a contrary effect. Indeed, it is interesting to

note that the Praja Parishad agitation has been welcomed by certain people and newspapers in Pakistan and the 'Azad' Radio has described the volunteers of the Praja Parishad as "the heroes of the Praja Parishad." It is also worth noting that this agitation synchronised with the consideration of the Kashmir issue in the Security Council.

It would appear, therefore, that the real objective of this agitation is something other than what has been proclaimed. The leaders of the Praja Parishad have been in constant touch with leaders of some organizations in India and more especially in East Punjab and Delhi. These organizations are the Bharatiya Jan Sangh, Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh and the Hindu Mahasabha. The leaders of Bharatiya Jan Sangh and Hindu Mahasabha have publicly supported the Parishad's agitation and have called for observance of 'Jammu Day'. The RSS has taken a special interest in the agitation....

Master Tara Singh also issued a statement supporting the Praja Parishad's agitation in Jammu.... We have received information that the Praja Parishad has collected some money in the Punjab and Delhi. Also that rations and some arms and ammunitions have been stocked.

It would appear that the organizers of this movement and some of their sympathisers in other parts of India look upon this agitation as something not affecting Jammu Province only but having a larger significance. Jammu Province is supposed to be the base of operations....

The house will appreciate the objectionable, anti-social, reactionary and subversive character of this movement.

* * * *

[Speaking⁴¹ on admissibility or not of an adjournment motion on *Satyagraha* in Jammu in Lok Sabha, Nehru said:]

Reference has been made in these adjournment motions to *satyagraha* movement and *lathi* charging of innocent people and all that, I do not know what my hon. friend

means by *Satyagraha* but I have never come across anything more remote from *Satyagraha* than what is taking place in Jammu & Kashmir.

[He, further, said:] I am not discussing the matter and I do suggest, Sir, that some hon. members in this House are trying to encourage utterly undesirable activities there.

[On being questioned he said:] I have proof of that.

[On being asked who these members were he replied:] Hon. Members of the Hindu Mahasabha in this House.

[He went on to say:] Is not the adjournment motion itself in support of the undesirable activities? I am prepared to justify every word of what I say.

[Further on] It is a very simple matter that some people are indulging in disorderly activities in the State. Among other activities were a number of raids on boys' and girls' schools, burning of books and other scandalous state of affairs and if I were there, I would have taken sterner measures than the Jammu and Kashmir Government has taken. . . . I am perfectly prepared to state such facts as are in my possession for the information of the House. Apart from the legal aspect of it, I am prepared to place before this House all such facts as I can gather.

* * * *

Hindu Communalism and States' Reorganisation

Nehru⁴² deplored violent methods of speech and demonstration. The word *Satyagraha* was being bandied about today and what was happening these days in the name of *Satyagraha* was something which was a million miles away from what Mahatma had preached. "It has become a joke. Are we becoming an opera for the whole world to laugh at?"

He would like to tell Mr. Chatterjee, Nehru added, that so far as he could see, there was nothing "more mischievous" than the Punjab Hindu Mahasabha agitation against reorganisation. He might see some reason for the

people in the rest of India like Gujarat, Maharashtra and Karnataka to be agitated. But there was not an atom of reason behind the Punjab agitation.

While we could not claim that the solutions reached were the ideal solutions, Mr. Nehru reminded the House that after prolonged consultations, they had reached the conclusion of the journey.

[He was referring to the Maha Punjab movement led by Maha Punjab Samiti consisting of Jan Sangh, Hindu Mahasabha and other right-wing parties against the demand of Punjabi Suba and Regional Committee formula.]

* * * *

"Religious Leaders' " Agitation

[Speaking⁴³ in New Delhi, Nehru said that he was strongly of] the view that newspapers spreading communal hatred should be checked. While he mentioned that he was in favour of freedom of opinion, he did not want newspapers, seeking to increase their circulations, to spread communal hatred. He wished that the law could be amended in such a way that action could be taken against such newspapers. . . .

PTI adds that Nehru said he would suggest to the Home Minister, that legislation be brought forward as soon as possible to stop newspapers from propagating communal hatred. "It has become absolutely intolerable that a newspaper should spread utter falsehoods and incite communal passions and make money in the bargain. Instead of this such a newspaper should be punished". . . .

[He] said that the way the Muslim League had spread poison in India was well known. Yet some people in India wanted to imitate the League. The Hindu Mahasabha, the Jan Sangh, and the RSS had donned the same cloak and had the same mind and ways—to incite people in the name of religion.

In Delhi also some people were going about inciting the

people by saying that the Gita had been desecrated at Aligarh. "Something wrong happened at Aligarh and we are trying to amend by doing some wrongs. To take out processions and loot the shops of Muslims and others. . . . is very wrong. From both sides in the name of religion, improper things are being done and innocent people are the sufferers. There had been some deaths too. All this is due to either mischief or ignorance. It will only vitiate the atmosphere of the country." The report that a copy of the Gita was burnt at Aligarh was "incorrect".

[Nehru] said that several opposition parties were trying to attract votes in the forthcoming election. As the election approached there was intense activity in the political organizations of the country. It would have been better if the discussion had been confined to fundamental policy issues and people were allowed the opportunity to express their opinion on these matters. But unfortunately that was not so.

In the small troubles that the country had faced in the past few months, the communists, the Hindu Mahasabha, the Jan Sangh and the Praja Socialists Parties had exploited the situation in a way which led to violence.

* * * *

Nehru⁴⁴ called the communal parties, particularly the Hindu communal organizations, worse than communists. They had no aims before them and no economic programme. They had no faith in democracy like the socialists or others. They wanted only to establish a "Hindu Rashtra". Theirs was the way of violence.

* * * *

In India today⁴⁵ there were both progressive and reactionary forces. Let there be no mistake about it; both were pretty strong. There was, however, this difference, that the strength of the reactionary forces was largely the strength of inertia, that inertia could be utilised on occasions.

Recently there was an agitation and counter-agitation

about the book "Religious Leaders"; agitation on the part of some Muslims and counter-agitation on the part of the Hindus. There, one could see the reactionary forces at work. Normally they could not function very much but as soon as they got "a peg to hang on", immediately they made a nuisance of themselves and played on the bigotry and passions and the inertia of the masses. The organizations that did this were communal organizations, whether they were Hindu or Muslim or Sikh or any other.

In a sense these organizations have no other strength except that they could possibly get from exploiting these weaknesses of the masses.

* * * *

Museum Pieces

In his criticism⁴⁶ of opposition parties, Nehru also referred to the Hindu Mahasabha, Ram Rajya Parishad and the Jan Sangh and said he wonders how people could join these organizations "whose policies will only result in civil war and chaos in the country."

All these parties stood for ideas which would bring about the "destruction of the country".

The Jan Sangh, he said, stood for "Hindu Rashtra" and not for "Bharat Rashtra", "How can we complain of certain parties in Pakistan spreading hatred towards India when we have such parties in this country?" he asked.

"The Muslim League left for Pakistan when India became free. But it left its traces in the form of these parties in this country."

Some of these parties, particularly the Jan Sangh, talked of Akhand Bharat, but they did not say how they proposed to achieve their objective—whether through waging war or through any other methods. Such a talk was foolish.

"There is freedom in this country for all—the clever as well as the foolish. Here is an instance of freedom for foolishness", he observed. The Prime Minister said if the

"Akhand Bharat" of the Jan Sangh concept was achieved then all that had been achieved by India in the past 10 years would be lost. "In the name of Dharma these organizations are deceiving you", he warned.

* * * *

[Speaking at Lucknow Nehru⁴⁷] described opposition parties as "museum pieces" depicting the past and having no link whatsoever with the present.

The Hindu Mahasabha, he said, was following in the "footprints of the Pakistan people. When the Pakistanis raised the slogan of "An Islamic State", the Hindu Mahasabha raised the cry of "A Hindu Rashtra"—even though the Hindu Mahasabha was opposed to partition and Pakistan. Such parties, he said, wanted to revise century-old traditions and put "India's clock back".

* * * *

[Speaking at Hyderabad Nehru said]⁴⁸ that US military aid to Pakistan and Britain's continuing support of Pakistan on the two-nation theory could lead to a dangerous situation and bring conflict in its wake.

He said that the Kashmir question acquired a special importance in the context of US military aid in Pakistan and Britain's old attitudes "to India's freedom". . . .

In this freedom movement, the people of Kashmir had close connections with the Indian freedom movement. "The people of Kashmir, the majority of whom are Muslims, had repudiated the two-nation theory all along. The Hindus and Muslims of Kashmir have many common bonds and they opposed the two-nation concept".

He said that it was very strange that, even after 10 years of India's freedom, Britain should still support this two-nation concept.

"It appears that India's going out of possession of Britain has caused a severe blow to their hearts".

* * * *

Nehru⁴⁹ said that the Muslim League, which went out of India on the creation of Pakistan, had surprisingly enough, left "a small tail in this part of Malabar".

He was against communalists of all sorts, whether Hindu, Muslim or Christian. He appealed to the Muslims of Malabar to take part in India's march towards national welfare. Kerala could not attain progress unless its three main communities—Hindus, Muslims and Christians—co-operated with one another.

If the Muslims of Kerala wanted isolation born out of communal politics, he could not help them but only feel sorry for them.

* * * *

Nehru⁵⁰ said that if communal approach is accepted, India would break up into bits and face complete ruin.

These communal parties talked of "Akhand Bharat" without realizing what it meant. "We paid a price for our freedom by accepting partition of the country. Whether it was right step or wrong is another matter. But partition is today an accomplished fact and those who talk of "Akhand Bharat" wish to attain their objective by a war. These are irresponsible approaches which are made only to deceive people and catch votes."

* * * *

There⁵¹ could be no compromise on the issue of communalism, Hindu communalism or Muslim communalism, as it was a challenge to Indian nationhood and Indian nationalism.

1. *The Statesman* (Delhi) February 15, 1948.

2. The Government of India on the murder of Gandhiji declared the RSS unlawful. The Government communique published in the *Statesman* of February 5, 1948, reads:

"... The Government have, however, noticed with regret that in practice members of the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh have not adhered to

their proposed ideals. Undesirable and even dangerous action has been carried on by members of the Sangh.

"It has been found that in several parts of the country individual members of the RSSS have indulged in acts of violence involving arson, robbery, dacoity and murder and have collected illicit arms and ammunition. They have been found circulating leaflets exhorting people to resort to terrorist methods, to collect fire arms, to create disaffection against the Government and suborn the police and military.

"These activities have been carried on under the cloak of secrecy, and the Government have considered from time to time how far these activities rendered it incumbent on them to deal with the Sangh in a corporate capacity.

"The objectionable and harmful activities of the Sangh, however, continued unabated and the cult of violence sponsored and inspired by the activities of the Sangh has claimed many victims. The latest and the most pernicious to fall was Mahatma Gandhi.

"In these circumstances, it is the bounden duty of the Government to take effective measures to curb the reappearance of violence in a virulent form and as a first step to this end, they have decided to declare the Sangh as an unlawful association..."

The Government of India's notification in a *Gazette of India Extraordinary* dated February 8, 1948, reads:

"All available members of the negotiating committee of the States which have individual representation in the Constituent Assembly having been individually consulted by the Governor-General, and having considered the material placed before them in regard to the activities of the RSSS in Alwar State, the possible complicity of this organization in the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi and other serious crimes with the support or connivance of the State Administration, agree that there are *prima facie* grounds for:

- (1) Asking His Highness the Maharaja of Alwar and Dr. Khare, Prime Minister of Alwar, to remain outside Alwar State temporarily in order that there should be no question of investigations of the allegations being in any way prejudiced; and
- (2) The Administration of the State being carried on, as a temporary measure, by an Administrator appointed by the Ministry of States.

"The Government of India accept the above advice and has decided that His Highness the Maharaja of Alwar and Dr. Khare, Prime Minister of Alwar State, should remain outside Alwar and has appointed an Administrator to carry on the administration of the State as a temporary measure. Arrangements have been accordingly made with immediate effect".

"The Maharaja of Alwar in a communication to the States Minister said, "...I am shocked to note the contents of this document referring to the activities of the RSSS in Alwar State, the possible complicity of this organization in the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi and other serious crimes with the support or connivance of the State Administration.

"It is extremely painful for me even to think that such an allegation should have been made against my State. As, however, the allegation is so grave, I do not wish to interfere in the least in the proposed investigations of the allegations and wish the position of my State to be cleared as best and as soon as possible. It is therefore ordered that the services of Dr. Khare, the Prime Minister of the State, be dispensed with'."

We reproduce the letter written by Mr. Pyarelal to T. B. Sapru describing the picketing by Hindu Mahasabha members in front of the Wardha Ashram on the eve of Gandhi-Jinnah talks in 1944 from *Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase*, Vol. I, page 86.

"You must have seen in the papers a report of the doings of the [Hindu Mahasabha] picketers at Sevagram....

"On the first day, the leader of the batch had blurted out that this was only the first step and, if necessary, force would be used to prevent Bapu from going to meet Jinnah. Yesterday they gave intimation that they would physically prevent him from going out of the hut, and planted pickets at all the three exits leading out of the hut.

"This morning I had an intimation on the telephone from the District Superintendent of Police that they intended serious mischief, and, therefore, the police would be compelled to take action. Bapu had proposed to go all alone in their midst and proceed to Wardha (railway station) on foot unless they themselves changed their mind and asked him to get into the car.... just before his departure, the D.S.P. came and said that he had arrested the picketers after giving them due notice, when all persuasion had failed....

"The leader of the picketers appeared to be very highly strung, fanatical and of a neurotic type, which caused some anxiety. Searching of his person after arrest revealed a full size dagger. When the police officer who arrested him banteringly remarked that at any rate he (the picketer) had had the satisfaction of becoming a martyr, quick came the reply, 'No, that will be when some one assassinates Gandhi.' 'Why not leave it to the leaders to settle it among themselves? For instance, Savarkar, the Hindu Mahasabha leader might come and do the job,' jocularly remarked the police officer in question. The reply was, 'That will be too great an honour for Gandhiji. The *Jamadar* will be quite enough for the purpose.'

The person referred to as *jamadar* was his fellow picketer Nathuram Vinayak Godse, who three and half years later killed Gandhiji.

The then Union Home Secretary (1948) pointed out that "the Government of India have ample evidence in their possession implicating both the RSS and its individual members in systematic acts of violence." The Home Minister pointed out that the members of the RSS indulged in attacking "innocent and helpless men, women and children".

3. The then Home Minister, Sardar Patel, pointed out that "the RSS men expressed joy and distributed sweets after Gandhiji's death."

4. *The Statesman* (Delhi), March 15, 1948.

5. *Ibid.*, April 4, 1948.

6. *Ibid.*, July 7, 1951.

7. *Ibid.*, July 8, 1951.
8. *Ibid.*, July 14, 1951.
9. *Ibid.*, August 22, 1951.
10. *Ibid.*, July 30, 1951.
11. *Ibid.*, August 12, 1951.
12. *Ibid.*, August 24, 1951.
13. *Ibid.*, September 13, 1951.
14. *Ibid.*, September 10, 1951.
15. *Ibid.*, September 27, 1951.
16. *Ibid.*, October 3, 1951.
17. *Ibid.*, October 3, 1951.
18. *Ibid.*, October 19, 1951.
19. *Ibid.*, October 15, 1951.
20. *Ibid.*, November 24, 1951.
21. *Ibid.*, December 4, 1951.
22. *Ibid.*, December 10, 1951.
23. *Ibid.*, December 18, 1951.
24. *Ibid.*, December 21, 1951.
25. *Ibid.*, December 22, 1951.
26. *Ibid.*, December 27, 1951.
27. *Ibid.*, December 12, 1951.
28. *Ibid.*, January 5, 1952.
29. *Ibid.*, January 17, 1952.
30. *Ibid.*, January 22, 1952.
31. *Ibid.*, February 15, 1952.
- 31(a). *Ibid.*, March 22, 1952.
32. *Lok Sabha Debates*: part 2, July, 1952, p. 3257.
33. *The Statesman* (Delhi), November 30, 1952.
34. *Ibid.*, December 22, 1952.
35. *Ibid.*, November 2, 1952.
36. *Ibid.*, November 23, 1952.
37. *Ibid.*, July 7, 1952.
38. *Ibid.*, August 16, 1952.
39. *Ibid.*, April 14, 1952.
40. *Lok Sabha Debates*: part 1, November-December, 1952, pp. 1450-54.
41. *Lok Sabha Debates*: part 2, December, 1952, pp. 1572-75.
42. *The Statesman* (Delhi), August 11, 1956.
43. *Ibid.*, September 24, 1956.
44. *Ibid.*, October 8, 1956.
45. *Ibid.*, October 26, 1956.
46. *Ibid.*, January 21, 1957.
47. *Ibid.*, February 2, 1957.
48. *Ibid.*, February 23, 1957.
49. *Ibid.*, February 26, 1957.
50. *Ibid.*, March 1, 1957.
51. *Ibid.*, February 27, 1957.

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Presenting Nehru's views on communalism in his own words and the background against which he expressed these views.

Including important extracts from Nehru's writings, speeches, statements up to 1957. Selected and edited, with introductory, historical and other interpretative commentary by

N. L. GUPTA

The primary purpose of the book is to present the views of Nehru on communalism, which has been a canker in the politics of India. It is a danger and a challenge to India's secularism, the very nationhood.

Nehru fought all through his life against communalism, and warned the people of India that it is a greater danger to India than even foreign attack. It eats into the vitals of the nation from inside. It is Indian version of fascism.

The book provides along with Nehru's views the historical background in which the communal rivalries grew.

What he thought and said of communalism stands and shall go a long way to comprehend the nature of the problem of communalism in this subcontinent.

1. '[Communalism] is in fact the Indian version of fascism.'
— NEHRU.

2. 'The bulwark of communalism today is political reaction and so we find that communal leaders inevitably tend to become reactionaries in political and economic matters. Groups of upper class people try to cover up their own class interests by making it appear that they stand for the communal demands of religious minorities or majorities.' — NEHRU.

3. '[Communalists] say something dangerous for the future of India from any foreign country.' — N

4. 'There could be no compromise or Hindu communalism or Muslim challenge to Indian nationhood and Indian nationalism.'
— NEHRU.



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