

REJECT THE BRITISH PLAN COMMUNIST APPEAL TO THE A.I.C.C.

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After three months of haggling, which have exposed British claims of sincerity but proved their imperialistness, which have brought no honour to Indian leadership, but only the humiliation of one British award after another, which have produced in our freedom-loving people the mood of cynicism or disgust, the country is faced with a critical choice.

by **P. C. Joshi**

THE Congress leadership has decided to go into the British-manufactured institution-making Body "with a view to framing the constitution of a free, united and democratic India" (Working Committee Resolution).

There is every reason to be extremely critical of this leadership whose long record of 25 years has been one endless series of nursing illusions that have always burst, despite more and more millions that have rallied behind the Congress, despite greater and greater urge for freedom in our country.

The simple question to be posed and answered in terms of a Cabinet Mission's basic declaration of May 16 and the numerous letters exchanged is: did the British open the gate of their Indian prison-house or only set a new trap for the Indian leadership?

Indian Independence
In the British plan there is either immediate nor future independence. To call a Constitution-making Body sovereign at is not based on a prior declaration of independence is a misuse words.

Indian Unity
The greatest song is sung out Indian unity having been sed, while the truth is that can disunity has been per- and intensified.

Indian Democracy
Indian Princes have been "related independent" and dovetailed into the India of British rule.

mism, viz., that "after dealing with the British we will deal with the Princes."

It is in the States that the British are creating the new material means to stay in India. State armies are being trained and strengthened.

The British proposals are an imperialist conspiracy against the independence of our country and the future of our people.

● Where have the British quit India?

British masters of the situation.

Responsibility Of AICC

An unprecedented responsibility rests on the A.I.C.C. It has to lead and not be led by the Working Committee. It has to save the Congress from falling into the British trap.

It can do so only if it calls for a decisive break from the compromising policy and disruptive tactics that the Congress leadership has been pursuing so far.

It must call for mobilisation of Indian strength and stop all talk of British sincerity.

It must call the people into action. It must give quit orders to the British rulers and call for preparations for the final bid for power.

The issue is grave beyond words.

Will the oldest and greatest of our freedom organisations lead the battle for freedom or will its leaders walk into the imperialist trap at the cost of Indian independence and the immediate future of our freedom movement?

just basis that the Muslim masses will see through the tactics of their own reactionary leadership in relying upon the British, and the Congress will be able to get their support over the heads of their own leaders, if they resist.

The Birias have got to be thrown out of the Congress fold before expecting the common Mussalman to see that the Ishpanis and the Noons are also thrown out of the League fold.

The most important issue facing our freedom movement and which the British are able to exploit to stay longer in our land is the controversy

confidence in vested interests and bureaucracy, while discouraging and repressing the masses.

All this must immediately cease if the new forces rising to challenge imperialism are to be united in a single battle.

Every aid and encouragement must be given to people's movement in every State in their fight for popular representation, responsible Government, and self-determination.

Similarly every encouragement must be given to the struggles of the workers; peasants for their immediate demands. The Ministries are not to be a party to repress their struggles.

Besides they must take immediate measures guaranteeing a better standard of life, housing and social services for the workers. They must the peasant in his fight against landlord oppression and farm

Such a policy would lin the entire mass of workers peasants and common people against the British plan, freedom's battle.

- ★ All Power To The Constituent Assembly!
- ★ Unequivocal Declaration Of Self-Determination!
- ★ All Support To People's Struggles!

All Power To Constituent Assembly

The very basis of the British-made Constitution-making Body must be challenged and the British plan blown sky high.

The very first thing the Congress delegation should demand is ALL POWER TO THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY, so that Indian independence is recognised to begin with, its structure built through the Assembly so that its reality emerges out of it.

(i) Immediate recognition of complete independence.
(ii) Withdrawal of British troops within six months.

(iii) Blunt refusal to let the Princes come into the Constitution-making Body. Only elected representatives of the States people can represent them.

(iv) Transfer of power to a free Provisional Government.
(v) Settlement of Sterling Balances within six months.

If the British refusal, the Constitution-making Body should be broken up and the country called upon to prepare for the final struggle.

Such a step will expose the British plan to the whole world and bring the British face to face with our irrecusable aim.

Declaration Of Self-Determination

The Congress should call upon the League for co-operation in the above demands for immediate power and offer guarantees for the rule of justice in our land based on people's will, and realising people's welfare.

To inspire confidence in all communities, above all among Muslims, and open the prospect of a joint front for a joint struggle the Congress must declare for unconditional acceptance of the right of self-determination, including secession, on the basis of just national boundaries of every Indian nationality.

Only when the Congress puts its case on an entirely

over 'union' and 'partition.' Either the Congress solves the problem in a democratic manner or the British exploit it for disruptive purposes.

When the Congress offers living evidence of democratic economic rehabilitation in the interest of the common people, both Hindu and Muslim, then it will be able to plead with justice and changes of success that Planning, Customs etc., should be bold and big plans of war against poverty, disease and ignorance.

All Support To People's Struggles

The Congress leadership has trimmed its sails for compromise with the imperialist plan of slavery and division precisely when the stage in India is set for a long-drawn out and final battle against imperialism, rule and its unendurable exploitation.

The events of the past few months offer an indication of the rising temper of the Indian people.

The INA strikes, the RIN mutiny, the strikes of the police and military personnel, the gigantic strike-wave that is sweeping across India and throws tens of thousands of workers into the fight against exploitation and poverty, the growing battles of the peasants against landlord oppression, and finally the outburst of the States people's discontent in States like Kashmir, where the entire people is in revolt, clearly prove that a big upsurge is on and if the Congress fails to unite it the entire force of our people can be thrown in a final battle against imperialism.

But instead the Congress leadership pursues a policy of discouraging mass actions and people's struggle in its hunt for compromise with imperialism.

It discourages the big struggles of the States peoples, that are breaking out and only makes the Princes feel safe about their autocratic regime.

Its Ministers invariably range themselves against workers' and peasants' mass action, inspire

Against Compromising Policy

The chief responsibility for fighting against the British plan lies with the Congress and for a policy of encouraging mass struggles lies on the Left elements. The Left elements stand for no compromise. They see through the diabolical British plan and see the high temper of our people rising. Will they muster sufficient clarity and courage to speak and fight for a policy which alone saves national honour, is based on just democratic principles and implements the practical program for the next phase of our freedom movement?

By boldly advocating rejection of the plan, taking leadership of the growing struggles, and unflinching acceptance of self-determination, the Left elements can fight political compromise and disruption and rescue the country's honour.

Launch Country-Wide Campaign

The present policy of commanding the people to hold back and trust the leaders should be reversed by a country-wide campaign calling upon the people to use their own limbs against their immediate oppressors and for a better life for themselves.

All the forces of our people must be released and thus preparations for the final bid for power set afoot on just and abiding foundations.

The gravest danger that ever faces our freedom movement has to be avoided, the leaders banned from pursuing their compromising policy.

The greatest opportunity of our freedom movement is before us. To an immediate independence of our country and build a prosperous future for our people.

The alternatives are: honour or dishonour, liberty or slavery, happiness or misery, freedom or slavery. A wrong step by the Congress will cost the entire country dear. The right one will open the road to power and prosperity.

DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE INTERIM GOVT. TO ASSUME FULL POWERS

Call To Resist Imperialist Attempts To Thwart People's Will

Settle Pakistan Issue By Democratic Vote On Basis Of National Self-Determination

(The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India, now in session in Bombay, has adopted the following resolution for the Constituent Assembly, to be introduced by its representative Sonnath Lahiri)

1. This Constituent Assembly, expressing the will of the Indian people to be free and independent from the yoke of Imperialism, hereby solemnly declares India to be an independent country. It declares that, whether in British India or in the States, it is the people who are sovereign and all authority shall henceforth be derived from them.

Provisional Government

2. This Constituent Assembly calls upon the Indian members of the Interim Government, who, as the nominees of the two main popular parties and of the minorities, together enjoy the support of the overwhelming majority of our people, to act as the Provisional Government of India and to function henceforth in the name of the Indian people and not as hitherto in the name of the British King-Emperor.

All powers so far exercised by the British Government, the King-Emperor, the Viceroy and the Governors over the Indian Provinces as well as the powers of paramountcy exercised by the Viceroy over the Indian States are herewith ended.

Freedom And Independence

3. Asserting the freedom and independence of the country, the Provisional Government shall at once proceed to fulfil the following tasks:

- 1 Take immediate steps to effect the withdrawal of all British troops, as their retention on Indian soil is incompatible with Indian sovereignty, and to secure the withdrawal of Indian troops outside India as their remaining in other lands is inconsistent with India's policy of peace and freedom for all nations.
- 2 Take over all banks, industrial and transport concerns, plantations, mines, etc., owned by British capital and nationalise them.
- 3 Take steps to secure international recognition for the free Provisional Government and to enter into diplomatic relations with other countries on the basis of equality.
- 4 Negotiate a treaty with Britain on the basis of the recognition of Indian independence, equality and mutual co-operation.

Programme Of Provisional Govt.

4. This Constituent Assembly calls upon the Provisional Government to carry through the following programme for the realisation of independence, thus creating conditions for the framing of a democratic constitution.

- (i) Conversion and expansion of the present Indian Army, Navy and Air Force into a real National Army, commanded, officered and manned by Indians, owing allegiance to the people and to the cause of Indian independence.
- (ii) Full restoration and extension of civil liberties. No police or military interference against workers' strikes for better wages and living conditions, no suppression of peasant actions against landlords and hoarders. Full support to all mass demonstrations against imperialist States for democracy and freedom.
- (iii) Adoption of urgent interim measures to afford relief to the toiling masses—
 - (a) Immediate handing over of all fallow land of the Government and the landlords to the landless peasants, reduction of rents and moratorium on debts, prohibition of all evictions and levy of a steeply-graded agricultural income-tax pending abolition of landlordism.
 - (b) Immediate enactment of legislation enforcing a minimum living wage, the recognition of trade unions, and the penalisation of defaulting capitalists.
 - (c) Import of capital goods for a planned expansion and reconversion of industries to supply the urgent needs of the people.
 - (d) Control of profits to ensure supply of goods at cheap prices to the people.

This Constituent Assembly declares that all Army, Police and Civilian officers hereafter owe allegiance only to the Indian people and their representatives, and calls upon them to obey and carry out the orders of the Provisional Government in pursuance of the above programme.

It calls upon the people to be vigilant and report acts of intransigence and sabotage carried out by bureaucrats and officials in the interest of their former masters so that such cases are speedily exposed and the culprits punished.

Sovereign Constituent Assembly

5. The Provisional Government backed by the entire people in revolt shall proceed to convene a sovereign and democratic Constituent Assembly, based on adult suffrage, proportional representation and the self-determination of national units.

Pakistan And Indian Unity

6. Differences between the Indian National Congress and the All-India Muslim League on the question of Indian unity and Pakistan should be resolved by the vote of the people through the democratic application of the principle of national self-determination in the following manner:

• (i) The setting up of a Boundary Commission which proceeds immediately to redemarcate the existing Provinces and States, so that each such redemarcated unit, together with the contiguous States or parts of States, forms the unified homeland of a linguistically and culturally homogeneous people, and India is regrouped in national units such as Kerala, Karnatak, Andhra, Tamilnad, Maharashtra, Gujerat, Rajasthan, Hindustan, Bihar, Orissa, Bengal, Assam, Sindh, Baluchistan, the Punjab, Pathanland and Kashmir.

• (ii) The recognition of the right of self-determination for Provinces redistributed as new national units by the Boundary Commission. The people of each such unit (and to begin with, the people of the redemarcated Provincial part thereof) will have the unfettered right of self-determination, i.e., the right to decide by the plebiscite of the entire adult population, whether they will join the Indian Union or form a separate State. Such plebiscites will be taken, wherever demanded, before a Union Constitution is actually framed.

The endeavour of the sovereign Constituent Assembly should be to create a free Indian Union of national democratic republics—in which each constituent national republic will be free, equal and sovereign, and will have the right to secede.

The Indian States

7. The Constituent Assembly declares that the retention of 584 feudal autocrats ruling over one-third of the country is completely inconsistent with the principles of democracy, and demands that popular interim governments be formed at once in each one of these States; each of these governments should call a Constituent Assembly based on adult suffrage and proportional representation, to establish a democratic constitution and to decide the future status of the ruler.

The same Constituent Assembly should elect delegates to the all-India Constituent Assembly.

The people of every State shall decide by a plebiscite, whether the State as a whole or its corresponding parts, as the case may be, merge with the adjoining Province inhabited by the people of the same nationality.

Fundamental Rights

8. This Constituent Assembly declares that the recognition of the following Fundamental Rights and Principles should be the basis of the constitution framed by the sovereign Constituent Assembly, convened as above:

- (i) Right to bear arms.
- (ii) Land to the tillers. Abolition of landlordism and all intermediary interests between the tiller and the State.
- (iii) Right to work, ensured by rapid and all-round industrialisation and nationalisation of all key industries, big plantations, mines, means of transport and communication.
- (iv) 8-hour day, 40-hour week, guarantee of living wage, equal pay for equal work, insurance against unemployment, sickness and old age, decent housing for all employees and other measures of social security, free compulsory education for all, equal rights for women.
- (v) Right of association and organisation, right to strike, right of freedom of Press and speech.
- (vi) Rights of Minorities:

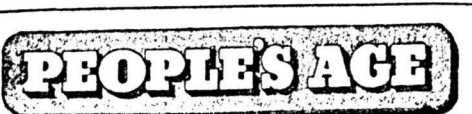
— All interspersed minorities in the new national units formed will have the rights regarding their language, education and culture guaranteed by statute, whose infringement would be punishable by law.

— All disabilities, privileges and discrimination (such as untouchability) based on caste, race or community shall be abolished by statute, whose infringement would be punishable by law.

— In order to ensure that all communities and political parties get their due representation in all legislative, administrative and executive organs the voting in all elections would be by adult suffrage and joint electorate with proportional representation.

— Rapid advancement of backward communities and tribes in economic welfare, education and culture, so as to bring them to the level of the rest of the population, must be the first charge on all governments and administrative organs.

9. This Constituent Assembly calls upon the Indian people, irrespective of caste and creed, to stand behind the Provisional Government in the fulfilment of these tasks and in support of their Declaration of Independence to resist unflinchingly all attempts of the Imperialists to thwart the people's will.



BRITISH BID TO GAIN STRANGLEHOLD OVER INDIA'S ECONOMY

Bait Of Capital Goods To Win Over Indian Industrialists

Indo-British negotiations for the settlement of India's sterling balances will soon be under way. A British mission is expected here in the middle of this month to initiate preliminary talks with the Finance Department and the Reserve Bank of India. Will these negotiations result in a complete, free and speedy payment of all our balances?

Our total credits lying with Britain today amount to nearly Rs. 1,620 crores, having been reduced during the last few months by over Rs. 100 crores on account of large purchases of locomotives for India in the sterling area, and mainly because of purchases by Indians of shares in England of British companies like the ICI and the Dunlop.

These balances have accumulated because during the war, Britain forcibly squeezed out of India, without payment, a large amount of goods and services, inflicting huge privations and sacrifices on us.

Today they have great importance for us. We have all along been pressing for complete and full payment of the entire balances and also for their convertibility into dollars.

Anglo-U.S. Conspiracy

But having kept them out of our reach all through the war, British imperialism is still denying us their benefits. It has been planning shame-facedly to write off the whole or a part of these balances and also opposing any demand for their convertibility into dollars.

An Anglo-American joint conspiracy was hatched in July last to wipe out the sterling debts. As a part of the terms of the Anglo-American Loan Agreement, both British and American Governments agreed between themselves that England's accumulated debts in each country be divided into three categories:

- 1) Part to be paid immediately;
- 2) Part to be released slowly in instalments beginning in 1951;
- 3) Part to be written off.

The settlement with the creditor countries, depending upon the "circumstances of each country," was decided to be attained on the above lines within one year of the ratification of the Anglo-American Agreement.

Mr. Fred Vinson, the then Secretary to the United States Treasury, even hinted that definite proportions had actually been agreed for the three categories into which the balances were to be divided.

Plain Denial

In any case, through this joint agreement the fate of these poor countries like India was meant to be sealed and the arrangement was a plain denial of all we had been rightfully demanding.

The amount to be paid immediately was not expected to be much. As the Birla-owned Eastern Economist wrote on January 11, 1946:

"The part that is to be released, therefore, cannot be a very large amount."

In accordance with the above agreement, Britain is now planning negotiations with the creditor countries, with a view to implement "agreed terms" and to decide upon the proportions of balances to be allocated to the various categories.

But the fact that Britain is the debtor country and holds the sterling balances is being exploited by her not only to scale down the debts or fund them over a long period, but to gain all-round economic and trade concessions, and

by
Prem Sagar Gupta

must now be added advantages from our debtor position (emphasis mine—P.S.G.) It is surely not too much to hope India may once again become our greatest export market.

And the whole course of the negotiations of the present mission is frankly outlined by the London Times in an editorial on December 24:

"The United Kingdom delegation may be expected to make the most of the fact that the balances were primarily the outcome of the quite abnormal and inflated conditions during the war. The Indian experts for their part will be anxious to ensure the maximum release of the balances in order to finance the industrial development planned for the new India.

"It is not unreasonable to hope that these two viewpoints are not divided by a gap so wide as to preclude agreement on a long-term spread of repayments of the debts."

The Hindu of November 21, quotes a British Treasury spokesman as having emphasised that:

"Britain would insist upon scaling down, and that interest on balances would be no higher than one-half of one per cent and lastly that the movement of capital would be strictly controlled, special permits being granted subject to British currency interests."

Bait Of Capital Goods

Thus the British game clearly is to gain the following points on pain of complete repudiation of the sterling balances:

*Secure a considerable scaling down;

*Fund the rest over a long period;

*Secure participation for British capital in Indian industries.

And today there is real danger of the British game succeeding. Indian industrialists have made immense profits during the war and have today at their disposal huge funds seeking im-

mediate investment. They are dying to get a supply of capital goods, whatever little they can.

It is this very bait of supply of capital goods that Britain is offering to the Indian industrialists, with a view to achieve its avowed objectives.

As a result of the Anglo-American Loan Agreement, by refusing to allow sterling to be converted into dollars, Britain has already assumed the position of a monopolist supplier of capital goods to Indian industrialists.

By refusing to release any capital goods, Britain is trying to force India into an acceptance of its own terms.

Industrialists' Game

The Indian industrialists too are already succumbing to British pressure.

● Behind the back of the Indian people, Indian capitalists, like Birla, Tata, Wanchand Hirachand and numerous others, have already entered into shameful partnerships with British capitalists, giving them a share in the capital, for joint exploitation of the Indian market.

● Their spokesmen like A. D. Shroff (one of the signatories to the Bombay Plan) and K. C. Mohendra (former head of the Indian Purchasing Mission in the U.S.A.) have already publicly urged the acceptance of a scaling down on the grounds of expediency.

The Indian bourgeoisie is keeping quiet over the issue of buying off and nationalising British investments in India, lest their British counterpart get offended and refuse them even the small supplies of capital goods.

Some of them, the top-rank, are even publicly defending the retention of British investments in India. Mr. G. D. Birla has declared:

"I do not believe this (the British capital) will ever be expropriated. The British firm will carry on."

Birla's mouthpiece, the Eastern Economist, disregards the liquidation of British assets in India, somehow wanting us to believe that "the whole of the sterling balances can therefore be easily wiped out" in the process.

● Some of the Indian industrialists are even paying 2.500 times the nominal value for British companies wanting to sell their assets in India all with a view to gain personal profit. In such cases, of course,

they do not even mind the severe depletion their dealings might cause in the sterling balances, for which otherwise they show such a big concern.

Thus the Indian industrialists, motivated by selfish interests or minor profits in the near future, are planning a complete betrayal of national interests.

Through their representatives, the Indian industrialists will bring strong pressure on the Interim Government to bargain and compromise with the British Government, in exchange of such pressure of the Indian and British vested interests that the Interim Government supported by the mass of Indian people has to fight.

The sterling balances are a national asset. They accumulated as a result of sacrifices of the mass of our people, even costing us 35 lakh lives in the largest famine, and an class of Indian industrialists and vested interests has only failed to negotiate on behalf of India with a view to agree to their scaling down or to use the national assets in a wasteful way.

Interim Govt. Must Act

The Interim Government should forthwith take over all British investments in India and nationalise the main industries like jute, coal and plantations, dominated by the British capital.

The sterling balances may not be with us but these sterling investments are within our reach and like what the U.S.A. or Canada has done, they should be immediately bought off at a nominal price as part payment of the sterling balances.

That will stop a huge annual drain of goods from India by way of interest, profits and home charges, etc. That will establish Indian awareness and control over important and basic Indian industries, coal, jute and plantations.

For the rest of the balances, the Interim Government should use India's economic sanctions (our position as British trade, etc.) to force Britain into a full payment to us in the form of capital goods.

The rate of payment or the number of instalments in which the whole payment should be made, can be negotiated with Britain and fixed in the best interests of the people and the economy of both the countries.

Profits from India's point of view should be given to the type of machinery required for the establishment of heavy industry in India. That is the only way to defeat the consequences of British imperialism and the betrayal of Indian industrialists. That is the only way to secure full payment of our balances and pave the way for the development of basic and heavy industries in India.

' People's Age '

January 12, 1947

COMMUNIST PARTY'S CALL TO THE PEOPLE OF PAKISTAN

taken by joint electorates and proportional representation. Adult suffrage and joint electorates would ensure people's sovereignty and growth of commonness; while proportional representation would ensure that each body of organised public opinion is reflected in the Supreme Parliament of the Pakistan Union.

The Communist Party warns the people in Pakistan that reactionary elements would assail these democratic principles in many ways and under diverse pleas. The danger through communalism is the greatest.

In order to keep up separatism—which ensures domination of reactionaries by splitting the masses; not only communal electorates might be perpetuated, but further new "communities" might be given the right to elect representatives on a communal basis.

Attempts might be made to introduce indirect elections—thus weakening direct popular control over elections.

Proportional representation might be rejected on some specious plea. Second Chambers, extraordinary powers to Governors or the President, all so many methods whereby the upper-classes check and control full fledged democracy.

The common people in Pakistan must see that the Pakistan Constituent Assembly adopts a constitution which is truly democratic and where the people's will is capable of being expressed and exercised without any let or hindrance.

Minority Rights

Mr. Jinnah and other Muslim League leaders have given statements wherein they have declared that minorities in Pakistan need have no fear; there shall be no discrimination against them and they shall enjoy full rights of citizenship in Pakistan. It has been declared, further, that their religious and cultural rights shall be protected. If these principles are adhered to and scrupulously put into practice, all would be well.

However, in the background of the separatist line of the dominant League leadership, of intense communal hatred roused by them in the course of the last ten years of the tragic events of Noakhali, Hazara, D. I. Khan

(Continued on page 13.)



On the 15th of August, the new State of Pakistan will come into existence.

The hopes and aspirations of millions of Indian Muslims, specially those living in Muslim majority areas, which constitute Pakistan, are bound with Pakistan. Common Muslims have believed that their desire to be free and independent, their will to build democracy, their longing to live a life of happiness, prosperity and of civilised and cultured existence in the land of their birth would be possible through the establishment of Pakistan.

On the other hand the upper-classes, rich and selfish elements among them, have all along striven through the poisonous weapon of preaching communal hatred through reliance upon British imperialism, to disrupt the natural process of unity of the exploited Muslim masses with their non-Muslim brethren, they have stood in the way of building the joint freedom front of all Indians, have fostered separatism among the Muslim masses.

The progressive forces have not been strong enough to defeat this policy.

Sovereign People's Republic

The sixty-eight million Muslim and non-Muslim inhabitants of Pakistan, like the rest of Indians desire independence, i.e., complete liberation from the yoke of British imperialism. They would like to be rid forever from all domination direct or indirect of their hated enslavers—the British imperialists.

In 1937, the Muslim League adopted the creed of "full independence" in place of "responsible Government under the aegis of British Crown". In the famous Pakistan resolution of 1940, they declared for the establishment of a "Sovereign State".

They did so because they believed, rightly, that within the orbit of the British Empire, the enemy of so many Asian peoples, full freedom was not possible.

Yet voices are being raised today in sections of the League leadership which want the Muslims to believe that "Dominion Status" is as good as sovereign existence. Attlee has openly expressed the hope that both India and Pakistan might choose to remain within the Empire—now re-named Commonwealth of Nations.

Who does not know that this Commonwealth is a misnomer to hide the ugly face of British imperialist domination? That remaining within the Empire, even though as an 'independent'

Dominion, means, political, economic and military commitments, dragging of our people into the camp of world reaction and creating in the path of their new life barriers of rapacious monopoly capitalism and colonialism?

Therefore, it is necessary that the very first act of the Pakistan Constituent Assembly should be the declaration that Pakistan shall be an independent Sovereign Republic—outside the British Empire, and not a Dominion within it.

However, this is not enough. The people of Pakistan have to be eternally vigilant and see that their independent State does not become 'independent' on the Egyptian, Transjordanian or the Iraq model.

There are elements in Pakistan, life-long tony feudallists, who, with independence on their lips, would—like the Nokrashys, the Abdullas and the Nurali Saids—be hand in glove with the imperialist enslavers, would be their humble servitors, would be willing to sell their people and their freedom for ignominious self-interest and filthy lucre.

Pakistan should be an independent People's Republic in the real meaning of the phrase where the people shall be sovereign and from where all traces of direct or indirect imperialist control shall have been wiped out.

It is important that a clear declaration is made of the foreign policy which the Pakistan Government will pursue.

Mr. Jinnah's recent statement supporting the Indonesian people's battle against Anglo-American-Dutch imperialism is a welcome first step. But a categorical assurance is necessary that Pakistan will always support the peoples of any part of the world struggling to free themselves of imperialist chains, and, in UNO and other Councils of the world, will oppose the direct and indirect attempts of world imperialism to spread its domination.

Pakistan And The Princes

A necessary corollary of the declaration that Pakistan is an independent sovereign Republic and not a stooge domination of the so-called British Commonwealth is a reversal

of the present attitude of the League leadership towards the Indian States.

No one in our country has ever had any doubts about the role the Indian Princes have played as agents of British imperialism's aim about the abominable conditions in which the 03 million States' peoples have had to live.

And yet the League leaders have stated repeatedly that the Pakistan Government will respect the right of the Princes to independence and will not tolerate any "interference" in the internal affairs of the States.

Such a policy means in practice supporting both the plans of British imperialism to maintain bases on Indian territory and the continued slavery of the States' peoples. The leaders of the League must categorically declare that they stand for the ending of the States' peoples' struggles for Responsible Government and for their free and unfettered right to decide their own future.

Power Must Vest In People

To ensure that the PEOPLE shall be sovereign in Pakistan, that power shall vest in them and that they shall rule, it is necessary that the constitution of Pakistan should be based upon firm democratic principles.

It is necessary, in this respect for popular opinion and the democratic will of the common citizen in Pakistan to assert itself, because the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan, as of India, has not been elected through adult suffrage, because it is communally divided, because it is overweighted with landlords, Princes' representatives and other reactionary elements.

However, democratic opinion can influence the representatives of the main political parties of Pakistan—the League and the Congress—whose members sit in the Constituent Assembly.

Above all, the principle of people's sovereignty must express itself through the provision that election to the future Pakistan Parliament shall be through adult suffrage; that it shall be direct; that the curse of communal electorates shall be done away with for good and its place shall be



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and Rawalpindi, Hindu and Sikh minorities fear that the majority will do justice to them and that their life and property could be in danger.

It is, therefore, necessary for the League, the leading political party in Pakistan, to back the statement of its leaders with positive actions to restore communal peace and to win the confidence of the minorities.

Form Peace Committees

It is incumbent on the League in Pakistan to take the initiative and form joint Aman (peace) Committees in each town and each village and each mohalla of the Pakistan area. The League should see that the majority community guarantees the life and property of each and every member.

The Muslim League and its leadership have to consider this joint campaign for peace for protection of minorities, their immediate and primary task. It is for them to isolate the riot-mongers from their own ranks and render them incapable of doing mischief. It is for them to discourage and suppress all communal hate-mongering and not to spare even the bigger leaders if they still directly or indirectly encourage minority-baiting.

Democracy in Pakistan cannot flourish, unless reconstruction and ushering in the era of material prosperity and moral and cultural uplift cannot be taken, even for the Muslim majority, if the communal hate-monger and riot-organiser is not isolated and crushed from the Muslim ranks. Such a step taken by the League would find an immediate response from the Hindu and Sikh minorities in Pakistan. It will help the sober and patriotic elements among them to fight and defeat the rabid communists in their own ranks.

Furthermore, such a policy pursued by the League in Pakistan would help to restore communal peace in India, would curb the five crores of Muslims in India, would encourage the patriotic Congressmen and other progressive elements to effectively pursue a similar policy in India.

Self-Determination

Pakistan will be composed of the main nationalities — Bengalis, Pathans, Baluchis and Sindhis.

It is clear that the unity of these in one State can be fully maintained and all can endeavour for the rebuilding of our own life and for common good, only if each one of these nationalities is assured the widest possible freedom to grow and develop according to their own genius and in conformity with their own cultural traditions.

The right of national self-determination vesting in each unit of Pakistan, would ensure justice, equality, guarantee against domination of the weaker by the more powerful nationality and freedom to grow and develop in its own way.

The conferring of this right would bring each nationality closer to each other by dispelling fears regarding domination and would strengthen the unity of the Pakistan State. Furthermore, it would be a powerful lever for the growth of unity over India.

The Bengali and Punjabi people, artificially split under a possibility of reunification, and all the Indian nationalities, would see in it a basis for ending the present era of separatism and the re-unity of all Indians. The recent experience of Yugoslavia shows how self-determination given to the five communal nationalities of that

State, accompanied by the uprooting of reactionary vested interests, who sowed seeds of national and communal conflicts, has united the entire country.

A similar policy pursued in Pakistan would strengthen Pakistan democratically and pave the way for the unity of all Indian nationalities on the basis of freedom, equality and democracy.

The new Pakistan State will have to tackle immediately the two questions of providing immediate economic relief to the masses and of taking measures to rebuild in a planned manner the economy of Pakistan, to undo the ravages of two hundred years of ruthless imperialist exploitation with its bitter fruit of industrial backwardness, agrarian misery and cultural blackout.

Problems of Food & Cloth

The problems of food and cloth and housing shortage and of unemployment will have to be tackled immediately.

The food problem has two aspects—production and distribution.

A drive for increased food production raises the question of granting certain elementary rights to the vast masses of tenants in the Pakistan areas.

The Haris of Sind, the Muzaras of Punjab and Frontier, the Aikhs and the poor peasants of Bengal are today cruelly exploited by the jagirdars, Khans and big landlords and jotedars, who with the support of the British imperialist State have de-

prived them not only of proprietary rights over the lands which they till, but who through various foul means deprive them also of a fair share in the crop produced by their toil.

Rights of Tenants

In the various constituent units of Pakistan, in Bengal, the Punjab, the N.W.F.P. and Sind, immediate legislation should be introduced to secure the rights of tenants over land and over their crops. This will result in increased production of food grains.

Steps should also be taken for the abolition of landlordism, the jagirdari system and all forms of parasitical feudalism fostered in our country by the imperialists in order to create an entire class of progressive, anti-people elements.

They keep down the people, hinder agrarian development and perpetuate backwardness and reaction in our entire social life.

The people of Pakistan, particularly the vast masses of the peasantry, cannot prosper, food production cannot increase, the political life of the country cannot be cleansed of corruption and reaction, unless this class—the biggest base of reaction in Pakistan—is liquidated for good.

Immediate steps have also to be taken to root hearing, blackmarketing, profiteering and bureaucratic inefficiency in regard to food. Pakistan is a surplus food area. Still, it

was a combination of Imperialist inefficiency, inflation, hoarding and profiteering which caused the frightful Bengal famine.

Pakistan should not only provide food for its own people but also do its duty by the rest of India by conducting a vigorous anti-hoarding and anti-black-market drive. A procurement drive with popular co-operation can defeat the profiteer and help the peasants and town people alike—that is also the best means of fighting bureaucratic inefficiency and corruption.

Economic Planning

In order to permanently root out economic backwardness, economic planning has also to be undertaken by Pakistan. The nascent capitalist class in Pakistan economy, would, because of its weakness, support the policy of alliance with British and American big business—thus jeopardising the very independence of Pakistan. All the horrors of Capitalist exploitation would also follow.

As it is a question of almost starting from a scratch, as far as industry is concerned in Pakistan, it is possible to start all the basic industries on a nationalised basis, thus ensuring maximum and speedy industrial development, and maximum benefit for the people.

In such a plan of economic development Pakistan should seek the help and assistance above all of India. A co-ordinated economic plan for Pakistan and India would be of great help to both and save both from groaning under the economic domination of rapacious British and American monopoly capitalists.

Above all, it has to be realised that a people's democratic economy cannot be built without the active support and willing participation of the working-class itself and their trade unions in schemes of

economic planning and industrial development as well as the immediate granting of workers' elementary demands—minimum living wage, adequate dearness allowance, social security benefits, etc.

The right of the workers to form their unions, the right to strike must be secured for them.

The people of Pakistan will realise their objective and full freedom and democracy only if the progressives of all parties—League, Congress, Akali Party, Nationalist Sikhs, Socialist Party and the Communist Party—join in a common endeavour to rouse and unite the people on the basis of the above programme.

The reactionaries and the vested interests will be weakened to the extent the progressives support the working-class and peasant movements struggling for elementary rights and fight for full democratic guarantees to all minorities.

Only by securing full guarantees to the minorities and fighting all discriminations against them will the people of Pakistan forge that unbreakable front of all sections—which will defeat reaction and ensure full freedom for all.

Communist Co-operation

The Communist Party in Pakistan will sincerely endeavour to bring all progressives together for carrying forward the battle for democracy and freedom.

The Communist Party will further co-operate with the Pakistan Government in everything that it does in furtherance of the above objectives. Its aim will be to defeat reaction in all camps and bring the common people of all parties and faiths together to build Pakistan as a democratic State in fraternal alliance with the Indian Union.

COMMUNIST STAND ON PARTITION OF SURMA VALLEY

From Jyotirmoy Nandy

The partition of the Surma Valley (Sylhet-Cachar) is now on the agenda. The main political parties are busy preparing their memoranda to the Boundary Commission.

THE Communist attitude towards the partition of the Surma Valley is clearly expressed in a statement issued by Biresh Misra, the Communist leader of Assam:

"We undoubtedly stand for the peaceful partition of Sylhet-Cachar on a just basis. We consider the characterisation of partition efforts, by League sections, as anti-Pakistan, as preposterous, because it is these League leaders who hoodwinked the Muslim masses on the partition issue envisaged in the British plan, and roused the worst communal passions in their campaign for joining East Bengal.

"The vote for East Bengal in the referendum was a vote for a communal division of India, Bengal, the Punjab and also for the partition of Sylhet-Cachar on Muslim-majority and Hindu-majority basis. Hence, efforts to bully non-Muslims into alliance today are definitely unjust and ineffective.

"The public has not forgotten that the Communist Party vainly explained the partition danger involved in voting for East Bengal and appealed to the Hindu and Muslim people of Sylhet to vote for remaining in the Indian Union, in which case Sylhet-Cachar might have easily won the status of an autonomous unit.

"Such a decision would have averted the danger of partition altogether and ensured the creation of a Sylhet-Cachar Province in the Indian Union, in which the Muslim form 56 per cent of the population in the two districts taken together.

"The entire Assam Congress leaders openly guaranteed the autonomy of Sylhet if she decided to remain in the Indian Union.

"Today, after trepoding that prospect, coaxing and cajoling

Sylhet, July 25

the Sylhet non-Muslims will only worsen the communal situation. Hence we appeal again against creating bad blood on the question of boundaries.

"We urge all parties to follow the principle already put forward by Congress and League leaders, namely, divide on a clear Muslim majority and non-Muslim majority basis.

"Naturally, therefore, people want to know on what lines we propose the partition of Sylhet and then Cachar. We have, after careful consideration, reached the following decisions and put them before the parties and people for due thought and fraternal consideration:

● First, the basic unit of partition of Muslim-majority and non-Muslim majority areas, herein mentioned as Muslim and non-Muslim zones, should be the Thana (police station) unit, because that way alone Muslim zones and non-Muslim zones may be demarcated most correctly. In this way, contiguity with East Bengal on the one hand and Assam on the other can be found by the respective zones.

With the village unit as the basis of calculation, both parties will reach a deadlock benefiting none.

● Secondly, tea labour must be recognised as regular inhabitants because they have been responsible for less than five per cent of the tea labour population in the last twenty-five years. Five per cent may claim habitation and descent in these districts from the beginning of this century and hence, even the alien rulers gave them voting rights, however restricted they may have been, and most of the Assam tea labour constituencies are in Sylhet-Cachar.

"Pay-rolls of tea gardens, rent receipts from the bosses for tilling rented land in the tea gardens, will prove the permanency of this population in Sylhet-Cachar and their valuable contribution towards its wealth and productivity.

"Any attempt towards the negation of their citizenship today or tomorrow must be thwarted by every democrat and more so by the Muslim demo-

crats, because once this false principle is accepted, the entire migratory Muslim population in Assam and the Sundarbans and the working-class population in Calcutta and Howrah would cease to be citizens.

"Tea labour and the entire working-class movement must fight this undemocratic and dangerous move from whatever quarter it may be coming, because the natural corollary of such a move means the negation of voting rights for the working-class in the industrial areas.

● Thirdly, and finally, on the question of the boundary between the Muslim and the non-Muslim zones, readjustments should be made on the basis of natural boundaries and normal lines of communication."

'People's Age'
August 3, 1947

NATIONALISE AND DEMOCRATISE THE

— by —
SUBRATA BANERJEE

Armed Forces

At Singapore, in March 1946, Pandit Nehru declared for all the world to hear:

"Some day every Indian arm will be a strong arm, and those arms will fight for Asian freedom."

That day has at last come on the agenda: August 15, and the prospect opens up before the country of bringing to fruition Pandit Nehru's Singapore declaration.

At the same time, the question of Asian freedom, so dear to Panditji's heart and to the hearts of our entire people, has come to the forefront with the unprovoked attack of imperialism on our brother people of Indonesia.

Our Indian arms strong enough to fight for Asian freedom today—as promised by Panditji? Can our Armed Forces, as they are constituted today, rush to the aid of Indonesia, should the need arise, at the call of the National Government and fight the imperialist aggressors to a standstill?

The answer which every Indian will rightly give is—"No!"

The fighting ability of our men has won universal recognition. We are great fighters and yet our Army is weak. Why? It is true that partition has weakened our Armed Forces; but we know that even on issues, such as Indonesia, on which Pakistan and the Indian Union are together and may take joint action, our united forces would still not be strong enough to be decisively effective.

Our weakness is not due to the small numerical strength of our Forces either, or to the shortage of war-equipments. Other Armies of smaller countries, far less equipped, have fought and are fighting successfully even today against overwhelming odds.

What then is the root cause of the weakness of our Armed Forces?

The real reason lies in the fact that the Indian Army was built by the British for their imperialist purposes and not as an Army of freedom.

The imperialist structure of our Armed Forces has been based on the following three principles:

1. British Imperialist control through British top-ranking officers;
2. Keeping the soldiers "free of politics"—which meant in fact totally ignorant mercenaries;
3. Preventing the emergence of any democracy within the Army by maintaining a rigid dictatorial division between officers and men, between different ranks of officers and officers and the others and between the British and the Army; and by recruiting officers not from the ranks but from the privileged classes alone.

If this is so how can we strengthen our Armed Forces to meet them capable, not only of the historic duty of winning Asian freedom, but also of car-

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Servicemen and our people flowed together for the first time, also came from this same Army. It is from among them also that has been formed the Indian Brigade of volunteers which is today fighting side by side with the Indonesians.

With this patriotic core as our base, the task of nationalisation becomes the easiest, provided we go about it the right way, profiting from the experiences of our brother nations.

Faced with similar problems the Indonesian Government are educating their Servicemen and raising their democratic consciousness. Military educational officers give general and political education to the troops. In Czechoslovakia, too, educational officers have been appointed for the same purpose: to build a National Army.

In our Armed Forces too there is an Army Education Corps. All it has done during the war is to give our soldiers a smattering of education; and through their own publications spread imperialist propaganda. Its task now must be to give our Servicemen a proper general and a national education. Like Indonesia and Viet Nam, we too must build up literate Armies in Pakistan and India.

There is no lack of patriotism among our officers and men, but it has to be given practical shape.

It will not be the first time on August 15 that our Servicemen will salute the National Flag.

The men of the INA carried the Flag on their shoulders. The RIN mutineers unfurled it on their ships. Then it was the Flag only of the national movement. Today it is also the Flag of our Nation, which our officers and men must defend with the last drop of their blood.

To be able to do so they must know all about this Flag, how it was born through the struggles against imperialist oppression, sure better relations between officers and men. In our new blood of our countless martyrs. They must understand what imperialism means, what its aims are still are in relation to our country.

Our soldiers must also learn democracy in practice. As in every other country of the world they too must have the same democratic rights of voting and standing for elections.

It is only then that Pakistan and the Indian Union will be able to build national, patriotically conscious Armies

which will play their full part in building the defence of our country.

Such a scheme of nationalisation alone will not, however, solve our problems of building new Armies. The present organisation of the Indian Army will stand in the way of such nationalisation. The entire organisation of our Armed Forces have to be democratised; for democratisation is the third principle on which a freedom Army can be built.

The British officers must go and they shall. But the danger is that they will leave behind them a small clique of "loyal" senior British-trained officers, whom they will use as their fifth columns inside our Armed Forces, to tie our defences to their hated schemes of imperialist aggression.

Everyone knows who they are. We have all heard the public expression of their views. And already members of this clique are being jockeyed by the British into positions of importance.

Indonesia too faces a similar problem, in a narrow section of Dutch and Jap-trained officers and men. But the rest of the patriotic officers and men, backed by the Government, are able effectively to fight the danger which arises from their presence. They have introduced the principle of the election of officers which is an immediate check on the few pro-imperialist officers who still remain.

In Czechoslovakia the problem has to a certain extent been solved by the systematic purge of anti-national officers. But the main weapon everywhere has been democratisation.

In India and Pakistan, too, the problem can be solved if the two Governments undertake to democratise their Armed Forces. The new regulations must encourage better relations between officers and men. In our new Armies this relationship must be based on the principle of division of labour and not on the privileges of rank as hitherto.

The universally accepted democratic principle of promotion alone must be introduced immediately, to change the narrow social basis of the officers cadre. This will lead to better understanding between officers and men. This will change the entire face of our Armies and make them info real People's Armies.

The Red Army of China has been fighting for the last twenty years against the reactionary Kuomintang forces and even today against the armed intervention of American imperialism. Its main strength is that it is a democratic Army, where relations between officers and men are based on the principle of division of labour, where officers and men eat, live and dress alike.

The Army that Aung San had built was based on the same principle of democracy and he himself had set the example by living the life of his own soldiers.

The soldiers in our new Armies must also be given the chance to learn elementary democracy through running their own elected Mess and Welfare Committees, and the social life of the units should be so organised that the officers and men and their families jointly participate in it and build new bonds of solidarity and strength.

But such a People's Army is bound to be numerically weak, both in the Indian Union and in Pakistan, owing to the enormous economic difficulties with which our two States will be faced in their attempts to fight the legacy of imperialism in every aspect of our national life.

Therefore, to lend valuable support to our new Armies, the entire people must be given military training. In the villages and cities of our country we must build people's militias, composed of the youth from all classes of society. These voluntary organisations could be run democratically by their own elected committees and all that the Governments need do is to give them elementary military training.

This will not only create a vast trained reserve behind our small, but well-knit and equipped Armies, but it will also bring our Servicemen and our people together.

It is only by building such Armies, rooted in the people, politically conscious and democratic in structure, that we shall be able to fulfil our historic role of winning and defending our freedom and of standing as a bulwark against Anglo-American imperialist plans for the domination of Asia.

' People's Age '
August 15, 1947

Such a question has been faced by other countries in the post-war period—by colonial countries like Indonesia or Viet Nam, which have raised the banner of freedom, by countries like Czechoslovakia, which have been liberated from Fascist domination.

The resistance movement, the armed struggle for freedom in these countries threw up a mass of patriotic officers and men. It is on this hard core that they are today building their new armies. The real strength of the Indonesian Army which is putting up such a tough fight against the superior forces of Dutch imperialism, lies in its vast mass of patriotic urban and village youth.

In India too we have such a hard patriotic core in our Armed Forces. The experiences of the war has politicalised the large majority of our officers and men. In spite of its structure and organisation and in spite of British attempts to weed out all patriotic elements, the broad masses of our Army are patriotic.

It was from among them that the INA was formed. The heroes of the great RIN Mutiny, when the blood of our

'BRITISH PLAN TO PROVOKE INTER-PROVINCIAL AND COMMUNAL CONFLICTS

Calcutta, August 25.

The Radcliffe Award on Bengal boundaries is a dangerous British manoeuvre to throw the Hindus and Muslims into another round of a bloody civil war. It is more, for it keeps the way wide open for future border conflicts.

No map of Bengal could have been more sinisterly drawn out to accentuate communal tension.

MINOR injustice apart, there are three important points at which the new boundaries will breed trouble.

● The first is regarding North Bengal. Districts of Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri are cut off from West Bengal. This is in accordance with the demands of the powerful tea planters, who are anxious to make one solid bloc with Assam. Now that these two districts are isolated, it will be easy to try to take them to Assam.

This also fits in with the long-hatched British plans for creating a Tribal Province from the borders of Nepal to North Burma. With the demand of a section of Gurkhas for joining Assam, it might be easier now for this Tribal Province to be formed, in which obviously reactionary control would be easy to maintain. Tea, timber and unexplored mineral resources, including Digboi oil, will fall within this coveted zone.

Gurkha-Bengali Conflict

Moreover, by isolating Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri, it will be easy to accentuate Gurkha-Bengalee conflict, which is in the interests of the British to do because this area promises to become the centre of a democratic offensive against feudal exploitation in Nepal, which is the recruiting ground for British Forces.

Stretching of East Pakistan frontier right upto Bihar might in the future be a source of conflict because on the other side of the border in Bihar, in the District of Purnea, there is a solid bloc of Muslim population contiguous to the new frontier of East Pakistan.

At the same time, within the Indian Union, the West Bengalis being denied an access to North Bengal, are likely now to agitate for the return of the Bengali-speaking areas of Manbhum, Santal Parganas and Purnea to West Bengal. This is sure to sharpen the Bengali-Bihari con-

by
Nikhil Chakravarty

flikt. Only last week, the Bengal Conference at Jamshepur which made such a demand was the scene of a Bengali-Bihari free fight.

Radcliffe has thus succeeded in opening new vistas of clash not only between Pakistan and the Indian Union but within the Indian Union itself.

● Secondly, the Award has handed over the whole of a Muslim-majority District—viz., Murshidabad—to West Bengal. Actually on August 15, the District had celebrated the day as a part of Pakistan.

● Thirdly, the whole of the Hindu-majority District of Khulna is given to West Bengal. It is a matter of almost amazement that such an Award loaded with provocations did not become the signal for a general flare-up in these disputed areas. It speaks volumes of support of the return of communal unity in Bengal as also the efforts of the leaders of the Congress and the League, that Bengal could survive this Award without immediate outburst of large scale civil war.

For this, the main credit should go to the remarkable upsurge of Hindu-Muslim unity achieved in Calcutta. The news of the great sequence of the days in Calcutta since August 15 spread like a wild fire throughout the Province. Coupled with this came the earnest efforts of mutual goodwill by League and Congress leaders in East Bengal.

Actually, at many mohall districts, panicle trek of Hindus from East Bengal stopped with the spread of a general feeling of goodwill manifested so abundantly on August 15th.

Gandhiji's Contribution

In this great task Gandhiji's contribution is not insignificant. He is literally trying to harness the great force of unity released on August 15th. His prayer meetings are drawing bigger and bigger crowds of Hindus and Muslims reaching their peak in the mass rally at Calcutta Maidan on August 24 which, despite inclement weather, drew over two lakhs of people.

Gandhiji, however, is not content with advising the people in his post-prayer speeches. He is getting the Ministry and the Corporation to take up the problem of resettlement in right earnest. In this task Mr. Sardary is offering considerable help, making very serious and unsparring efforts to get Hindus back in Park Circus and reflecting the spirit of the Muslim masses today in solidifying amity with Hindus.

Besides, Para and Mohalla Peace Committees are being jointly formed, all determined to preserve the precious treasure of August 15. Demonstrations of Hindu-Muslim solidarity are being multiplied every day in fraternals, soirees, bathaks, entertainments, socials and spontaneous meetings. The climax of all this is a mighty peace rally which is to come off—to be participated by numerous organisations including Congress Volunteers, the Muslim National Guards, Hindustan National Guards, Communist Party Volunteers, various students' and women's relief bodies, which will take place on August 28.

Specifically over the question of boundaries, the vigilance has not slackened. Immediately on its announcement, Nazimuddin and Pratul Ghose, as the Premiers of the two Bengals, jointly issued a public appeal that despite its patent defects, the Boundary Award should be accepted and any changes might come only by mutual arrangement between the Congress and League leaders. Communist leader Bhawal Sen also issued an appeal along similar lines, adding that any re-adjustment should have the seal of popular approval through a plebiscite or referendums.

This was followed by a joint appeal by Congress and League Secretaries.

Communalism Eschewed

Bengal Press, both Hindu and Muslim, which was so long almost inextricably entangled in communal bickerings has also played a fine role in maintaining communal amity, thereby not only reflecting the prevailing passion of the people but also serving true national ends.

They are all very conscious of the fact that Radcliffe has taken the advantage of our differences. The Amrita Bazar Patrika wrote:

"It is because we have no confidence in our own countrymen that we have been forced to invite a foreigner to arbitrate between us. Sir Cyril's has been the departing kick of British imperialism at both Hindus and Muslims. Let us, Indians, sit together and make up our differences." League Morning News wrote: "By our failure to agree among ourselves, we gave the Britisher a chance to give us a boundary-line that is neither fair nor just nor sound."

They also gave a lead to the people, urging them not to distrust communal harmony.

League Azad wrote: "Let not the mighty manifestation of communal harmony be disturbed even by the unsatisfactory report of the Boundary Commission and we too are opposed to jeopardising in any way this unity. Rather, we think the right course is to rectify the defects of the present boundaries by agreement and understanding."

Congress supporter Jugantar wrote:

"Let us not dispute over it. The friendship that has grown among Hindus and Muslims must be kept up. We are not prepared to set the whole country aflame over a few miles of land and a few thousand



persons... If higher authorities of the Congress and the League can bring about a peaceful settlement of our quarrel, well and good. And if that is not possible, then considering the greater good of the country and life and property of lakhs of people, we shall for the present accept this. Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs shall have to take a pledge that under no circumstances must peace be disturbed."

Communal Leaders

With the announcement of the Radcliffe Award, however, tension has been running high in some of the disputed areas like Jalpaiguri, Dinajpur, Malda, Murshidabad and Khulna. From one or two places local fracas was reported, although in the general atmosphere of communal solidarity all over Bengal they sound like exceptions rather than a rule.

What is serious in these local tensions is the dangerous role of reactionary communal leaders who are completely ousted from prominence and prestige by the mighty sweep of August 15. For instance, it is found that some reactionary Muslim leaders in Murshidabad and their Hindu counterparts in Khulna are distorting the Ghosh-Nazimuddin joint appeal to mean that there is yet room for unsettling the Award if a tearing campaign is launched at once.

Thus a League deputation has gone to Nazimuddin while over 500 Hindus are brought down to Calcutta to put pressure over Dr. Ghosh who, however, said that any change could be pos-

sible only if made by the Congress and League. High demands and that communal amity and peace have got to be maintained.

It is important in this connection to examine the part of Mahasabha in playing on August 15. With Shyamaprasad's entry into the Central Cabinet synchronising with Pannaswamy's sloop over Mahasabha's "disactionaries" in U.P., the press of the Mahasabha is at a cebb.

With the great upsurge of August 15, the Mahasabha found itself in a peculiar state. Even the address of the Hindustan National Guard who were attracted by the Mahasabha during the hey-day of Shyamaprasad's partition campaign prestige, could not be back from the frenzy of communal fraternisation that gripped Calcutta Hindus and Muslims.

Mahasabha's Role

On the Odd day could be the Hindustan National Guard rubbing shoulders with Mahasabha and in numerous meetings they could found jointly controlling the crowd and shouting slogans. This too was one of the biggest snubs for Mahasabha's communal bias. And it is this fear of total isolation that has forced many prominent Mahasabhaitees some forward in Calcutta to join the local Peace Committee.

The Radcliffe Award, however, came as a god-send to the Mahasabha and at the disputed zone it is these people, together with their opposite numbers among Muslims who are desperately trying their best to poison the atmosphere by rousing communal passions and passions among the people.

The line that is being pursued by Shyamaprasad's own Hindustan is more revealing, slashed at Ghosh-Nazimuddin appeal for mutual accord is only possible way to rectify injustices under the Radcliffe Award and wrote:

"The platitude by the Congress having repeatedly failed, those now reduced to a bluff."

A special article in the Congress falls to do anything the Hindu Mahasabha will be to take the charge" and picture prospects.

Here is the danger signal of the coming weeks for Bengal. Radcliffe on the one hand and the Mahasabha on the other have not spared any pander to queer the pitch. It is a spontaneous upsurge of Hindus and Muslims of Bengal reinforced by the communal unity efforts of Congress League leaders and created by Gandhiji's great permission that has kept these dark forces. But if vigilance is not pressed by energetic actions against the saboteurs of communal solidarity, things might take bad turn any moment. A suspense continues.



By

ABANINDRANATH TAGORE

With an introduction by
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August 15, 1947

LORD MOUNTBATTEN ON THE PLAN

79

TRUE FULFILMENT OF EARLIER TRANSFER OFFER

NO INTERFERENCE IN INDIAN DECISIONS

Lord Mountbatten, the Viceroy, told Indians at a Press conference in Delhi yesterday that the British plan which was announced on Tuesday was the true fulfilment of the earlier offer by which the transfer of power would have taken place in 1948.

There would be no interference, he said, with the Indians' decisions. He was there only to assist them in achieving their aims.

When he was questioned about the future of the Indian Army the Viceroy said that Pakistan and Hindustan would be free to decide whether they wanted to have joint defence arrangements or separate defence systems.

FULL AND FRANK REPLIES

EFFORT FOR RAPID LEGISLATION

From Our Own Correspondent

DELHI, JUNE 4

Indian reactions to the British Government's procedural plan for the transfer of power are mixed. On the one hand there has been no violent outbreak of communalism. On the other hand most party leaders and newspapers accept the proposals without enthusiasm, in a spirit of "making the best of a bad job."

Muslim and Sikh reactions to the plan are somewhat different from those of the Congress Party. Muslim League commentators welcome the acceptance of Pakistan as marking the hour of deliverance of Muslims from Hindu domination, but at the same time they make it clear that, in the words of the Muslim League organ, *Dawn*, "the Muslim nation can never reconcile itself to the act of vandalism which truncated Pakistan. At the same time the successful conclusion of the major battle for national freedom is an occasion for national rejoicing."

In spite of Sardar Baldev Singh's broadcast speech yesterday, in which he said that the plan was a settlement, not a compromise, the attitude of the Sikh community is better summed up by the declaration of the veteran firebrand leader, Master Tara Singh, that "the British Government's plan is unsatisfactory and disappointing. I must make it clear that the ultimate acceptance or rejection of the plan by the Sikhs depends on the terms of reference of the boundary commission. The Sikhs, and for that matter the Punjab Hindus, cannot be satisfied unless the dividing line is the River Chenab. We shall continue our struggle till our objective is obtained. For the Sikhs the question is not merely of political power but of their very existence."

NEED FOR RESTRAINT

Thus it is clear that the seeds of dissension are still there and that they will grow into a jungle of communal strife blocking national progress unless political leaders are willing to curb their tongues and to speak reasonably and constructively.

Meanwhile Delhi remains the scene of intense political activity, which is likely to continue for the next fortnight during which the Muslim League Council and the All-India Congress Committee will meet to ratify their leaders' decision while the Viceroy confers with the leaders on measures to give effect to

the independence of the States, the Maharaja of Patiala heads the section which has thrown in its lot with the existing Constituent Assembly and wishes to arrive at a settlement with Hindustan.

DELHI, June 4.—Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan, general secretary to the Muslim League, announced to-night that the Muslim League Council will meet on Monday in secret to discuss the British plan. The League working committee discussed the plan at a 2½-hour meeting to-day attended by Mr. Suhrawardy, Premier of Bengal, and Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah, Premier of Sind.—*Reuter.*

MR. GANDHI'S BELIEF IN ULTIMATE UNITY

APPEAL TO MR. JINNAH

DELHI, June 4.—Mr. Gandhi this afternoon had a discussion lasting for 45 minutes with the Viceroy. The Congress working committee had a three-hour session and adjourned until June 12.

This evening Mr. Gandhi said to his prayer meeting: "The British Government is not responsible for partition. The Viceroy has no hand in it, in fact he is as much opposed to division as Congress itself. But if both of us—Hindus and Muslims—cannot agree on anything else, then the Viceroy is left with no choice."

Mr. Gandhi expressed full confidence that the two parts of India would ultimately unite again. "I want," he said, "to appeal to Mr. Jinnah—'You've got what you wanted; now you should invite Congress and the other parties to a conference to find a solution independent of the British.'"

Alteration in the plan could be made only by joint agreement of all communities. "I cannot advise you to rebel against Congress because it advised you to accept this plan," he said to the prayer meeting. "Don't forget that Congress was forced into this position. I want to lessen the pain in your heart by saying that neither Hindus, Muslims, nor Sikhs have lost anything. Whatever the Viceroy has done can be changed by common agreement among the Indian people."

The Viceroy, he said, had worked very hard and tried his utmost to bring about a compromise, and this plan was the only basis on which agreement could be reached. The Viceroy did not want to leave the country in chaos; hence all his efforts.—*Reuter.*

' The Times '

June 5, 1947

THE PLAN FOR INDIA

The general relief with which the publication of the procedural plan has been received in India reflects the serious nature of the situation the plan is designed to resolve. That dissentient voices should be raised is inevitable, if only because the partition of British India into twin political entities, however necessary as an expedient to avoid the imminent peril of civil war and anarchy, represents a postponement of the united India which has always been prominent among the aims of the older nationalists. The most effective answers to the critics were provided, in characteristically frank and forthright fashion, by LORD MOUNTBATTEN himself yesterday at the first open Press conference ever held by a Viceroy. He insisted, with a conviction which impressed all his hearers, that the plan was not a "British move," since the British are now in India only to do what Indians themselves want done, but had grown out of his protracted conferences with the party leaders, who were familiar with every stage of the progress he was making towards a reconciliation of opposing points of view. The plan therefore came to the party leaders neither as a surprise nor as a shock. They share his own view that it provides the soundest practicable basis upon which to found the structure which must link India of to-day with India of to-morrow. The determination of these leaders to avoid violence and to ensure that whatever solution is finally adopted shall be put into operation peacefully shows their confidence that the procedure now proposed affords a just and fair method of ascertaining what the peoples of India really desire.

The arrangements suggested for finding out the opinion of Bengal and of the Punjab are undoubtedly the best that can be devised. It is a wise precaution to ensure that a test vote can be taken in the undivided legislatures on the affiliation which the undivided provinces would choose. This may influence the final decisions for or against partition which will be taken by the Hindu and Muslim representatives sitting separately. The special position of the North-West Frontier Province and of the Sylhet district of Assam entails special arrangements, to which no exception can be taken; proposals of another kind will meet the case of British Baluchistan. The most careful consideration has been given, as the VICEROY has shown, to the position of the Sikhs. The merit of these proposals is that they direct communal and party

the plan.

At a Press conference this morning, lasting two and a quarter hours, during which he answered frankly, fully and convincingly the questions put by a gathering of nearly 300, Lord Mountbatten made it clear that "power would be transferred as completely this year as it ever would have been by June, 1948, under the February 20 announcement." The latest plan, he said, would be the true anticipation of the previous transfer plan, and as a result of his discussions with Mr. Attlee he was hopeful that the legislation conferring Dominion status on India or on Hindustan and Pakistan would be put through Parliament within the next two months.

The only thing that would delay the final framing of the Bill was uncertainty about what the provinces were going to decide about partition. A skeleton act would be fitted in as the people of India took the decisions about their future constitutional ideals, and the Bill would thus be rushed through in record time. If it could be passed in two months it would be a legislative record and a measure of the extreme good will and sincerity that existed in England towards India.

SIGNS OF SUSPICION

Facing a barrage of questions, many of which seemed inspired not so much by outright hostility as by extreme suspicion of British intentions, the Viceroy replied with a sincerity and candour designed to convince his questioners that there was nothing sinister or ulterior about the proposals. Repeatedly he assured his questioners that he was concerned only to assist the Indian party leaders in attaining their objectives and that he would not himself interfere or take decisions.

Parrying many questions designed to obtain a ruling or an interpretation on specific points contained in the plan, the Viceroy steadfastly maintained that India must make up her own mind on all matters. "I am the mechanic who keeps the car running, but I do not actually sit in the driver's seat and turn the wheel."

Asked what would be the position if the plan was rejected by the Muslim League Council, Lord Mountbatten replied that he had decided to underwrite the assurances given to him by the leaders of the various political parties and took full responsibility for going ahead with the plan. It might be risky, but he had spent the past six years in taking "calculated risks." He did not wish to anticipate the Muslim League Council's decision.

Many questions centred on the position of the Indian States. The Viceroy explained that with the lapse of paramountcy, possibly in August, the States would be free agents either to enter the Constituent Assembly or to make such arrangements as might be necessary. The British Government had no intention of recognizing any Indian State as a separate Dominion.

"If any State comes to me asking for a separate treaty—economic or military—with Britain I will transmit such a request to His Majesty's Government, but the question has not so far arisen." As the Crown representative he would do everything in his power to help the States to negotiate with the other parties. He thought that geographical and other factors would influence them in deciding which Constituent Assembly to join.

Dealing at length with the proposed conferment of Dominion status on Hindustan and Pakistan, Lord Mountbatten explained that it was intended to meet the Indian parties' demand for the speedy transfer of power. "Let no one say 'Look at these British. They have trapped us into Dominion status.'"

Indians would be free to decide after an interim period whether or not they wished to remain within the British Commonwealth of nations.

On this issue many questions came from Congress journalists, headed by Mr. Devadas Gandhi, managing editor of the *Hindustan Times* and son of Mahatma Gandhi, on "the potentialities for mischief" in paragraph 20 of the announcement providing for the grant of Dominion status to one or two successor authorities according to the decisions taken by the Indians. The gravamen of the charge was that if Hindustan decided to leave the Commonwealth it should not be open to Pakistan to remain within the Commonwealth lest suspicion should arise that the British would entrench themselves in one part of the country, thus proving a source of embarrassment and danger to the independence of the other part.

The Viceroy was forthright in refusing to give an undertaking on this point. "Why," he asked, "are you asking me to impose the will of an independent part on the other part of India? Why are you asking me to say that people cannot do what they like but must do what the majority wants them to do? Is all this talk of independence a hollow mockery?"

FRONTIER PEOPLE

Explaining why the North-West Frontier Province referendum did not provide for the question whether the frontier people wanted to be independent of either of the two Dominions which might come into existence, the Viceroy replied that "the high commands" of the two main parties had agreed that neither a frontier nor any other province should be allowed to declare itself independent, as that would lead to the Balkanization of the country. But this was a matter for the Indian people and their leaders, and if "the high commands" of the two parties agreed that this was to be done the Viceroy would agree.

Referring to the "national partition" of the Punjab and Bengal, the Viceroy said that this was purely for the purpose of ascertaining the wishes of the people of the provinces and would not involve administrative partition until the boundary commissions had done their work. He expressed the greatest sympathy for the Sikh community in its present dilemma, but he maintained that the partition of the Punjab was at the request of the Congress Party as expressed in their resolution of March 9, which itself was passed at the instance of the Sikh community. He wished he could see some way of preserving the unity of the Sikhs, but he was no miracle-monger and this, too, was a task for the Indian leaders.

INDIAN ARMY

Questioned about the future of the Indian Army, Lord Mountbatten said that Pakistan and Hindustan would be absolutely free to decide whether they wanted to have joint defence arrangements or separate defence systems. He hoped the decision would be such as to preserve the morale and effectiveness of the Indian Army and to save it from collapse.

Concluding, Lord Mountbatten expressed the greatest faith in the future of India and his belief that where there had been bitterness and strife henceforth there would be a revulsion of feeling and a new spirit of cooperation and good will as well as fair play for minorities.

It is learned that the Nawab of Bhopal has communicated to the Viceroy his decision to resign from the office of Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes and has asked to be relieved as soon as possible. Under the standing rules of the Chamber the pro-Chancellor, who is the Maharaja of Patiala, will automatically act as Chancellor. It is no secret that in recent months there has been a fundamental cleavage of opinion within the Chamber. Whereas the Nawab of Bhopal heads the section which has so far declined to enter the Constituent Assembly and is believed to favour

loyalties into constructive channels, and interpose the solid barrier of two major political integrations between British India and the rising tides of fragmentation and anarchy. The consequences of this will shortly appear in the strengthened control which the responsible statesmen of both communities will be enabled to exercise over their own wilder elements. The "high commands" of both the Congress Party and the Muslim League have been increasingly disturbed by the tendency of their local representatives to act violently, to pursue their own vendettas, and to defy the policies laid down for their observance. In future there will be neither occasion nor pretext for such behaviour, which has been especially characteristic of the Communists and other extreme left-wing elements, who will now be subjected to the effective discipline which ordered political institutions both require and supply.

The two successor authorities which are likely to emerge as a result of the expressed will of the Indian peoples will find themselves faced with complex tasks. They will not only have to settle their own constitutions and remodel the present administrative structure to conform with the new requirements. They will also have to work out and determine their relations with each other. Arrangements must be made for such vital matters as defence, finance, communications, and indeed the majority of subjects at present controlled by the single Central Government. The proposed transfer of the full powers of Dominion Governments to these successor authorities at an early date will necessarily require the creation of interim machinery for the exercise of these powers until the final constitutions are completed. It has been suggested that the Constituent Assemblies might act as temporary legislatures to which the provisional Cabinets might be made responsible. These are all matters to be determined by the peoples of India themselves; the function of Britain is only to assist and to mediate as the two new Dominion Governments emerge. LORD MOUNTBATTEN doubtless derived some satisfaction yesterday from being able to enlighten the Indian Press upon the real implications of Dominion status, pointing out that it embraced all the freedoms associated with independent nationhood. Prompt and cordial messages of good will have already come to the peoples of India from every Dominion of the Commonwealth through its most responsible spokesman in anticipation of the time, which may be as early as next August, when the membership of the Commonwealth will be so dramatically augmented. The people of the Dominions, as the PRIME MINISTER of NEW ZEALAND said yesterday, do not regard Dominion status as an inferior kind of independence or as an independence with something taken away, but rather as

an independence with something added -- a sense of comradeship and of co-operation in common endeavour. It is among the most valuable features of the present proposals that at the moment when the interests of India require the closest and most cordial cooperation between the two new successor authorities they will be bound each to the other not only by the ties of interwoven fortunes but also by the comradeship inherent in the relations between fellow members of the Commonwealth. Like all other Dominions, each will be free to leave the Commonwealth whenever it desires to do so; but, again, like the other Dominions, both may well hesitate in the last resort to abandon the unique advantages of membership.

While the new plan directly affects British India alone, its execution must exert a considerable influence upon the future of the Indian States. LORD MOUNTBATTEN removed a good deal of the suspicion with which the States are still regarded in some British Indian circles when he made it clear that the States could not enter the Commonwealth separately as Dominions, and that Britain in handing back paramountcy was freeing herself from her commitments to them. She would offer her services in helping the States to adjust their relations with the successor authorities. This pronouncement follows logically from the policy laid down by the Cabinet mission. It harmonizes with the belief of the States themselves, expressed by the NAWAB of BHOPAL and other of their wisest counsellors, that they must identify themselves with the larger interests of India and fit themselves to play their appropriate part in the future of their country. The regional confederations now being framed by the States, as well as the larger units, will doubtless seek affiliation ultimately with one or other of the successor Governments to which the new procedure now promises to give birth.

' The Times '

June 5, 1947

FUTURE PROSPECTS UNDER THE NEW RÉGIME

NO TRANSFER OF PARAMOUNTCY

From Our Delhi Correspondent

Now that British India is about to transform itself into two countries, Hindustan and Pakistan, what is to become of the Indian States, in number 562, which have hitherto preserved a degree of independence under their rulers who have had direct relations with the British Crown? In area 712,000 square miles, in population 23,000,000 (according to the 1941 census), they occupy two-fifths of the entire Indian sub-continent and contain nearly a quarter of its total population.

The future of these States is far from clear. Statements made by his Majesty's Government on February 20 and June 3 of this year show that there is no intention to hand over the powers and obligations exercised by the Crown under paramountcy to any successor Government or Governments of India. This runs counter to many declarations made by Congress Party spokesmen purporting to prove that the new State of Hindustan is the natural inheritor of paramountcy. The Muslim League, however, has put forward no such claims on behalf of Pakistan, but has expressed its intention of not interfering with the sovereignty of the Princes.

BRITISH POLICY

The latest British statement on the subject is that "the policy towards Indian States contained in the Cabinet mission's memorandum of May 12, 1946, remains unchanged." That document has not received the attention it deserves at the hands of political commentators. The operative part of it is contained in paragraph 5, which reads as follows:—

When a new fully self-governing or independent Government or Governments come into being in British India, his Majesty's Government's influence with these Governments will not be such as to enable them to carry out the obligations of paramountcy. Moreover, they cannot contemplate that British troops would be retained in India for this purpose. Thus, as a logical sequence, and in view of the desires expressed to them on behalf of the Indian States, his Majesty's Government will cease to exercise the powers of paramountcy. This means that the rights of the States which flow from their relationship to the Crown will no longer exist and that all the rights surrendered by the States to the paramount Power will return to the States. Political arrangements between the States on

the one side and the British Crown and British India on the other will thus be brought to an end. The void will have to be filled either by the States entering into a federal relationship with the successor Government or Governments in British India, or, failing this, entering into particular political arrangements with it or them.

Since this declaration of British policy was made events in India have moved fast and the States find themselves confronted with the urgent alternatives of throwing in their lot with either one of the two Dominions shortly to come into being, or of declaring their independence in circumstances which render the maintenance of such independence precarious. Attempts to preserve a united front were made by the Chamber of Princes under its Chancellor, the Nawab of Bhopal, but these failed in the face of the determination of some Princes to enter the existing Constituent Assembly and thus make their peace with the Congress Party. The Chamber of Princes is now about to be dissolved, having outlived its utility.

The position to-day is that a score of States have joined the Constituent Assembly of Hindustan. They include most of the Rajputana States—Bikanir, Jodhpur, Jaipur, and Udaipur—as well as Patiala, Baroda, Gwalior, Cochin, and a number of smaller States. Since the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan is not yet functioning no State has joined it, but it seems clear that certain Muslim States like Kalat and Bahawalpur will do so as soon as possible.

CASE FOR COMPROMISE

Some States whose rulers profess a different faith to the majority of their subjects are in an awkward fix. Thus the Maharaja of Kashmir, a Hindu prince ruling over a predominantly Muslim population of 4,000,000, finds himself cut off from his co-religionists on the far side of Pakistan. It is difficult to see how he can do otherwise than come to terms with the Muslim League. On the other hand the Nawab of Bhopal is a Muslim ruler most of whose subjects, numbering about 1,000,000, are Hindus. His State is surrounded by the territory of Hindustan, but he is reported to be averse from throwing in his lot with that State, and will possibly seek an alliance with Pakistan.

Two rulers, one Muslim and the other Hindu, have taken the bull by the horns and announced their intention of declaring their independence as soon as paramountcy lapses. The first is the Nizam of Hyderabad, the premier State in India, whose people, some 16,000,000 in number, are 91 per cent. Hindu, while the ruler is the foremost upholder of Islam in the country. The other ruler who has declared he will become independent on August 15 is the Maharaja of Travancore, Hindu head of a Hindu State of 6,000,000 souls (with an appreciable Christian minority), situated in the far south of India. Because it has its own seaboard and ports, as well as a flourishing economy, Travancore is more strongly placed than any other State to withstand sanctions imposed upon it, but political infiltration among Congress sympathizers in the State may prove to be its Achilles heel.

The All-India States Peoples Conference, a Congress-sponsored organization which has been gaining ground in recent years and is now well established in most States, contests the right of any ruler to proclaim his independence. It maintains that sovereignty henceforth vests in the people of the States and that paramountcy must pass to the successor Government of British India. It has announced that it will resist attempts such as those of the rulers of Hyderabad and Travancore to stay out of the union of Hindu-majority provinces, and because it has behind it a powerful "fifth column" among States subjects, it is a force to be reckoned with.

The picture that emerges is thus highly confusing. It is not too much to say that India faces balkanization unless the Princes can arrive at some sort of understanding to "live and let live" with the two major political parties. As has been said, the attitude of the Muslim League has been more tolerant than that of the Congress Party, and the former may pay dividends in the shape of ordered progress and integration of certain States within the framework of Pakistan.

But many Congress leaders contend that the Princes have no survival value in the new India, that they are anachronisms and "medieval despots" who must vanish from the scene as soon as British power is withdrawn. These politicians are confident that, with public opinion and economic sanctions behind them, they can eliminate the Princes and absorb their territories into Hindustan—and the view is even shared by some *dewans* (Ministers of States) who have espoused the Congress cause.

Such a contingency presupposes that the devolution of power from British to Indian hands will be carried out without a hitch. That is a consummation devoutly to be wished, but realism impels one to say that the possibility of civil strife, communal or otherwise, cannot be ruled out. And it is a significant fact that in recent months the Indian States have been comparatively free from communal rioting and many refugees from fanaticism in British India have taken shelter under the protecting wing of Princes who have fed and clothed them.

Should circumstances arise in which the system of personal rule provides a greater degree of security and order than may be found in adjoining areas under "democratic" rule, its attractions might prove quite surprisingly strong. Even in the rapidly changing political

set-up in India to-day, the tradition of loyalty to a dynasty persists and has much to recommend it.

DANGERS AHEAD

If it came to a "showdown" and active strife developed between a successor Government and certain Princes, widespread disorder might occur and the last state of the country be worse than the present. The communal virus might spread to the States and rulers might emerge as champions of a particular faith, leading a *jihad* (holy war) against all comers. It is worth remembering that some of the bigger Princes have at their disposal quite considerable military forces, which they could augment by recruitment among unemployed ex-soldiers.

Therefore, although it may seem easy to drive a wedge between rulers and their subjects, politicians in British India would be well advised to exercise moderation and restraint in their dealings with the States. Hitherto they have, generally speaking, not done so. What is needed now is a measure of tolerance which will give Indian India a chance to play its part in the evolution of a policy embodying all that is best in indigenous systems as well as those elements of western democracy which suit the Indian temperament. Equally, it is incumbent upon the Indian Princes to adjust their outlook to modern conditions and emerge as constitutional heads of their States. Most of them already realize this and are anxious to institute reforms which will put them abreast of the rest of the country. A few are, indeed, ahead of British India and may be relied upon to follow progressive courses.

The great majority of Princes have no wish to fall foul of popular parties—unless the Communist menace, which is most serious in South India, can be described as such. The smaller States know they are so vulnerable that they cannot survive except on sufferance. That is why they are anxious to come to terms with the new India. In some cases they are seeking to protect their interests—quite legitimately—by forming regional confederations which will constitute more stable administrative and political entities. Before joining one constituent assembly or the other, they wish to see the complete picture as it emerges from the hands of the constitution makers. In other cases, important States have decided to take part in shaping the new constitution.

In all this the British have no role other than that of counsellor and friend. The last thing they wish to encourage is fissiparous tendencies leading to the balkanization of India. The Viceroy, Lord Mountbatten, has made it clear that the British Government does not intend to recognize any Indian State as a separate Dominion. As Crown Representative, he will do everything in his power to help the States to negotiate with the other parties. The inference is that Britain hopes it will be possible for every State to establish satisfactory relations with one or other of the Dominions shortly to come into being. That should also be the hope of progressive minded Indians.

' The Times '

June 20, 1947

The declaration of the Governments of Hyderabad and Travancore of their intention to assume independence when power is transferred from British to Indian hands has caused lively controversy in British India. The Congress Party, pursuing its traditional contention that any Indian succession Government is entitled to assume all the powers and obligations vesting in the British raj, strongly denies the right of the States to declare their independence when Britain puts an end to the existing connexion between the Crown and the ruling Princes. The latest resolution of the All-India Congress Committee goes so far as to assert that it would be "a denial of the course of history and of the objectives of the Indian people today" and calls upon the States to "enter as democratic units into the Indian Union." Mr. JAWAHARLAL NEHRU has claimed "suzerainty or paramountcy" for the Union Government, and has given a warning that it will not recognize the independence of any State or tolerate such recognition by any foreign Power. Mr. JINNAH, on the other hand, speaking for the Muslim League, contends that, since the British Government have refused to transfer paramountcy, paramountcy will come to an end, that no one can compel the States to do anything contrary to their own free will, that they are entitled to remain independent if they so desire, and that Pakistan will be glad to negotiate or adjust political, commercial, and economic relations with them on this basis if they wish.

This is not a question in which Britain can interfere: it must be settled in India. There is some truth in both contentions, contradictory as they may seem at first sight. Under British rule India has been treated in many respects as an organic whole; economic life would be brought to an end if the elaborate network of agreements covering finance, Customs, communications and the like now linking British India to the Indian States were suddenly to lapse. These "matters of common concern" will not lose their importance to all parties when the British Government cease to exercise the powers of paramountcy; due provision must be made for them, if the whole country, irrespective of political boundaries, is not to fall into administrative and economic chaos. Certainly it would not be in accordance with the larger interests of either Dominion if individual States were to buttress a claim

to independence by relying upon non-Indian support. But the Congress Party is acting most unwisely in endeavouring to guard against such a danger by openly threatening the rulers and Governments of the States. Not for the first time, Mr. JINNAH shows better judgment. He has no more wish than the Congress Party to see a patchwork of independent jurisdictions in India, but he remembers that it was the ill-advised attempt of the Congress Party in 1938 to force its views upon the Princes as well as upon the Muslims which led the States to recoil from the federal provisions of the Act of 1935 and the Muslims to press on with their campaign for Pakistan. Mr. JINNAH is confident that the States, with their long political experience, will accommodate themselves to the new situation. He is content to accept the British view that it is open to them either to enter into a federal relationship with the Governments of Hindustan or Pakistan or to remain outside the orbit of both while concluding such arrangements upon "matters of common concern" as may be necessary. He recognizes, as Mr. AMERY recognized in a recent address to the Royal Empire Society, that the two Indian Dominions, like other Dominions of the Commonwealth, can easily maintain a fraternal association with lesser units in various stages of political development. There is no need to force a set political pattern upon every part of India.

It would be wrong to take for granted that the States intend to stand upon the strict letter of the sovereignty they will shortly recover. The majority of the 563 States are already engaged in pooling their sovereignty into the groupings which owe much to the foresight of the NAWAB of Bhopal. Certain of these, like the confederation of Western India and Gujarat, possess ports and other attributes of economic strength which would make close cooperation with both Dominions of British India profitable to all parties. The larger States which stand outside these groupings have their own special difficulties and interests. The two States which have already announced their intention of preserving independence of action are examples. Hyderabad, for all its size, is landlocked and must choose its course with care; hence its present attitude of reserve—which is all that "independence" means for the moment. Travancore, rich, highly developed, and with a population larger than New Zealand, has its closest economic ties with Bengal. It cannot declare its political and economic affiliations until the size and situation of the two future Bengals are determined. Indeed, the existing, un-

certainty about the boundaries of the two Indian Dominions is a major factor in causing several important States to postpone their decision. Another is the determination to avoid, if possible, identification with the grievous communal cleavage which at present accompanies—and may still imperil—the projected division of British India. To some predominantly Hindu States, like Mysore and certain units in Rajputana, the choice appears obvious, for geographical as well as for communal reasons; they are already ranging themselves with the Hindustan Constituent Assembly. But even they have not committed themselves to entering the Union until its final shape emerges.

Thus the distinction which the Congress Party seeks to draw between the "patriotic" States associated themselves with the Constituent Assembly

of Hindustan and the "unpatriotic" States which decide to hold aloof is unreasonable and unfair. Each State or group of States must retain in its own hands the decision to federate with one or other Dominion or to remain outside both while making provision for "matters of common concern." There is no obligation, moral or otherwise, upon any State to enter either Constituent Assembly unless it is convinced that such a course will be advantageous. Those, like Hyderabad, Travancore, and, it may be, Bhopal, who favour abstention, do not thereby debar themselves from future association with one or other Dominion or from close cooperation with either or both. The attempt of the Congress Party to put pressure upon the States would seem to be unjustified as well as unwise. Certainly it fits in badly with the party's recent disclaimer of the intention to force a constitution upon any unwilling portion of the country. There is no reason why this disclaimer, which forms the basis of the present procedural plan, should hold good for British India alone.

' The Times '

June 21, 1947

DOMINIONS OF INDIA AND PAKISTAN

FREEDOM FOR STATES UNDER INDEPENDENCE BILL

GOVERNOR-GENERAL'S TRANSITIONAL POWERS

The Indian Independence Bill, providing for the establishment of the two independent Dominions of India and Pakistan on August 15 next, was formally introduced by the Prime Minister in the House of Commons yesterday.

The Bill gives extensive transitional powers to the Viceroy and Governor-General to make orders for dividing between the new Dominions the powers of the Governor-General in Council and for the division of the Indian armed forces.

Sir Cyril Radcliffe, K.C., has been appointed chairman of the Boundary Commissions for the Punjab and Bengal.

ROYAL TITLE CHANGE

FUTURE OF TREATIES

From Our Parliamentary Correspondent

A significant new chapter in the history of the British Commonwealth was opened when the Prime Minister formally introduced in the House of Commons the Indian Independence Bill.

It was done in the traditional way. The Speaker called upon the Prime Minister, who sat opposite the dispatch box on the Treasury bench; Mr. Attlee nodded his head; and the Clerk of the House read out the title of the Bill, the text of which was issued later in the day. Thus was launched the Bill by which will be established on August 15, 1947, the two independent Dominions of India and Pakistan, to whose Governments there will then be transferred all the powers hitherto exercised in British India by the Parliament and Government of the United Kingdom.

Apart from the States which may adhere to one or other of them, the two new Dominions together will embrace, in the area which is now British India, a total

population of more than 300,000,000 people. This compares with a total population of about 33,000,000 in all the rest of the self-governing Dominions.

The future of the North-West Frontier Province is yet to be decided, but on the assumption that this Province decides to join Pakistan a rough estimate suggests that within the territories of British India there will be a population of about 220,000,000 in the new Dominion of India and about 80,000,000 in the Dominion of Pakistan. Outside British India there is a population of about 100,000,000 in the 630 Indian States. Some of the States have already decided to link themselves either with India or Pakistan.

20 CLAUSES

The Bill will be debated on second reading in the Commons on Thursday. Its main provisions, contained in 20 clauses and three schedules, are as follow:—

The two independent Dominions to be known as India and Pakistan are to be set up from August 15, 1947.

India will consist of all the territories under the sovereignty of the King which are included in British India except those designated in the Bill as the territories of Pakistan.

Pakistan will consist of the Provinces of East Bengal and West Punjab, the territories included in the Province of Sind, and the Chief Commissioner's Province of British Baluchi-

stan. If the referendum to be held in the North-West Frontier Province shows a majority of votes in favour of joining the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan, this Province, too, will be part of Pakistan.

There is to be a Governor-General appointed by the King for each of the two Dominions, but unless and until provision is made to the contrary by the Legislature of either of the Dominions the same person may be Governor-General of both.

The words "Indiæ Imperator" and the words "Emperor of India" are to be omitted from the royal style and titles.

From the appointed day (August 15) his Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom will have no responsibility for the government of any of the territories now included in British India. The suzerainty of his Majesty over the States will also lapse from that date.

Temporary provisions are made for the government of each of the new Dominions. The powers of the Legislature of each Dominion, for the purpose of making provisions for its constitution, will be exercised in the first instance by the Constituent Assembly of that Dominion.

Extensive powers are given to the present Viceroy and Governor-General to make such orders as seem to him necessary or expedient to bring the Act into force. He may make orders for dividing between the new Dominions the powers of the Governor-General in Council and for the division of the Indian armed forces. These transitional powers extend only to March 31, 1948, or such earlier date as may be determined by the Legislature of either Dominion.

REAL INDEPENDENCE

The title of the Bill in itself is noteworthy. It is intended to emphasize the fact—not always understood in other countries—that the self-governing Dominions of the British Commonwealth are completely independent nations, subject to no constraint by the United Kingdom or any other member State, and united only by their common allegiance to the Crown. To make this more plain, on the accession of these two new Dominions, the royal style and titles will be so amended as to omit that which has made his Majesty King-Emperor of India. The passage in the Bill relating to this reads:—

The assent of the Parliament of the United Kingdom is hereby given to the omission from the royal style and titles of the words "Indiæ Imperator" and the words "Emperor of India" and to the issue by his Majesty for that purpose of his royal proclamation under the Great Seal of the Realm.

Under the Statute of Westminster it is necessary for the Parliaments of all the Dominions to give their assent to any change in the royal style and titles. Their Governments have already indicated that there will be no objection to the passing of the necessary legislation.

TREATY RELATIONS

Other consequences of the establishment of the new Dominions are set forth in the same clause, as follow:—

7.—(1) As from the appointed day—

(a) His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom have no responsibility as respects the government of any of the territories which, immediately before that day, were included in British India;

(b) the suzerainty of his Majesty over the Indian States lapses, and with it, all treaties and agreements in force at the date of the passing of this Act between his Majesty and the rulers of Indian States, all functions exercisable by his Majesty at that date with respect to Indian States, all obligations of his Majesty

existing at that date towards Indian States or the rulers thereof, and all powers, rights, authority or jurisdiction exercisable by his Majesty at that date in or in relation to Indian States by treaty, grant, usage, sufferance, or otherwise; and

(c) there lapse also any treaties or agreements in force at the date of the passing of this Act between his Majesty and any persons having authority in the tribal areas, any obligations of his Majesty existing at that date to any such persons or with respect to the tribal areas, and all powers, rights, authority, or jurisdiction exercisable at that date by his Majesty in or in relation to the tribal areas by treaty, grant, usage, sufferance, or otherwise.

There follows an important proviso that, notwithstanding anything in paragraphs (b) or (c), any agreements relating to customs, transit and communications, posts and telegraphs, or other like matters shall be continued until the agreements are denounced by the States or the tribal areas on the one hand or by the Dominions or Provinces on the other, or are superseded by subsequent agreements. This is inserted to prevent any disruption of common services after the transfer of power. With the passing of paramountcy all the Indian States will regain complete freedom of action and it will be for them to decide for themselves how they will shape their course in the India of the future.

GOVERNOR-GENERAL

It appears from the Bill that Lord Mountbatten will become for a transitional period after the passing of the Act Governor-General of both Dominions. This transitional period will not continue beyond March 31, 1948, and may be terminated earlier at the instance of either Dominion. If it is so desired there will afterwards be a Governor-General for each.

Under the same clause the Governor-General will make such Orders as appear to him necessary or expedient for dividing between the new Dominions and the new Provinces to be constituted "the powers, rights, property, duties, and liabilities of the Governor-General in Council" or of the Provinces which are to cease to exist; for "removing difficulties arising in connexion with the transition to the provisions of this Act"; for authorizing the carrying on of the business of the Governor-General in Council between the passing of this Act and the appointed day; for enabling agreements to be entered into and other acts done on behalf of either of the new Dominions before the appointed day; for authorizing the carrying on for the time being on behalf of the new Dominions, or groups of Provinces, of services and activities previously carried on on behalf of British India as a whole; for regulating the monetary system and any matters relating to the Reserve Bank of India; and, for any of these purposes, for varying the constitution, powers, or jurisdiction of any legislature, court, or other authority in the new Dominions, and creating new legislatures, courts, or other authorities.

ARMED FORCES

These powers are to be made retrospective to June 3, 1947. A special clause makes provision for the Indian armed forces, and stipulates that the Orders to be made by the Governor-General "shall make provision for the division of the Indian armed forces of his Majesty between the two Dominions and for the command and governance of those forces until the division is completed." Another clause lays it down that nothing in the Bill

affects the jurisdiction or authority of the United Kingdom Government, or the Service departments, in relation to any of his Majesty's forces (not being Indian forces) " which may, on or after the appointed day, be in either of the new Dominions " or elsewhere in the territories which are at present included in India.

The Bill recognizes as the Constituent Assembly for India, with the necessary modifications, the Assembly which sat first on December 9, 1946, in which the Muslim League declined to participate. It also authorizes the establishment for Muslim India of a Constituent Assembly of Pakistan to be set up under the authority of the Governor-General. The Indian States may accede to either of the two Dominions and their representatives may sit in either of the Assemblies.

THE INDIA OFFICE

When the Bill becomes law the functions of the Secretary for India and of the India Office will be ended, and all business relating to India and Pakistan will be dealt with by the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations. The India Office was built out of Indian revenues, and there is a proviso in the 1935 Act that the premises shall be used only in connexion with the relationship of the Crown to India. It is expected that some of the archives will be transferred to the new Dominion Governments and that an amicable arrangement will be made with them about the future use of the India Office for some other Government purpose.

It was on June 3 that Mr. Attlee first announced to Parliament the plans for the transfer of power to successor authorities in India this year on the basis of Dominion status. Within 32 days, so swiftly have events moved here and in India, he has been able to present to Parliament the Bill for establishing the two new Dominions of the King.

' The Times '

July 5, 1947.

The purpose of the Indian Independence Bill, which the PRIME MINISTER introduced into the House of Commons yesterday, is to permit the creation of two independent Indian Dominions out of the territory long known as British India. No more appropriate date could have been devised for the Bill's appearance than Independence Day, July 4. By making certain necessary alterations in the Government of India Act of 1935 and allowing the remaining provisions to stand until they are modified by the new Dominion Governments at their discretion the necessary legislative framework is provided for the period of transition which must elapse before each Dominion has framed its final constitution. This procedure, which was suggested to the Cabinet last month by LORD MOUNTBATTEN, ingeniously solves a major difficulty in the transfer of power from British to Indian hands. *

It has long been the desire of all sections of Indian opinion, regardless of party differences, that this transfer should be effected as rapidly as possible. The difficulty was to devise a method of effecting the transfer without waiting for the completion of the process, almost certainly lengthy, by which the peoples of India must finally shape their own constitutional arrangements. By setting up two Indian Dominions and conferring upon them the complete control of their own affairs enjoyed by other partners in the Commonwealth this country is enabled to relinquish power over India forthwith in a perfectly constitutional fashion, while leaving to each Dominion the remaining responsibility of shaping at leisure the form of its domestic policy and the nature of its external relations. In accordance with the undertaking of the Government to pass the necessary legislation through Parliament before the end of the present session, some hard and complex work has been done both in Whitehall and in Delhi. The provisions of the draft Bill have been communicated informally to the leaders of the Indian parties, and it is understood that they have made valuable contributions to its present form. Since the policy which it embodies has already received the general approval of MR. CHURCHILL and other Opposition leaders, its passage through Parliament should not be impeded for political reasons.

The territories of the two new Dominions are to be known as India and Pakistan. They are to come into exist-

ence on August 15. The Bill also provides for the work of the boundary commissions which, under the guidance of SIR CYRIL RADCLIFFE as chairman, are to define the final frontiers. Each Dominion is to have its own Governor-General; but until they make their decision there may be one Governor-General for both. This provision may be important. There is at present a widespread feeling in India that LORD MOUNTBATTEN, who is confronting the difficult work of partition with such outstanding energy and success, is probably the best person to carry it to completion. For this purpose certain specific powers are entrusted by the Bill to the Governor-General. These he may exercise until the end of March, 1948, unless either Dominion decides to terminate them at an earlier date. Full legislative authority in each Dominion is vested in its Constituent Assembly, which is consequently empowered to create its own Cabinet, and after August 15 the central Government of India comes to an end, together with every form of British control over the new Dominions or any portion of them. Detailed provisions in the Bill cover the armed forces, the services of the Secretary of State, and numerous other questions raised by the changes proposed, of which the more important are summarized on another page.

Since Parliament is not entitled to legislate directly for the territories of the Indian States, the references in the Bill to their future position are necessarily indirect. The Bill lays down in terms the right of the States to accede to either of the new Dominions. It is important to emphasize this right of accession—and, presumably, of abstention—in view of the political pressure to which the States are being subjected by the Congress Party. The Bill further provides that from August 15 the suzerainty of the Crown over the States lapses, and that all power and authority exercisable by the Crown in relation to them comes to an end. By its nature the peculiar relation of paramountcy which has so long linked the States to the Crown cannot be transferred to any succession Government. This is not to say that chaos must supervene with the end of this relation. Until existing agreements covering Customs, communications, posts and telegraphs, and other such matters are either denounced by the rulers or the Dominion or Province concerned or superseded by subsequent agreements, the Bill provides that they shall remain valid. Such "standstill" arrangements are plainly indispensable to prevent the economic life of India from undergoing a disastrous interruption. There is no reason to suppose that the States will object to them. But it is essential that the States shall be given time to adapt themselves to the new régime, and

this is plainly the intention of the Bill in so far as they come within its scope.

The creation of two Asiatic Dominions in the manner set out by the Bill is an event without parallel in the history of the Commonwealth. It is another remarkable illustration—the United States of America was the first—of the power of those political ideas fashioned in this island of which, as BURKE argued so eloquently when American independence was at stake, freedom is the first. The manner in which, since BURKE'S day, the constituent elements of the world-wide association of British communities have evolved from subordination to full and equal partnership has borne out his eloquence, though it still perplexes some observers. They cannot easily understand how the complete independence of each country in the Commonwealth can be reconciled with the close and cordial relationship which binds them all together. The essence of this relation, into which this great sub-continent of India, with its diversity of race, of creed, and of culture, now newly enters, is that it is voluntary. It is instantly terminable at the discretion of each associate. It is entirely appropriate that the "short title" of the legislative enactment which will bring the two new Dominions into existence should be "The Indian Independence Act"; and, by the same token, it can reasonably be hoped that, with the choice made free, the British connexion will not be wholly abandoned.

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LORD MOUNTBATTEN AND MR. JINNAH

BRITISH FORCES' EARLY WITHDRAWAL

The Indian Independence Bill, which provides for the establishment on August 15 of the two independent Dominions of India and Pakistan, was given an unopposed second reading in the House of Commons last night.

The Prime Minister said the King had intimated that as soon as the Bill was passed he would accept the recommendations of the Congress Party and the Muslim League in favour of Lord Mountbatten as Governor-General of the Dominion of India, and of Mr. Jinnah as Governor-General of Pakistan.

HOPE OF FUTURE UNITY

BRITISH AIMS

WESTMINSTER, THURSDAY

Although shades from the glittering days of India's past under British administration may have hovered over the House of Commons this evening when the Indian Independence Bill came up for second reading, it was to a future in which he hoped the two new Dominions to be set up on August 15 might ultimately come together to form one great member-state of the British Commonwealth that Mr. ATTLEE lifted the gaze of the House.

The dignity and restraint of his speech matched the greatness of the occasion and the mood of the assembly. No passage was heard with closer interest in the silent Chamber—enriched by the glow of *saris* in the crowded galleries—than that in which Mr. ATTLEE announced that the King had intimated that he was prepared as soon as the Bill was passed to accept the recommendations of Congress and the Muslim League in favour of the present Viceroy as Governor-General of the Dominion of India and Mr. Jinnah as Governor-General of Pakistan.

NEW CHAPTER OPENED

VOLUNTARY SURRENDER OF POWER

Mr. ATTLEE, in moving the second reading of the Indian Independence Bill, after announcing that the King placed his prerogative and interest, so far as concerned matters dealt with in the Bill, at the disposal of Parliament, said that the Bill brought to an end one chapter in the long connexion between Britain and India and opened another. British rule, which had endured so long, was now, at the instance of this country, coming to an end.

There had been many instances in history where States had at the point of the sword been forced to surrender government to another people, but it was very rare for a people who had long enjoyed power over another nation to surrender it voluntarily. He recalled as the nearest parallel the action of the Liberal Government of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman of 1906, when he gave back to the Dutch in South Africa the freedom to manage their own affairs which they had lost in the South African war. It was a great act of faith which bore fruit in 1914 and in 1939. He often heard that great South African statesman General Smuts describe it as marking the end of imperialism. He regretted, and he was sure the House would regret, that the statesman who was then a young Under-Secretary who had the honour of announcing the decision of the Government to extend responsible government to the Transvaal 41 years ago—Mr. Churchill—was not, for reasons they all knew, able to be present at the debate that day. (Cheers.)

Looking back over the years we might well be proud of the work which our fellow citizens had done in India. (Cheers.) There had, of course, been mistakes and failures, but we could assert that our rule in India would bear comparison with that of any other nation which had been charged with the ruling of a people so different from themselves. There had been a great succession of Viceroy's who had made their contribution and had sought to serve India faithfully. Not least among them would be counted the present Viceroy, (Cheers.) There were also the names of many governors of provinces, and high among them was that of Sir John Anderson. Administrators, soldiers, missionaries, and others had served India, and in various parts of India there were the graves of those who had died in her service.

Constitutional change did not mean the disappearance of the civilian European communities in India. In the future those of British race who had been in the services in India would, the Government confidently expected, be willing, at the invitation of the two new Governments, to continue in official service in India and Pakistan.

PARTITION THE ONLY WAY

It had been the settled policy of all parties in this country for many years that Indians in course of time should manage their own affairs, but the question had always been "How and when." The major difficulty had been the communal system, the absence of mutual trust and toleration between communities.

It had sometimes been said by our enemies that this was a difficulty created by ourselves in order to perpetuate our own rule. Nothing could be more untrue. They had all wished to maintain the unity of India and to give complete self-government and preserve the rights of minorities and everyone had hoped that a solution might be found without resorting to partition. He knew that many Indians of all communities devoutly desired this. It had not been found practicable. They and the Indian statesmen had had to accept the only alternative—partition. He earnestly hoped that this severance might not endure, that the two new Dominions they now proposed to set up might in course of time come together again to form one great member-state of the British Commonwealth of Nations, but this was a matter for Indians themselves.

The demand for independence had been insistently pressed for many years by leaders of Indian thought. There were very strong reasons that militated against the complete isolation that some demanded. The one great practical example of how complete freedom and independence could be combined with inclusion in a greater whole was the British Commonwealth of Nations. The British Commonwealth of Nations was so unique that its nature was still not fully comprehended. Even many of our American friends did not understand that the Dominions were as free as Great Britain.

In this Bill they set up two independent Indian Dominions, free and equal and of no less status than the United Kingdom, and completely free in all respects of any control by this country, but united by a common allegiance to the Sovereign, receiving through their membership of the Commonwealth great advantages but not in any way suffering any restriction. The idea of this Bill expressed the independence that had been the goal for so long of so many Indians. He believed it would be realized within the British Commonwealth of Nations. It was his hope that these new Dominions might continue in this great association, giving and receiving benefits. He saw

with great regret in one paper, and he thought it was in one paper only, that the step they were now taking was described as abdication. It was not abdication; it was the fulfilment of Britain's mission. (Cheers.) It was the culminating point in a long course of events.

The House was being asked to deal with the Bill in a very short time, but the Government were really constrained by the urgency of the matter. It had been an arduous and exacting task to prepare the Bill in the time available. No doubt if time allowed it could be improved. Its general lines had had to be discussed by the Governor-General with the Indian leaders, and while he would not suggest that every detail had the approval of Congress and Muslim leaders, he believed that in its present form it represented the greatest amount of agreement possible and he believed it would effect what was desired. Delay he was absolutely certain would jeopardize success.

Clause 5 provided for the appointment by the King of a Governor-General for each of the new Dominions, but with the proviso that until provision was made to the contrary the same person might be Governor-General of both. The appointment of Governors-General in the Dominions was made by the King on the advice of his Ministers in the Dominion concerned, and it would be wholly improper for his Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom to be in any way concerned with the matter. But to-day (continued Mr. Astley) it is necessary for me to make some further comments because the position in relation to the appointment of Governors-General of the new Dominions is exceptional.

UNUSUAL PROCEDURE

In the first place, there is the matter of procedure. It is not possible to follow the normal procedure in this case. Under the Bill, Governors-General have to be appointed as from August 15. Although the two countries become Dominions as from that date, there can be no Ministers formally to advise the Crown until a Governor-General has been appointed and Ministers have taken office. In these circumstances, it was agreed with the Indian leaders, and the King's approval was obtained, that the Viceroy would consult the recognized leaders of Congress and the Muslim League as to whom they would wish to recommend for appointment as Governors-General. Then their advice would be formally tendered to the King by his Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom.

This procedure will, of course, apply only in the present case. I wish to emphasize the fact that although the appointments would be made on the formal advice of Ministers here, they are, in fact, the recommendations of the Indian leaders themselves. So much for the exceptional procedure in the present instance. The Viceroy has represented that it would be in the interest of all if some statement could be made at an early date about the persons who are to be recommended for these posts. This, again, is a most unusual procedure. I should inform the House that I have received the King's specific authority for referring to recommendations before him and to which assent cannot, of course, be given until the Bill has become law. It had been intimated to us that it would be most convenient to all concerned to have one Governor-General for both of these Dominions in the initial stages, and for some time we proceeded on this assumption. It has recently become clear, however, that the Muslim League was in favour of a separate Governor-General to be appointed for Pakistan.

THE VICEROY AND MR. JINNAH

It is obviously very desirable that this matter should be settled at the earliest possible opportunity in order that the position may be understood in India, and so that the new Governors-General can prepare themselves to take over on August 16. Both Congress and the Muslim League have been recognized in the Bill as successor authorities, and they have made recommendations which have been conveyed by his Majesty's Government to his Majesty. While the formal announcement must await the passing of the Bill, his Majesty has intimated that he is prepared to accept these recommendations as soon as the Bill is passed. The recommendations are in favour of the present Viceroy as Governor-General of India, and of Mr. Jinnah as Governor-General of Pakistan.

The recommendation of Lord Mountbatten was welcomed by the Muslim League (Mr. Attlee went on), and they had agreed that he should be the chairman of the Joint Defence Council which would be responsible for the Central Administration of the Armed Forces until India and Pakistan were in a position to administer them. He was sure the House would agree that this recommendation showed that Lord Mountbatten had carried out his duties in India with complete impartiality and had won the confidence of all the people of India. (Ministerial cheers.) He had expressed his willingness in the special circumstances to serve in this capacity, at all events during the transition period.

He wished to pay his tribute to Lord Mountbatten. Great benefits for the future of the whole continent of India would have followed from his appointment as Governor-General of both new Dominions. He had built up a remarkable position for himself with both parties in India and his wise counsels and his great devotion to the public cause without any thought of his own personal position would undoubtedly prove a most beneficial factor in the future development of the whole continent of India. (Cheers.)

TRANSFER OF POWER

FOREIGN RELATIONS

With the transfer of power to two Indian Dominions it was necessary to terminate the paramountcy and suzerainty of the Crown over the Indian States, and with them the political engagements concluded under paramountcy. A feature running through all their relations with the States had been that the Crown had conducted their foreign relations. They received no international recognition independent of India as a whole. With the ending of the treaties and agreements the States regained their independence, but it would be unfortunate if they were to become islands cut off from the rest of India. The termination of their existing relationship with the Crown need have no such consequences. Already a large number of them had declared their willingness to enter into relationship with the new Dominions, and some had been represented in the Constituent Assembly of India. The Government hoped that all States would in due course find their appropriate place within one or other of the new Dominions. He welcomed the active steps that were being taken to set up States Departments of the new Dominions to handle negotiations with the States Governments. If he were asked what would be the attitude of his Majesty's Government to any State which decided to cut adrift from its neighbours and assert its independence he would say to the ruler of that State: "Take your time, think again." He hoped that no irrevocable decision to stay

out would be taken prematurely. Fresh agreements with the North-West Frontier tribes would have to be negotiated by the successor Governments.

Subsection (2) of Clause 7 dealt with the omission from the Royal Style and Title of the words *Indiae Imperator* and the words "Emperor of India." A change in the Royal Style and Title was not a matter for the United Kingdom alone, but concerned other members of the British Commonwealth as well. As a result of consultations with the Prime Ministers concerned, he was authorized to state that the other Commonwealth Governments agreed with the proposed change in the royal style and titles and were prepared to take such steps as they considered necessary to obtain the consent of their Parliaments. It might, therefore, be some time before this sub-section could become operative.

With the termination of all British control over the Indian sub-continent the historic office of Secretary of State for India would come to an end. The conduct of relations with India would fall within the sphere of the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations. The transitional period would, no doubt, bring, in our relations to India and Pakistan, a considerable volume of work, much of it of a winding-up character which would not ordinarily fall within the range of the functions of the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations. This would add considerably to his responsibilities, and in order to assist in this work it was proposed to appoint a Minister of State for Commonwealth Relations. It was one of the posts allowed under section 2 of the Re-election of Ministers Act, 1919, commonly called "Ministers without Portfolio." There would consequently be no need for legislation, but he would be submitting a recommendation to the King for filling this post in due course.

TWO LEGISLATURES

CONSTITUENT POWERS

The original plan of the Cabinet mission was for the setting up of a Constituent Assembly for the purpose of framing a constitution for all India. The decision to set up two Dominions, of course, altered the whole situation.

It had become necessary to provide for legislatures in India and Pakistan as from August 15, and these legislatures, besides having general legislative powers, would have also constituent powers—that was to say, they must be legislative bodies set up for the dual purpose of performing the ordinary functions of a Parliament and of making some constitutions. The problem to be solved was to get Parliaments at work in the two Dominions where there was no constitution actually in being, while at the same time providing for the framing of a new constitution. A solution has been found by adopting the India Act of 1935, with necessary adaptations, as the basic constitution for the time being of both the new Dominions, while giving the constituent Assemblies the status of Parliaments.

Clause 9 set out the machinery of adaptation. This was to be done by order of the Governor-General. By the appointed day, August 15, the powers were exercisable by the Governor-General within the meaning of the Act of 1935, that was to say, by Lord Mountbatten, but after that date, where the Order or Act affected only one Dominion, by the Governor-General of that Dominion; where it concerned both by the two Governors-General acting jointly. He (Mr. Attlee) admitted that the powers given here were very wide. That was inevitable in the nature of the case. The Governor-General had to bring the Act into operation. He had to effect a division between the two Dominions, dividing the powers, rights, assets, property, liabilities, &c.

The Indian leaders had agreed in principle to the setting up of an arbitration tribunal to which could be referred any question regarding the position of assets and liabilities on which the two Governments could not reach agreement. The question of the composition of that tribunal was still under discussion.

VITAL SERVICES

But, besides these duties, the Governor-General had to make the adaptations required in the Government of India Act, 1935, in order to make the new constitution for the time being. He had in particular the task of arranging during the transition period for the carrying out of services which were vital in the interests of both the new Dominions.

The House would realize how great was the problem of dealing with such matters as railway and other communications, the Reserve Bank, the monetary and fiscal systems, and, of course, defence, to mention only the most obvious examples of those services which had hitherto been operated in the interests of the whole of India. Clearly, it must take time before the separate systems could be set up, for definite agreements to be made between the two Dominions. Provision must be made by some method—it might be by joint delegations of the two Dominions—for carrying out all these various activities during the transition period, and it was for this reason that such wide powers were given to the Governor-General. These powers would come to an end on March 31 next, unless terminated earlier by the Dominion legislatures.

His Majesty's Government in the White Paper published last April made their position plain with regard to the services and all pledges given then by his Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom stood. It was then stated that the Government of India accepted liability for pensions earned by the services under the Secretary of State whether they were civilians or members of the defence services. Clause 10, which had been inserted expressly at the request of the leaders of the Indian parties, provided for the maintenance of the existing conditions of service as well as the right of those members of the Secretary of State's services who continued to serve the Governments of the new Dominions. He was happy to announce that the leaders of the Indian parties had guaranteed the existing terms and conditions of service of all those in their services, including Europeans. (Cheers.) That excluded any discrimination between Indians and non-Indians. There was one category for which his Majesty's Government had a special responsibility—namely, the Europeans who had served in the Secretary of State's and analogous services. The Government intended to invite the new authorities to negotiate in due course an agreement whereby a capital sum in sterling would be set up to cover these liabilities. Meanwhile they would receive the pensions to which they were entitled.

Until the division of the armed forces was completed and the Dominion Governments were in a position to administer them, the existing armed forces in India would remain under the administrative control of the Commander-in-Chief, who would in turn be under a joint defence council of which, it had been agreed, Lord Mountbatten should be chairman. The Commander-in-Chief would have no responsibility for law and order, no operational control of any units except those in transit from one dominion to another, and no power to move troops within the borders of either dominion.

WITHDRAWAL OF BRITISH TROOPS

On the transfer of power on August 15,

the withdrawal of British armed forces in India would immediately be started. The withdrawal would be carried out as rapidly as shipping permitted, and would be completed probably by the end of the year. The Third Schedule of the Bill set out modifications of the Army Act to be made for the British Army while it remained in India. The general principle was to remove all powers of interference by the Governor-General and other civilian authorities in India with the internal affairs of the British Army in India, while preserving their powers and duties so far as they did not amount to interference of that kind.

It had been the Government's intention to undertake negotiations which should be concluded simultaneously with the transfer of power, on matters arising out of the transfer of power, but owing to the course of events it had not been possible for such agreements to be negotiated: it was only since his Majesty's Government's statement on June 3 that it became clear that the transfer of power would be to two separate States. The Government's desire was to establish close, cordial, and effective relations with both the new Dominions in all fields affecting the common interest, and particularly in regard to defence matters and in the economic field.

' The Times '

July 11, 1947

Yesterday the House of Commons, in according an unopposed second reading to the Indian Independence Bill, gave expression to the confidence of the British people in the vitality of the conceptions of political freedom first fashioned in this island. The power of these conceptions to transcend the barriers of race and creed has been exhibited on previous occasions during the evolution of the Commonwealth, but it has never been illustrated in more dramatic fashion than in the legislative measure which will call into being two great new Asian partners in that world-wide and voluntary association. That the rule of Britain over India would finally achieve some such fulfilment has been long perceived by British statesmen, if only because an evolution of this nature was inherent in the political principles on which that rule was based. Exactly one hundred and fourteen years ago, as a correspondent has recalled, when the great India Bill of 1833 was being debated in the House of Commons, MACAULAY delivered in its support on July 10 the famous forecast which has since inspired so many of those who followed him in the service of India: It may be that the public mind of India may expand under our system till it has outgrown that system: that by good government we may educate our subjects into a capacity for better government: that having become instructed in European knowledge, they may, in some future age, demand European institutions. Whether such a day will ever come, I know not. But never will I attempt to avert it or retard it. Whenever it comes, it will be the proudest day in English history.

That day has now arrived.

The PRIME MINISTER'S impressive survey of the development of British rule in India from its early beginnings to its fulfilment in the present Bill set the tone of yesterday's debate upon a level worthy of a great occasion. But it was to the future rather than to the past that he was mainly concerned to direct the attention of the House. He made plain his conviction that the ending of one chapter in the long connexion between the British and Indian peoples was in fact the preparation for another; and he laid stress upon the important part which British citizens continuing to work in India could play in strengthening the ties of friendship between the two new Dominions and the other partners of the Commonwealth. His exposition of Commonwealth relations, and his insistence that the two new independent Dominions would have no lesser status than the United Kingdom or Canada, will certainly command abroad

the approval generally manifested by all sections of opinion in the House. His survey of the present situation in India and of the developments which the Bill permits threw light upon many points hitherto obscured from the view of the public. In regretting that the peoples of India had found it impossible to combine in a single political unit the PRIME MINISTER echoed a feeling generally held both inside and outside Parliament. But the communal problem, which was not of Britain's creating, had stood in the way; and the plan now proposed was the best that could be devised. It had been hoped that the two new Dominions would agree to accept a common Governor-General for the transition period preceding the completion of partition, but even this hope, as the PRIME MINISTER showed, has been disappointed.

The Congress Party's nomination of LORD MOUNTBATTEN for subsequent appointment as Governor-General of India, though not unexpected, will be widely welcomed. He has won universal regard and confidence by his wholehearted desire to serve the best interests of India; and there is no doubt among the Indian leaders that he is admirably fitted to the new constitutional position he will occupy. The decision of the Muslim League to choose MR. JINNAH as the first Governor-General of Pakistan is more surprising. There are doubtless good reasons why Pakistan should prefer to have its separate Governor-General from the outset; but it is unusual for a statesman at the height of his power and reputation to accept an office, however dignified and influential, which by its very nature entails a withdrawal from direct day-to-day administration. Yet those who will be called to rule Pakistan may hold that the relatively undeveloped polities which make up much of its territory must be guided by a Governor-General capable of exercising the functions of higher control and co-ordination which formerly vested in a Canning or a Curzon. Certainly MR. JINNAH will be a force with which his Cabinet must reckon.

No portion of the PRIME MINISTER'S statement gave more general satisfaction than that which dealt with the defence arrangements of the two Dominions. The partition of the Indian Army is already proceeding smoothly in a fashion which has surpassed all hopes under the guidance of a committee presided over by the present commander-in-chief; while the institution of a common defence committee under the chairmanship of LORD MOUNTBATTEN provides a guarantee of present security and lays the foundation of future cooperation for the protection of all the peoples of the sub-continent. It is understood that the leaders on both sides have agreed to retain British officers in their military service until each Dominion is in a position to proceed with its own scheme

of replacing them with fully qualified Indian officers. At the same time the PRIME MINISTER announced the entirely correct and necessary decision to withdraw all British troops from the two new Dominions as rapidly as possible after the transference of power, and to complete the process by the end of this year.

There was no disposition on the part of Opposition speakers to question either the supreme significance of the occasion or the general principles on which the Bill is based. MR. HAROLD MACMILLAN developed some of the points touched on by the PRIME MINISTER in explaining the relations of the two new Dominions to the Commonwealth system, and emphasized the importance of a good understanding between them if the other partners were to afford them the full benefits of common protection. But he was particularly concerned that the Indian leaders should provide liberal treatment both for the minorities within the Dominions and also for the Indian States. The PRIME MINISTER alluded only very briefly to the position of the States; and it seems likely that an attempt will be made in the Committee stage of the Bill to elucidate the intentions of the Government towards those States which do not find it easy to join either Dominion. That the majority of States will ultimately do so, as the PRIME MINISTER hopes, cannot be doubted, but they must be given time to adjust their policy to the new conditions, and certain attempts by spokesmen of the Congress Party to coerce them by threats into precipitate action have already caused an unfortunate impression. But SARDAR PATEL, in setting up the new States Department of which he has taken control, has now explained that it is not in fact the intention of the Congress Party to dominate the States or to interfere in their domestic affairs; and that he is concerned only to secure their cooperation in the fields of defence, foreign affairs, and communications already accepted by them as matters for the Indian Union. Since MR. JINNAH has already expressed a liberal attitude towards such States as desire to enter relations with Pakistan, there is good hope that in time all States will find their footing, but the unilateral termination by the British Government of the existing treaties and engagements will shortly cause a situation not free from anxiety.

The course of the debate, no less than the cordiality of the welcome given to the Bill from every side of the House, will make clear to the peoples of India the determination of all sections of opinion in this country to lend the fullest aid and support to the two Dominions so shortly to emerge into nationhood. But for this support to be effective, it is essential that the new partners in the Commonwealth should agree to work together for the common good of both. Each will be in every sense an independent State; but

independence by itself is not enough to ensure the benefits of freedom. The progress and prosperity of the Indian Union and of Pakistan, as well as of the myriad peoples who compose their populations, must depend above all upon the resolution of the statesmen on either side to conduct their mutual relations in the same fraternal spirit from which the Commonwealth itself derives its abiding strength and vitality.

' The Times '

July 11, 1947

POWER HANDED OVER IN INDIA

BIRTH OF TWO NEW DOMINIONS

LORD MOUNTBATTEN ON A FRIENDLY PARTING

In accordance with the grant of independence to India the two new Dominions of India and Pakistan came into being at midnight.

Lord Mountbatten, whose advancement to an earldom is announced, was present yesterday at a ceremony in Karachi, the capital of Pakistan, and referred to the fact that Great Britain and Pakistan were parting as friends.

CEREMONIES IN KARACHI

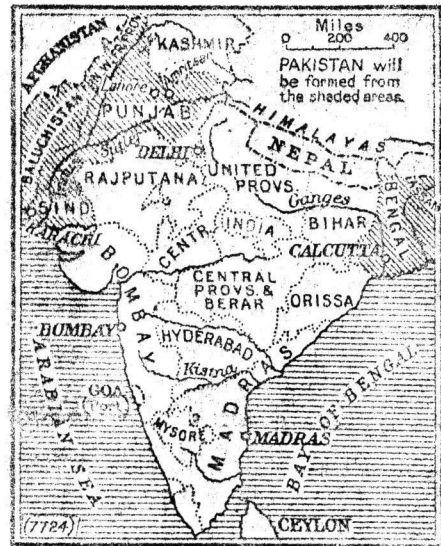
PUBLIC APATHY

From Our Special Correspondent

KARACHI, Aug. 14

To-day's elaborate ceremonies in the capital of Pakistan were marked by a surprising lack of popular enthusiasm. When Mr. Jinnah arrived at the Constituent Assembly there were shouts from the crowd of "Qaid-i-Azam zindabad!" ("Long live our great leader!"), and later, when he and the Viceroy drove through the main streets of Karachi in an open car, there was some shouting of slogans organized by Muslim cheerleaders. Otherwise there was a general air of apathy on the part of the people. Some of the main streets through which the procession passed were half empty except for the troops lining the road, and many of the reserved seats for distinguished citizens in front of the Assembly Hall were unused.

It is a puzzling phenomenon, and the visitor does not know whether to put it down to the lethargic temperament of the ordinary Sindi, to the fact that the majority of the population of Karachi is Hindu, or to a realization by its inhabitants of the tremendous problems which overshadow



THE KING'S MESSAGE

Mr. Jinnah, Governor-General of Pakistan, accompanied by his sister, Miss Fatima Jinnah, arrived at the Constituent Assembly from Government House at 9 o'clock. Lord and Lady Mountbatten, the Viceroy and Vicereine, arrived five minutes later and were welcomed by Mr. Jinnah. Guards of honour were mounted by the Royal Indian Navy and the 1st Battalion, The Royal Scots, with the latter's pipe band.

Sitting on the dais on the right of Mr. Jinnah, the Viceroy, in naval uniform, addressed the Assembly and first read the following message from the King:—

"I send you my greetings and warmest wishes on this great occasion when the new

Dominion of Pakistan is about to take its place in the British Commonwealth of Nations. In thus achieving your independence by agreement you have set an example to all freedom-loving people throughout the world.

"I know that I can speak for all sections of opinion within the British Commonwealth when I say that their support will not fail you in upholding democratic principles. I am confident that the statesmanship and spirit of co-operation which have led to the historic developments which you are now celebrating will be the best guarantee of your future happiness and prosperity. Great responsibilities lie ahead of you and your leaders. May the blessings of the Almighty sustain you in all your future tasks. Be assured always of my sympathy and support as I watch your continuing efforts to advance the cause of humanity."

The Viceroy said that he spoke to-day as Viceroy. To-morrow he would be the constitutional head of Pakistan's neighbour, the Dominion of India. But the leaders of both Governments had invited him to be the independent chairman of the Joint Defence Council, an honour which he would strive to merit.

AN EVENT IN HISTORY

"To-morrow," the Viceroy went on, "two new sovereign States will take their place in the Commonwealth; not young nations, but the heirs of old and proud civilizations: fully independent States whose leaders and statesmen are already known and respected throughout the world, whose poets and philosophers, scientists and warriors, have made their imperishable contribution to the service of mankind; not immature Governments or weak, but fit to carry their great share of responsibility for the peace and progress of the world. The birth of Pakistan is an event in history. We who are part of history and are helping to make it are not well placed, even if we wished, to moralize on the event, to look back and survey the sequence of the past that has led to it."

The Viceroy then paid a tribute to Mr. Jinnah and to the other Muslim leaders, and also to those who had advised and assisted the progress of the negotiations, and who had kept the machinery of administration running under great difficulties.

"All this has been achieved with toil and sweat. I wish I could say also without tears and blood, but terrible crimes have been committed. It is justifiable to reflect, however, that far more terrible things might have happened if the majority had not proved worthy of the high endeavours of their leaders and had not listened to that great appeal which Mr. Jinnah and Mahatma Gandhi together made."

The Viceroy recalled a statement of the Partition Council which, in the name of the two Governments, had guaranteed liberty of speech and religion. He said it was nothing less than a charter of liberty for a fifth of the human race. He also described his recent visit to Lahore, and paid tribute to all those public-spirited citizens who had preserved Lahore from complete ruin.

"This," he continued, "is a parting between friends who have learned to honour and respect one another even in disagreement. It is not an absolute parting. I rejoice to think, not an end of comradeship. Many of my countrymen for generations have been born in this country, many have lived their lives in this country, and many have died here. Some will remain for trade and commerce here, others in Government service and in the armed forces, who count it an honour that they have been invited to serve you."

The Viceroy recalled the remarkable degree of political and religious tolerance which had flourished in the reign of the great emperor Akbar. He hoped the world would hold fast

to the great principles which Akbar had taught. Concluding, he said: "May Pakistan prosper always; may her citizens be blessed with health and happiness; may learning and the arts of peace flourish in her boundaries; and may she continue in friendship with her neighbours and with all the nations of the world."

BRITISH OFFICIALS

Mr. Jinnah then made a brief reply in which he asked that the thanks of Pakistan be conveyed to the King for his message. He greatly appreciated the good will and sympathy which Britain had shown towards Pakistan. "We are parting as friends and I sincerely hope we shall remain friends. For that reason I am glad so many British officials have volunteered for service in Pakistan. We shall try to make them happy and they will be treated equally with our own nationals." Concluding, Mr. Jinnah acknowledged the congratulatory messages which had been received from foreign Governments. These included the United States, Egypt, France, Syria, and Nepal.

When the Viceroy and Mr. Jinnah left the Assembly Hall a salute of 31 guns was fired and guards of honour were mounted by the Royal Air Force and the 4th Battalion, Rajputana Rifles, with the pipes of the Baluch Regimental Centre and the 5th Baluch Regiment. They sat in an open car and were followed in another open car by the Vicereine and Miss Fatima Jinnah. The route of the ceremonial drive lay through three miles of streets, which were lined by 3,000 men of the Royal Indian Navy, Royal Artillery, Royal Indian Artillery, Royal Indian Engineers, The Royal Scots, Rajputana Rifles, Baluch Regiment, the Royal Air Force, and the Royal Indian Air Force. There were some ceremonial archways, but the town was not *en fete*. The drive ended at Government House, over which the Union Jack had been flying since the Viceroy's arrival, side by side with Mr. Jinnah's Muslim flag—a green background bearing a white star and a crescent moon.

Pakistan is officially born at midnight to-night, when there will be a blowing of sirens and hooters and a ringing of bells. To-morrow morning Mr. Jinnah will be sworn in. Other arrangements include a formal parade and march-past, the feeding of the poor, the giving of sweets to school children, and fireworks and illuminations.

THE SCENE IN DELHI

PANDIT NEHRU ON INDIAN AWAKENING

DELHI, Aug. 15 (1 a.m.)—The new Dominion of India assumed power of government from Britain as the last stroke of midnight rang from the Council Chamber of the Parliament building here.

Several thousand people packed the main entrance to the Council House, cheering each leader as he arrived to take part in the session of the Constituent Assembly, which began at 11 p.m. yesterday (Thursday).

Pandit Nehru, addressing the "independence meeting" of the Constituent Assembly, said:—

"At the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will wake to life and freedom. We end to-day a period of ill fortune and India discovers herself again."

Speaking of Mr. Gandhi, who was not present, Pandit Nehru continued: "The ambition of the greatest man of our generation has been to wipe every tear from every eye. That may be beyond us, but so long as there are tears and suffering, so long our work will