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PUNJAB CRISIS

AND

CURE

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by

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To

THE PEOPLE OF THE PUNJAB

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I

Searchlight Over the Past

Within a week of the 34-day agitation of the Muslim League resulting in the break-down of the Coalition Ministry, a new chapter of communal violence opened in the Punjab on Tuesday the 4th March, 1947. This outburst of violence spread like wild fire over the province, and in the absence of an alternative ministry the Governor was obliged to announce the prorogation of the Punjab Legislative Assembly and the issue of a Proclamation under Section 93 of the Government of India Act 1935. It is unfortunate that the hopes of co-operation and mutual goodwill changed so suddenly into fears of strife and mutual discord and led to an orgy of rioting, killing, arson and looting which may further lead to very serious consequences in the future if they are not stopped immediately. The cause of this sudden deterioration in the political situation of the Punjab is obscure but its effect is very significant, for as Sir Stafford Cripps said in a speech in Commons the other day, 'this is just another one of those factors that make it so difficult to predict the course of

events in so complete a situation as exists politically in India today.'

Nothing is more galling to an Indian mind today than the antagonism existing between Hindus and Muslims in the country. *Hindus* and *Muslims* are not two armies of fighters or crusaders. They constitute two half-nations in culture, civilization, philosophy, language, customs, manners, dress and diet representing two different characters and yet so closely associated, rather knit together that through age and antiquity each one has become a part and parcel of the very flesh and soul of the other. It would, therefore, be idle to expect the formation of any constitution of a free India in the midst of the clash of these two forces which has created enough of collective and individual resentment in the country. A new constitution cannot live long so long as it is an external frame-work, It must be the expression of the nation as a whole coming from the enlightened consent of the masses as a prophetic picture which should be the mainspring of its development in the coming years.

We must know that it is almost impossible for Indians to rule India : *India must rule herself*. We must evolve the whole population of the country and mould our constitution upon the character of the people, for after all a constitution is a mere embodiment of the character of a people. We must, therefore, balance our system of government in its different parts and only

then it can run smoothly as a mechanical force which has its fuel in itself. We who are pledged to the goal of democracy, ought to understand that such a system of government can only be brought out and stabilized on mutual sympathy and capacity to understand each other's point of view. It should be strong enough to reach the individual citizen, to be obeyed by him and to receive its authority and power from him. The Muslims in India are a hundred million strong today, and to treat such a huge portion of the population as a negligible factor by trying to forge a constitution without securing their co-operation by understanding the cause of their resentment and without allaying their fears, goes against the very spirit of democracy. Those of us who are impatient enough to break off the shackles of slavery and wrest power from the unwilling hands of the British without waiting for the Muslims to join in coo-peration, are running the hazard of perpetuating the hold of the foreigner over India. "India is our prize possession," said Lord Birkenhead to Oxford University students in 1927. "We in England have to live on it ; the Indians may live in it. . . . It is the task of you, the younger generation, to hold India to the last drop of your blood." This of course was a vain dream of the Imperialists of the bygone days having been ruled out by the present steersmen of the British Government as both undesirable and unpracticable, but the fact remains that Hindus and Muslims must come

together within the limit of time during which the British Government is prepared to maintain its responsibility of holding peace in the country, and take over power before the date beyond which the said Government is not willing to continue its function.

It is, therefore, imperative that we must seek a quick solution of our age-long ailment of communalism. "Communalism," wrote Messrs. Thompson and Garratt in *The Rise and Fulfilment of British Rule in India,* "is an old Indian problem which time does little to solve. Only to a small extent is this enmity based on race or religion. It may be better regarded as the revolt of emancipated lower caste Indians against the social and financial domination of the higher castes. The Muslim invaders brought very few of their own countrymen into India, and it is only in the extreme north of the peninsula that Central Asian types are common. According to census reports hardly a sixth of the Mohammadans, even in the Punjab, are of a different race from the Hindus. The great bulk of Indian Muslims are descendants of converts, in nearly every case of converts from the lower caste Hindus. Many Hindu customs, and sometimes even the caste system, still survive amongst them, but their new religion gives them a self-respect and class-consciousness which was denied to those who remained in the Hindu system. Recently the work of Dr. Ambedkar and others has had a similar effect upon the depressed classes

amongst the Hindus.

" Almost invariably there is some economic basis to Hindu and Muslim rivalry. In many parts the Hindus are the shopkeepers and money-leaders, the Muslims peasants. In cities the petty employers and shopkeepers may be Hindu and their labourers chiefly Muslim. Sometimes, as in Bombay, north-country Muslims have been brought in as strike-breakers. Where such rivalry exists, disturbances usually follow some religious provocation—the sacrificial killing of cows or the playing of music in front of mosques—but the underlying force is an economic grievance.

" Of later years all religions and castes have found it expedient to organise politically, and they have also discovered that disturbances are an easy way of attracting the attention of the Government to any grievances. The worst trouble is likely to occur where communities are comparatively equal, and are anxious to display their strength. Recent political developments have added to this temptation, while doing nothing to ease the old economic differences. Perhaps the best evidence of the political nature of much communal trouble is to be found in the Indian States. Until the last decade they were almost free from this scourge. Under strictly autocratic rule no one is likely to gain from such demonstrations. It was useless for a Hindu Sabha or Muslim League to agitate against a Muslim or Hindu Prince. It was better to take

thankfully what they could get, and the Prince could afford to be generous to his subjects of another religion. Now that some semblance of democracy has been introduced in most of the larger States, and the inhabitants have learnt that the Government of India may intervene in case of a well-advertised quarrel, Hindu-Muslim troubles have occurred in Kashmir, Alwar, and other States and these have been almost as serious as any in British India.

"The 1919 Scheme retained the communal electorates of the Morley-Minto reforms, for which neither political group could blame the Government. The Muslims specifically demanded separate electorates, and the Hindu leaders conceded the principle in the 'Lucknow Pact' of 1916. Their effect has been altogether bad. It is not only that they have led Indians to organise along sectarian lines, for this was probably inevitable, and caste grouping occurs even within the Hindu constituencies, but the system throws up the worst type of pugnacious fanatic, who loves to 'prove his doctrines orthodox, by apostolic blows and knocks.' The feeling that great changes were going to take place, and the prospect of some actual transfer of responsibility and control over appointments, have combined to rouse all the meaner political passions, especially in those Provinces, like Bengal and the Punjab, where the two communities are nearly equal in number. Middle-class unemployment, and a family system which elevates

nepotism into something like a virtue, have also helped to embitter the politico-religious struggle. A further and very grave disadvantage of the communal electorate is that an alteration in the balance of the parties can only occur through wholesale proselytism or through differences in the birth-rate. And both sides are stirred to new missionary enterprise, when the reward is not only a soul but also a permanent addition to one's voting strength. The activities of the Arya Samaj amongst the poorer Muslims, and of various Mohammadan bodies amongst the lower caste Hindus, have caused the greatest bitterness. The politicians get all the support they need from an irresponsible Press, while ill-feeling amongst the educated classes is kept alive by scurrilities like the *Rangila Rasul*.

"Towards the middle of the decade two other political developments tended to accentuate communal feeling. The movement to organise the depressed classes and outcastes was a severe blow, not only to the Brahmins, but also to certain wealthy but more lowly castes. It had added to the missionary fervour of both the Hindu and Muslim communities, for here are potential converts being snatched away into another fold. Less justifiable and far more dangerous is the revival of pan-Islamic ambitions amongst certain sections of educated Mohammadans. The emergence of Federation as a serious political proposition has given a new meaning to old and vague aspirations. The fear that the

Central Government will be dominated by caste-Hindus has revived the idea of a great northern Muslim country, including and possibly centring round Afghanistan, and having Karachi as a port. Propaganda of this kind added significance to the Kashmir troubles where a Muslim State is profoundly discontented under a Hindu Prince. When Lord Irwin succeeded Lord Reading in 1926, communal tension due to these various factors, had become acute, and his arrival was heralded by fierce Hindu-Muslim rioting."

Historical consciousness ought to suggest us a timely action at this moment of turmoil, for climbing from fact to fact, we have at least been able to expose the mysterious puppet-maker who was pulling the wires behind these two great communities and determining their movements and actions. But it is essential to allay the unjust fears of each other with a mutual sympathy before that old puppet-maker is compelled to close down his *tour de force*. Freedom, in fact, has never been given by a nation to another as charity or reward, and the British are no exception to this rule. In the history of the world, one fact stands out like a milestone, and that is that the only road to freedom lies through unity and sacrifice. Freedom is an entity of mind which is won through struggle and safeguarded with sacrifice. Freedom cannot be earned by virtue of a letter-patent signed by the Cabinet Mission on behalf of the British Crown, but supposing for a minute, even if we

succeed in earning such cheap 'freedom,' and the British imperialism too is withdrawn from India, the country would plunge into the throes of a ghastly civil war between Hindus and Muslims, and our divided house would attract other nations to walk upon us at any moment and compel us, just so obligingly, to hand over our cheaply earned laurels to them. It is therefore essential that we should carve out a new way of living based upon principles tested and approved,—principles of the equality of man, freedom and democracy. Such principles guarantee not only the fundamental rights to every citizen, but also extend special protective rights to minority communities. Yet to achieve this object we must win the approval and active support not only of a numerical majority in the country, but also of all the sections of the people in the country, for no constitution can work in a free country without the *popular support*. It thus becomes inevitable that the Indian National Congress and Muslim League should come to an agreement on India's political problem, for these two political parties between them command the allegiance of about 90 per cent. of the population of the country. In a recent statement to the press, Mr. F. K. Nariman stressed upon the same point saying : "Perhaps to some communalists and Mahasabha-minded Congressmen, the boycott resolution of the Muslim League will be welcome as a good riddance of an obstructive nuisance in both the Constituent Assembly and

the Provincial Governments ; they will perhaps feel that now the way is clear for reaching the goal of Swaraj through the short and smooth cut of Constituent Assembly. But they will soon be disillusioned. A Constituent Assembly for genuine national freedom without either of the major parties, would be like a wedding party or ceremony without a bride or bridegroom. With the Scheduled Castes up in arms in the west, Non-Brahmins opposing in the south, the Sikhs still undecided and hesitating, and on the top of it the major community declaring war against it, there could not be a more depressing atmosphere for such a gathering. It is bound to end in a fiasco and failure resulting in a terrible reaction in the country.

" We must remember that the Constituent Assembly has only a moral sanction behind it ; its success will depend more upon the willing consent and goodwill of all the parties concerned as its resolutions are not to be enforced at the point of bayonet by the strongest party.

" After years of isolation and separation, when all the efforts to bring the Congress and the League on a common political platform were successfully resisted, it was a great triumph both of diplomacy and statesmanship that the Cabinet Delegation at last succeeded in establishing a political contact between the two rival political parties ...

" The very fact that the League and its president agreed to participate in one provisional

Government and the same Constituent Assembly for the whole of India, by itself negatived the idea of Pakistan that is fundamentally based on two separate, distinct and independent Sovereign States. Having secured this main point, generous concessions could have been made on minor details to retain the vantage position thus gained.

"Instead, we found that the League was practically frightened out of the arena of co-operation by frightful and ill-advised long statements, once again to drift in the desolate wilderness, and on the bloody battlefield of civil strife."

The same idea was staunchly supported by Pandit Nehru in a recent meeting at Wardha where he declared that 'in another year, we will be free, but without the struggle of the people, their co-operation and co-ordinated efforts, Swaraj could not be won. And even if freedom came, it could not be maintained."

The Muslim League admittedly commands the obedience of 90 per cent. of the Muslims of India and more so in the Punjab. The Muslim masses have been brought together upon a single platform by Mr. Jinnah, if not by ideas, by sentiments, if not by principles, at least by emotions. He maintains that the problem of India's future can only be solved by creating two independent and sovereign states of Hindustan aud Pakistan within India for Hindus and Muslims respectively. The idea of Pakistan and the demand for parti-

tion have gone deep enough in the Muslim mind to flare up a communal fanaticism and to threaten a civil war if the leaders of the other party would adhere to the plan of ignoring them. Under the circumstances, the question, as to why Muslims are so keen about the Pakistan demand, needs our immediate attention for understanding the cause of their bitterness, for allaying their fears by protecting them with strong constitutional safeguards, and for drawing the full support of this great community for making a new India.

II

The Role of Sikandar Hayat Khan

The Hindu-Muslim schism led to the foundation of an Empire! "Hindus," says K. L. Gauba in his *Consequences of Pakistan*, "are primarily the architects of Pakistan," and that "the one-nation theory is in the realm of the theoretical." In support of this the same authority gives some very well-known facts of which the following will be of interest to the reader:

"Pandit Moti Lal Nehru's daughter wished to marry a Muslim, who was the editor of his newspaper the *Independent*. Pandit Nehru threatened he would commit suicide. Mahatma Gandhi, instead of persuading Pandit Moti Lal that the gallant editor belonged to the same nation as the Pandit, persuaded Mr. Syed Hussain to give up the lady and to leave the country.

"Mahatma Gandhi's own son became a Muslim. The Mahatma at once ostracised him from his fold. He was only reconciled to him when he was brought back to Hinduism, with (it is alleged) the Birla influence! If Hira Lal Gandhi became a Muslim, what of it? Why should the Mahatma have been grieved? By

change of religion he did not cease to be an Indian.

"An equally correct charge that may be averred against the majority community is economic exploitation by Hindus of Muslims. In order to draw Muslim capital, it is usual in new Company floatations to include one or two Muslim directors. But Muslims are usually in such a minority that they have no effective voice in the management, and if they have, they are removed or superseded at an early opportunity. Muslim directors are seldom in any effective position to influence orders for Muslim firms or employment for Muslim personnel. They are the bait for unwary Muslim investors to fall into the net of Hindu capitalists.

"Hindu directors of companies may denounce Mr. Jinnah for prompting the two-nation theory. If Mr. Jinnah lays emphasis upon this by words, they prove it by conduct. Take great commercial institutions like the Punjab National Bank, the United Commercial Bank, the Lakshmi Insurance Company, the Bharat Bank, and the Bharat Insurance Company. You will hardly see a Muslim anywhere. The Lahore Electric Supply Company, a Company to whose prosperity Muslim consumers have contributed as much as Hindu consumers, employed no Muslim in its executive or clerical staffs, until faced with the pressure of acquisition by the Punjab Government.

"Can it be said that Muslims are excluded generally from these institutions by accident?

If Hindus and Muslims belong to one nation and there is community of race and culture between them, the first step to establish this is for Mr. Gandhi to persuade his financier friends, the Dalmias, the Birlas and the Bhallas to employ at least fifty per cent. Muslims. I am afraid he will find this more difficult than opening wells to the untouchables.

"And if there be one nation, would Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, or Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya view with equanimity the marriage of their exalted castes to a Muslim? I am afraid every argument of race and culture now advanced by the protagonists of Pakistan would be used by these eminent gentlemen to prevent such a union.

"It is futile to argue when it comes to the transfer of political power that Muslims and Hindus constitute one nation, when it is the unhappy truth that it would be the Hindu community which would be the most outraged if the theory were translated into fact.

"Sir Ganga Ram, the philanthropist, made no secret that he would admit no Muslim to any of his benefactions. He was a kindly gentleman but no good Samaritan. The *Tribune* newspaper, although founded to promote nationalism, has never had a Muslim Trustee or a Muslim Editor, or a Muslim Manager. Its reporters and sub-editors are all Hindus. By accident? And this is in a national Trust! It may be argued for the Sir Ganga Ram Trust that the donor was a com-

munalist and wished to exclude Muslims: his wishes are being followed. But Dyal Singh Majithia was not a communalist. One of his first Trustees was a Christian, but now the *Tribune*, the Dyal Singh Library, and the Dyal Singh College which were never intended to be communal institutions are primarily Hindu institutions.

"Millions of Hindus will not drink the same water that a Muslim will drink nor eat at the same table. On thousands of Railway platforms millions of Hindus every day establish the fact of two nations by insisting on *Hindu Cha* and *Hindu Pani*.

"The deplorable fact is that the Congress admits to its membership and even to its Working Committee persons who preach the one theory and act upon the other.

"Whatever else may he said of Mr. Jinnah it must be admitted that for years he was the ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity. While Jinnah preached Hindu-Muslim unity, Lala Lajpat Rai emphasised Hindu-Muslim differences."

This attitude naturally worked a lot in dividing the Hindus and Muslims and in helping to create the ever-increasing gulf of communal differences between them.

The late Sir Mohammad Iqbal once wrote in a letter to Jinnah about the impending danger to the Punjab Muslims as a consequence of such an attitude: "I tell you," wrote Sir Iqbal, "that we

are actually living in a state of civil war which, but for the police and military, would become universal in no time. During the last few months there has been a series of Hindu-Muslim riots in India. In North-West India alone there have been at least three riots during the last three months and at least four cases of vilification of the Prophet by Hindus and Sikhs. In each of these four cases, the vilifier has been murdered. There have also been cases of burning of the Quran in Sind. I have carefully studied the whole situation and believe that the real cause of these events is neither religious nor economic. It is purely political, *i.e.*, the desire of the Sikhs and Hindus to intimidate Muslims even in the Muslim-majority provinces. And the new constitution is such that even in the Muslim-majority provinces the Muslims are made entirely dependent on non-Muslims. The result is that the Muslim Ministry can take no proper action and are even driven to do injustice to Muslims partly to please those on whom they depend, and partly to show that they are absolutely impartial. Thus it is clear that we have our specific reasons to reject this constitution. It seems to me that the new constitution is devised only to placate the Hindus. In the Hindu-majority provinces, the Hindus have of course absolute majorities, and can ignore Muslims, altogether. In Muslim-majority provinces, the Muslims are made entirely dependent on Hindus. I have no doubt in my mind that this constitution is calculated to do

infinite harm to the Indian Muslims. Apart from this it is no solution of the economic problem which is so acute among Muslims.

"The only thing that the communal award grants to Muslims is the recognition of their political existence in India. But such a recognition granted to a people whom this constitution does not and cannot help in solving their problem of poverty can be of no value to them. The Congress President has denied the political existence of Muslims in no unmistakable terms. The other Hindu political body, *i. e.*, the Mahasabha, which I regard as the real representative of the masses of the Hindus, has declared more than once that a united Hindu-Muslim nation is impossible in India. In these circumstances it is obvious that the only way to a peaceful India is a redistribution of the country on the lines of racial, religious and linguistic affinities. Many British statesmen also realise this, and the Hindu-Muslim riots which are rapidly coming in the wake of this constitution are sure further to open their eyes to the real situation in the country. I remember Lord Lothian told me before I left England that my scheme was the only possible solution of the troubles of India, but that it would take 25 years to come. Some Muslims in the Punjab are already suggesting the holding of a North-West India Muslim Conference, and the idea is rapidly spreading. I agree with you, however, that our community is not yet sufficiently organised and

disciplined, and perhaps the time for holding such a conference is not yet ripe. But I feel that it would be highly advisable for you to indicate in your address at least the line of action that the Muslims of North-West India would be finally driven to take.

"To my mind the new constitution with its idea of a single Indian federation is completely hopeless. A separate federation of Muslim provinces, reformed on the lines I have suggested above, is the only course by which we can secure a peaceful India and save Muslims from the domination of non-Muslims. Why should not the Muslims of North-West India and Bengal be considered as nations entitled to self-determination just as other nations in India and outside India are?

"... The interest in the All-India Muslim League is rapidly growing in the Punjab, and the holding of the coming session in Lahore is likely to give a fresh political awakening to the Punjab Muslims."

The idea of *Pakistan* and the desire to consolidate the Muslim-majority areas,—'the national homelands', into 'Muslim States' was prompted first by Sir Mohammad Iqbal in his presidential address of the League Session at Allahabad in 1930 as an appeal for the recognition of the Muslims as 'a distinct political entity' and for the creation to that end of 'autonomous States based on unity of language, race, history, religion and identity of economic interests' linked together

by a *Centre* exercising only the powers vested in it by their free consent. He further made it clear that "I would like to see the Punjab, the North-West Frontier Province, Sind and Baluchistan amalgamated into a single State. Self-government within the British Empire or without the British Empire and the formation of a consolidated North-West Indian Muslim State appears to me to be the final destiny of the Muslims at least of North-West India." This idea of partition and formation of a Centre deriving its authority not from the people of the whole of India, but *only* from the people of its component units, got established among the Muslims during the course of a decade, and the task of framing a constitution for a free India of four hundred million people belonging to various castes, creeds and shades of cultures became all the more complicated, because under these circumstances, the provinces, like the Indian States, were to become 'quasi-sovereign entities' having a free choice to entrust to the Centre only such common affairs as they considered essential for a central management.

Thus, the growth and consolidation of the feeling of unity among the people as a whole envisaged under a democratic constitution, was necessarily impaired by the creation of such a communal problem, and to meet these peculiar conditions the solution lay in evolving a form of government best suited to give ample scope both for the development of unity and diversity with-

out creating a conflict between the two. In order, therefore, to devise a happy mean between the Muslim demand for Pakistan and the Hindu demand for a federal form of government, as well as to solve the much-vexed problem of communal differences by 'freeing' the Muslims from a 'Hindu Raj' and promoting them to establish as a 'separate nation' in their 'home-lands', a Centre different in its powers, composition and purpose was contemplated first by the late Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan, who suggested firstly, the grouping of all the Provinces and States into seven Regions on communal basis, delimiting two of these to cover the Muslim-majority areas in the north-west and the north-east, and secondly the Federation of the various Regions with an 'Agency Centre', which meant that the individual Provinces and States would retain their autonomy, that the Regional Legislatures would be responsible for dealing with all subjects of common interests to their component units, and that the Federal Centre would deal only with such subjects as are considered most essential for securing the unity of different entities for a common purpose, like defence, foreign affairs, customs and currency. His scheme, according to Professor Coupland, meant that "the British Indian members of the Central Assembly would be elected on a Provincial basis, preferably indirectly by the Provincial Legislatures just as the States' members would be appointed on a State basis, and secondly, that when they come to the Centre,

they would regard themselves *not* as representatives of India, but as the agents of their respective Provinces . . . Such a Centre, Sir Sikandar declared, could not be 'a domineering Centre which may undermine their (the Muslims') power and authority in the Muslim-majority provinces. And, as if to stem Provincial independence and to blunt the edge of separatist sentiment, he suggested that a group of provinces might be entitled, after ten or fifteen or twenty-five years, to 'reconsider their position' in the light of experience and if they chose, secede."

This scheme of the creation of a Federal Union, based on the Regional principle with a *minimal* Centre, was supported further by the Aga Khan at the time of the Simla Conference in 1945 when he suggested to Mahatma Gandhi and Maulana Azad that the constitution of the Muslim-majority Provinces in the west into one block and of a united Bengal and Assam in the east, should be the first measure in that direction.

Sir Sikandar's above scheme, which accepted half the Pakistan demand of the Muslim League in demarcating the Muslim 'home-lands' and guaranteeing them autonomy within their own political boundaries, but which rejected the other half of it in refusing to admit their 'home-lands' as independent and sovereign States, forms the main basis of the Cabinet Mission's Statement of May 16, 1946; and the fact that the Muslim League accepted the proposals contained in the

said Statement, automatically nagatived its demand of a full-blooded Pakistan based upon the division of India into two independent and separate Sovereign States.

The most promising move in the direction of the development of 'unity and diversity' was the formation of the Punjab National Unionist Party under the leadership of Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan, which, according to the Simon Report, despite the deep communal cleavages, was able to form a successful ministry by holding the balance between nearly equal forces of Mohammadans on the one side and Hindus and Sikhs on the other. As regards the period of Government by this party in the Punjab, Professor Coupland writes in *Indian Politics 1936-1942*: "The disappearance of the official *bloc* under the Act of 1935 might have produced a difficult situation if the National Unionist Party had not obtained a clear majority at the elections of 1927 ninety-six seats out of 175. Its leader, Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan, who had been a member of the Executive Council under the old *regime* and had twice acted as Governor of the Province, could count, moreover, on the support of a group of fifteen to twenty Sikhs, known as the Khalsa Nationalist Sikhs. He formed a cabinet of three Muslims, two Hindus, and one Sikh. Sir Sikandar was still in office when he died at the end of 1942—a record only beaten by Mr. Fazal-ul-Haque; but his Ministry was far more stable and united in itself, despite the communal strains to which it

was subjected, and kept a far firmer hold on the respect and support of the legislature. This was largely due to the personality and prestige of the Premier, but not wholly. The level of ability and public repute among the Ministers as a whole has been higher than in most other Provinces. Three of them, besides the Premier, had served at one time or another on the old Executive Council. Of the two Hindus, Sir Manohar Lal, a man of considerable academic distinction, represented within the Cabinet the very class, the urban Hindu commercial class, which, as will be seen, was to suffer most from the forthcoming legislation, while Sir Chotu Ram, the Revenue Minister, was able to influence opinion among Hindus in the rural areas in the face of bitter Congress opposition. And this strong and compact cabinet was backed by a strong and compact majority in the Assembly. A little 'cave' of nine Independents broke away from the Unionist Party in the summer of 1938, but otherwise the alignment of forces remained more or less unchanged, and the Government was never in serious danger of dafeat. Not that it had a quiet time. On the more controversial questions the temper of the legislature was stormy; there were frequent 'scenes'; and in the winter of 1938 the Government introduced a bill for the appointment of a Serjeant-at-Arms to assist the elderly Speaker to maintain discipline. It was carried, against vehement opposition, in the course of 1939.

"The strength and solidarity of the Government were confirmed by the outbreak of the war. At the time of the Munich crisis in 1938 the Premier pledged the Punjab to the unconditional support of Britain in the event of war. When 'we offered our hand' in the last war, he said 'we were still in our political apprenticeship:' it is offered again by a Punjab 'which has now attained its political majority.' In May 1939 a resolution to the same effect was carried unanimously in the Assembly. On August 25 Sir Sikandar repeated his assurance of the previous year. 'The manpower and resources of the Punjab will be unhesitatingly and ungrudgingly placed at the disposal of Great Britain and her Allies, in the service of our motherland, and for the sacred cause of justice, righteousness and freedom.' When war had finally broken out, it was believed that the Premier would have been willing to take some leading Congressmen into the Ministry if they had been willing to co-operate in the war effort. In November he submitted a resolution to the Assembly declaring its determination to resist aggression and protect the security and honour of the Punjab and India, and asking for an assurance that the constitutional position should be reconsidered after the war with a view to India's immediate attainment of Dominion status with effective protection of minorities and in agreement with all parties concerned. This resolution was carried by 104 votes to 39; and thenceforward, though there was

evidence of anti-war sentiment and defeatism in some Congress quarters, the Punjabis as a whole remained true to their martial tradition, provided a steady flow of recruits for the armed forces, and backed without demur the Ministry's unswerving war policy.

"Nevertheless, as the war years went slowly by, the Government's popularity declined. This was partly due, no doubt, to mere staleness, the effect on public opinion of seeing the same men in office year after year; but it was also due to the intrusion of an external factor, the Muslim League, and the consequent exacerbation of communal feeling, especially among the Sikhs... Though these developments were welcomed by more militant Muslims as making for Muslim solidarity, they weakened the Premier's claim that the Punjab should as far as possible keep itself to itself and deal with its own communal difficulties in its own way. To the Sikhs the ascendancy of the League was paticularly alarming. Mindful of the days when they had ruled the Muslims, they fiercely repudiated the idea of Pakistan. When the Viceroy enlarged his Executive Council in July 1941, the fact that none of its eight Indian members was a Sikh was taken as a slight on the national importance of the Sikh community; and, though the Punjab Premier was not in any way responsible, he was blamed for it. There was a stormy Sikh conference, with the militant Akalis in the foreground, at Amritsar in August 1941; there were threats of 'direct action;' and in the

course of the following winter alarmist rumours were current of an imminent Sikh revolt. Nor was the Sikh attitude softened ; it was hardened by the British Government's plan for the drafting of the post-war constitution expounded by Sir Stafford Cripps in the spring of 1942. A little later, however, a concordat was at last achieved. In July 1942 Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan came to terms with Sardar Baldev Singh, a Sikh who commanded much more influence in his own community than the Sikhs who had hitherto held office, and appointed him Minister of Development. A few days later the Viceroy again expanded his Council, and among the eleven Indian members there was now a Sikh, Sir Jogendra Singh, Member for Education, Health and Lands. As a result of these moves, particularly the former, the Punjab Government recovered most of its earlier strength, and it looked as if it would outlast the war when on December 26, 1942, Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan died suddenly of a heart attack."

III

Khizar Hayat Khan in Power

The ideal of Pakistan which had begun to exercise the Muslim mind in the Punjab with the passage of the Lahore Resolution by the Muslim League in 1940, received a fresh incentive upon the death of Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan. "I see a light—a very bright light," declared Mr. Jinnah then. "Because I say, when I went to the Punjab in November last, throughout my tour, it really made me happy to see that the solid body of the people were all right and sound. My appeal is to the leaders—and we have got very able men, very capable men—if they were to make up their minds, I feel confident that within six months the face of the Punjab would be changed.

"We have got a great deal to do," he added. "Of course, it has now been made clear as to what we are struggling for. And one who now pretends that he does not understand, well, what shall I say? He is fool or a dishonest. Our goal is here; our demands are clear. What is that we want? We want to establish independent states

in those zones which are our homelands and where we are in a majority."

The League gradually developed power similar to that wielded by the Congress in provincial politics but its policy was contrary to that of the Congress. It wanted to maintain Muslim Government in the four provinces by securing the adherence of the Muslim ministers and their supporters. In the Punjab, however, the colleagues of the late Sir Sikandar stood up to the blow inflicted by his sudden death, and reorganized themselves under the leadership of Malik Khizar Hayat Khan, previously Minister of Public Works, filling in the vacant ministry by Sir Sikandar's eldest son, Major Shaukat Hayat Khan.

Based on the principle of coalition, the Khizar Government seemed as strong as that of his predecessor with the support of 120 members from all the communities—Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs and Scheduled castes in a house of 175. Therefore, although personally a member of the Muslim League and a supporter of the Pakistan ideal, Khizar Hayat could not accept Jinnah's claim that the Punjab Government was a 'Muslim League Government subject to the control of the League High Command.' The League's growing strength, however, soon began to be felt. Shaukat Hayat Khan was the first man in Khizar's Cabinet to show a leaning towards the League group in the Assembly, and was therefore ousted from the Ministry as well as the Unionist Party for want of confidence by its

leader. Since that date Shaukat Hayat became an active worker of the League and an avowed enemy of the Unionist Party in the Punjab. Strong propaganda was launched against the Punjab Ministry, and at the Delhi Session of the Muslim League, Mr. Jinnah warned the Muslim Premiers that 'unless they remained within the orbit of the fundamental principles and policies of the League, they would lose its support.' As regards the Punjab, he said: "I regret to say that the Punjab has not yet played the part it ought to play and is entitled to play; because remember, the Punjab is the corner-stone of Pakistan." Khizar Hayat, who was present at the meeting, rose in support of the main resolution of the Session and announced: "The Punjab Muslims are with their brothers of the other Provinces, and if any obstacles are put either by the British or by the Congress in the way of the legitimate and reasonable demands of Mussalmans, the Punjab Muslims would not lag behind others in making sacrifices." Yet it was impossible for Khizar Hayat and his Muslim colleagues to identify their Government with the League and accept its control because it was a coalition Government based on inter-communal co-operation and not a pure Muslim Government. It was, under the circumstances, natural for the non-Muslim colleagues of Khizar Hayat to react sharply against the League's proceedings at Delhi. Sir Chotu Ram, the then Revenue Minister in the Khizar Cabinet, declared that the reason that the Premier and

most of his supporters were Muslims did not make the Punjab Ministry a League Ministry.

In order, therefore, to win over the basic province of Muslim politics, the activities of the League were steadily expanded during 1943. There were other Muslim organisations in the country like the Azad Muslims backed by the Congress, Jamiat-ul-Ulama, Ahrar, Momins, Shias, the Muslim Majlis and others which exerted to combat the Muslim League and its ideal of Pakistan and to work for India's freedom by inter-communal co-operation on a federal basis, but their efforts failed to make any impression on the bulk of the Muslim public opinion and they were outweighed by 'two substantial factors —the support commanded by the League in the Provincial legislatures and the success of its candidates at bye-elections'. "Every effort was made," said Mr. Jinnah at the Karachi Session in December, 1943, "to destroy the Muslim League, but every effort to cause disruption in the Muslim League rebounded upon them as a boomrang, as the Muslim nation knew where lay their true course to follow and stood by the Muslim League." By the year 1944, thus, the League was able to establish among the Muslim masses a position equivalent to that enjoyed by the Congress among the rest.

The onslaughts of the Muslim League continued in the Punjab until Mr. Jinnah shook down its Government in June 1944 when Khizar Hayat Khan was expelled from the League and

its electoral support to the Unionist Party was with drawn.

In the meantime, Jinnah's attitude to the major problem of India's future remained quite unchanged. 'The Muslim majority Province must have Pakistan,' he repeated again and again. At the Karachi Session he went further. Partition, he said, should not be left to the decision of the Indian parties. The British Government should put it through. Then, and only then, it would be able to transfer power to a free Pakistan and a free Hindustan. And he matched the Congress' 'Quit India' with a new slogan for the League, 'Divide and Quit'. That in effect was the only answer he gave some weeks later to Lord Wavell's appeal for co-operation. 'Divide and Quit' meant imposing Partition by force; 'Quit India' meant leaving her people to fight it out. Thus both Congress and the Muslim League were demanding that the British Government should deal with the problem for them, and by methods that were equally impracticable.[1]

In June 1945 Lord Wavell proposed to invite Indian leaders with a view to form a new Executive Council with more representatives of organized political opinion in the country. The proposed Concil was to represent caste-Hindus and Muslims in equal proportion, and with the exception of the posts of the Viceroy and the

1. R. Coupland, *India a Re-Statement* (Oxford 1945), p. 234.

Commander-in-Chief as War Member, the Council was to be Indianized in entirety. Among the persons invited to the Conference was Khizar Hayat Khan who came to take counsel with the Viceroy in forming the interim Government in the capacity of the Premier of the Punjab and leader of the Unionist Party. Khizar Hayat was understood to have asked that one of the Muslim seats should be allotted to the Punjab. Not long ago, most Muslim Unionists were also members of the League, but the quarrel between Mr. Jinnah and the Premier had forced them apart. Mr. Jinnah, therefore, contended that it was the right of the Muslim League alone to name the Muslim members of the Council, since the League was the only recognized organisation of the Mussalmans of India. Here then, according to Professor Coupland, was a second point of conflict with the League, and a point of more immediate practical importance than the first. The primary task of the new Council would be to finish the war with Japan, and the Punjab Muslims ranked second to none in the record of the Indian Army. Was it possible that the Council should contain no representative of the party which manned most of the Punjab Ministry?[1] But Mr. Jinnah declined to submit a list on the League's behalf without having an assurance that all the Muslim members of the Council would be members of the Muslim

1. *Op., cit.*, see p. 253.

League. This claim, according to the Congress and the Punjab Premier, was untenable and unsustainable, and therefore the Simla Conference broke down without achieving anything substantial except straining further the relations between the Muslim League and the Khizar Party.

With the end of the War in August 1945, all those problems which were being postponed as a war excuse, suddenly propped up to the forefront. Of them the most vital and important was the solution of the political differences and the establishment of a Government for a free and independent India under a constitution framed by the true representatives of the country. As a preliminary measure to this end, elections to the Central and Provincial Legislatures were called for, and the country became an arena for a frenzied election-campaign by the various parties and organizations. The Congress exerted to rally the Muslims against the Muslim League. In this connection, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the Muslim President of the Congress did his best to reorganize the said body against the 'Pakistan' propaganda of his opponents, and in a statement issued from Srinagar in August 1945, he invited the Muslim masses to come to the Congress fold since a settlement of the problem could only be made by the willing co-operation of its federating units and of its principal communities, and could not be founded on compulsion. He further declared

that the Congress had gone to the farthest limit in recognizing the right of self-determination even to the extent of separation under certain circumstances; but in the same statement he drew a conclusion 'after long and careful deliberation' that the division of India was wholly impracticable and opposed to the ultimate interests of the Indian Muslims. The Maulana's Statement could very little improve the situation. On the contrary, the League propaganda in the Punjab, as elsewhere, out-weighed all, and one by one the Muslim members of the Unionist Party and even some of the Congress began to drop out of their respective organizations and enter the League camp. 'The voice of Muslims has been raised,' declared Mr. Jinnah in the course of an address. 'We shall achieve Pakistan and live in it. Without Pakistan there is only death for Muslims . . . . In the Punjab, the Muslim League had to contend against strong forces, firstly, against the Glancy-Khizar combination, and secondly, against black-marketeers' money on the Congress side. Fighting against the adversaries, the Muslim League has ended imperialism in the Punjab."

From the general elections the Muslim League in the Punjab returned to the new Assembly with a strength of 77 members. Later, one Congress member—Maulana Daood Ghaznavi —who was elected for a Congress seat, joined the Muslim League bringing its number to 78. Speaking of the League success in the Punjab,

Mr. Jinnah said at a meeting in Lahore: "Your triumph in the Punjab is all the greater, for you had to face most unscrupulous methods that were resorted to by your opponents. The power and authority of the Government was abused flagrantly, officers were let loose openly to hinder, coerce and threaten the Muslim League candidates and those who were supporting them. It was almost a criminal conspiracy which you had to face.

"Punjab," he added, "is the corner-stone of Pakistan, and such a clear, thumping majority for Pakistan has given me one of the most pleasant shocks that I ever received in my life, and it has stunned our enemies."

Further in the course of the same speech, he said: "You have not only secured a clear verdict for Pakistan but the Muslim League and Mussalmans of the Punjab have freed not only the Mussalmans but the people of the Punjab from the clucthes and the stranglehold of the bureaucracy." And in conclusion he said: "I say to you, Punjab has taken pride as the sword-arm of India and you played your part heroically on different battlefields which is recognised by the world. Let now your sword-arm play a more magnificent part in the achievement of Pakistan. You can do it. We shall do it if Muslims will stand united. My prescription is unity, faith and discipline and we shall win."

The Constitution provides 85 seats to the Muslims in a house of 175, but special consti-

tuencies return 5 more Muslims to the Assembly, increasing their strength to 90, and enabling them thus to form a purely Muslim Ministry in the Punjab. But 13 Muslim Unionists turned the scales in favour of the Coalition and deprived the Muslim League of its fruits to rule the province. That was a sharp blow to the prestige of the League which in spite of being the largest single group in the Assembly, was made helpless by Khizar Hayat Khan, who formed the Coalition with the support of 95 members consisting of the Unionists, Congressmen and Akali Sikhs, and once again resumed the working of the Government with the help of two Unionist Muslims, two Congressmen and one Sikh as colleagues.

This failure in the Punjab touched Muslim League to the quick, and at the Session of the All-India Muslim League held at Delhi in April, 1946, ground was first prepared to torpedo the Khizar Coalition Ministry. During the Session, the Khan of Mamdot, leader of the Punjab Muslim League Party declared that 'Pakistan was the last demand of the Muslims and Muslims would not rest unless they achieved it.'

He said : " Whenever Punjab Muslims showed signs of awakening from the slumber, they were given sleeping doses. This time, Sir Bretrand Glancy also applied sleeping doses to Muslims in the form of *Murabbas* (squares of land) and *Jagirs*. He sometimes applied as

many as 20-*Murabba* doses to some Muslims but he failed.

"All the Muslims," he said, "who were elected to the Assembly, including the Unionists, supported Pakistan." He declared further that they were prepared to sacrifice hundreds of Ministries for Pakistan, and he gave a detailed account of the intrigues of the Glancy-Khizar Axis against the formation of the League Ministry in the Punjab.

Sardar Shaukat Hayat Khan coming to speak next said: "I represent the martial clans of Pakistan who do not believe in words but in action. They will fight till death if any attempt is made to subject their nation to the domination of anyone else. I speak for the Punjabi soldier and I say that three-quarter million demobilized soldiers in the Punjab are pledged to achieve Pakistan. They talk of defence, but I ask: what will defence avail if a hundred million people are discontented?"

"Britain asks us," he continued, "'can we defend ourselves?' Let there be a test, let us be given a chance here and now when the British are still here and a Congress Government rules the Punjab."

And then turning to Mr. Jinnah, he said: "You, sir, are holding us back, and we beg of you to give the word of command. Let us prove to the doubting how we can, and how we mean to defend our Pakistan."

Next to speak was Mr. Firoz Khan Noon,

who said: "Neither the Hindus nor the British know yet how far we are prepared to go in order to achieve Pakistan. We are on the threshold of a great tragedy.

"The problem of defence is set forth as an argument against Pakistan. I am convinced that it is not the defence of Pakistan which they are afraid of, but the defence of Akhand Hindustan. They want us to remain in Akhand Hindustan because they want to use the army of Pakistan to defend them."

Sir Firoz continued: "Russia at San Francisco declared that from then onwards, the freedom of the oppressed peoples of Asia was going to be its concern. We are confronted with the problem of defence. Defence against whom? If Hindus give us freedom, then the Hindus are our best friends. If the British give it to us, then the British are our best friends. But if neither will give it to us, then Russia is our best friend. I warn them of a great new search of sentiment that is taking place even among the big landlords of the Punjab.

"If Britain sells our freedom to gain the trade of Akhand Hindustan," he concluded; "if the British force on us an Akhand Government, the destruction and havoc which Muslims will cause will put to shame the deeds of Halaku Khan and Changiz Khan, and the responsibility for this will be Britain's."

IV

The Cabinet Mission Plan and the Punjab

The Punjab being the 'corner-stone' of the proposed 'Pakistan States' of the Muslim League, played a very significant part in the Cabinet Mission's deliberations during its thirteen weeks' stay in India from March 23rd to June 28th, 1946. The Plan which it finally evolved in the nature of a compromise between the *Pakistan* demand of the Muslim League and the *United India* demand of the Congress, therefore, centres along the fortunes of this important province in the country.

Speaking briefly, the proposed Plan falls under three main heads :

(*a*) Establishment of machinery to evolve a Union of India including both British India and the Indian States.

(*b*) Formation of three separate and distinct groups of provinces, and setting up of a Constituent Assembly at the Centre.

(*c*) Setting up of an Interim Government at the Centre.

For (*a*), *i.e., the Union of India,* it provides :

(1) There should be a Union of India, embrac-

ing both British India and the States which should deal with the following subjects: Foreign Affairs, Defence and Communications; and should have the power necessary to raise the finances required for the above subjects.

(2) The Union should have an Executive and a Legislature constituted from British India and States representatives. Any question raising a major communal issue in the Legislature should require for its decision a majority of representatives present and voting of each of the two major communities, as well as a majority of all the members present and voting.

(3) All subjects, other than the Union subjects, and all residuary powers should vest in the Provinces.

(4) The States will retain all subjects and powers other than those ceded to the Union.

(5) Provinces should be free to form Groups with executive and legislatures, and each Group could determine the Provincial subjects to be taken in common.

(6) The constitutions of the Union and of the Groups should contain a provision whereby any Province could, by a majority vote of its Legislative Assembly, call for a reconsideration of the terms of the constitution after an initial period of 10 years and at 10-yearly intervals thereafter.

For (*b*), *i.e., the Grouping of Provinces and the setting up of the Constituent Assembly,* it provides representation of each Province, as well as each of the three major communities,—Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs—on the basis of one member for each million of the population. The provincial representatives will divide thereafter into three Groups or Sections,—A, B and C. Group A will comprise the six Hindu-majority provinces

of the U.P., Bihar, Orissa, C.P., Bombay and Madras. Group B will contain the North-West Muslim-majority provinces of the N.-W. F. P., the Punjab, Sind, and Baluchistan ; and Group C will include the North-Eastern Muslim-majority provinces of Bengal and Assam. This grouping arrangement, or the 'zonal division' of India was brought out especially to appease the 'Pakistan' demand of the Muslim League which envisaged two separate constitution-making bodies for Hindustan and Pakistan, *i.e.*, the Hindu-majority Provinces and the Muslim-majority Provinces, respectively. The Mission, thus, conceded the Pakistan demand in substance through the grouping of Provinces on communal basis and making three constitution-making bodies instead of one for all practical purposes, except Defence, External Affairs, and Communications.

It was further explained by the Secretary of State for India, the leader of the Mission, that he was compelled to seek for a solution which, 'by securing the main objects of both parties, will enable a constitution-making machinery to be brought into immediate operation.' "While we recognise the reality of the fear of the Muslim League," he stated, "that in a purely unitary India their community, with its own culture and way of life, might become submerged in majority-Hindu rule, we do not accept setting up of a separate Muslim sovereign State as a solution of the communal problem.

"*Pakistan*, as the Muslim League would call

their State, would not consist solely of Muslims; it would contain a substantial minority of other communities which would average 40 per cent. and would in certain wide areas even constitute a majority, as for instance in the city of Calcutta, where the Muslims form less than one-third of the population.

"Moreover, the complete separation of Pakistan from the rest of India would, in our view, gravely endanger the defence of whole country by splitting the Army into two and by preventing that defence in depth which is essential in modern war. We, therefore, do not suggest of this proposal.

"Our own recommendations contemplate a constitution of three tiers at the top of which would be the Union of India with an Executive and Legislature empowered to deal with the essential subjects of External affairs, Defence and Communications, and the Finance necessary for these services."

For (*c*), *i.e., the formation of an Interim Government*, it was understood that no appreciable advance was made in that respect, for the Viceroy's veto was to remain unabated, and the Paramountcy of the British Crown over the States was not to be transferred to the new Government, excepting that all members of the Executive Council would be Indians. It was also believed that there would be fourteen seats on the Council out of which the Viceroy contemplated offering five each to the Congress and the

Muslim League, and one each of the remaining four seats to the Sikhs, Indian Christians, Parsis and other minorities.

The reaction of the major communities in the Punjab at this juncture was remarkable and spoke well of their future course of action in the Province :

"The Cabinet Mission's proposals have appeased the monster of communalism let loose by the Muslim League. The country is sought to be cut up into three parts, two of which will be really Pakistan covered with B and C constitutional cloaks, and a predominantly non-Muslim province and an over-whelmingly nationalist Muslim province are sought to be thrust into them against their will . . . It is partition of the worst type. It is the Balkanisation of the country to please Mr. Jinnah, thus providing the fissiparous tendencies with the amplest possible scope for operation."

This is how the Hindu Press in the Punjab reacted against the Cabinet Mission's proposals. It denounced the Plan for :

(*a*) It suggests a very weak Centre, having control over only three subjects,—External Affairs, Defence, and Communications, but without having anything to do with such vital items as currency, income-tax, customs and tariffs. This would mean the decentralisation of currency, exchange and excise policies, and introduction of different scales of tariff duties creating the worst possible economic confusion and chaos, and ultimately dividing the country into two economically independent India.

(*b*) It suggests communal grouping which will split up the country into three parts and prove fatal to Indian unity and democracy. Under this scheme Assam, a predominantly Hindu province, and N.-W. F.P., a preponderantly Muslim Nationalist province would be thrust into the B and C Pakistan groups respectively against their own wishes.

(*c*) The Viceroy suggests communal parity between Congress and the Muslim League in the composition of the Interim Government. This is 'neither commonsense, nor justice, nor equity, nor democracy,' for it brings the Indian National Congress down to the level of a communal body. The Congress contends that the question of parity with the Muslim League does not arise, since it represents 75 per cent. of the population of India against 25 per cent. of the Muslim League. The refusal of the Congress to agree to a communal parity, therefore, led to a deadlock towards the formation of an Interim Government.

The Muslim Press received the Cabinet Mission's proposals with equally hot words. It wrote :

"It does very little justice to Muslims : it does not concede Pakistan, which in the sense of an absolutely independent zones of the Indian sub-continent still remains the Muslim nation's unshakable goal. So will it remain until it is completely achieved. . . . The British Labour Government's attitude towards Pakistan, therefore, leaves Muslims utterly cold. . . . The new British Plan itself will be judged, and the Muslim League's attitude towards it will be determined by only one criterion. Does it bar all progress towards attainment of the goal, or does it offer

opportunities for registering an advance towards that goal? If, after a careful study, it is a trap from which there is no exit towards Pakistan, it will have to be completely rejected."

And about the defects of the Plan it wrote :

(*a*) A United India for the purpose of 'a United Defence' is a most puerile plea, for the armed forces can be equitably distributed between the two new Sovereign States which can thereafter become the centres for separate development by the States concerned.

(*b*) The opponents of the grouping system have expressed a fear that 'the majority party in each group may so frame the constitution of the provinces that they may not be able to record their free vote on this important issue.' This is childish. Under the British Cabinet Mission's proposed Plan, the present provincial units must remain as they are at present. They cannot be wiped out. Each province must have its legislature and nobody can doubt that these legislatures will be elected by the free vote of the people concerned. These legislatures can decide by a majority of votes whether the province concerned wishes to stay in its Group or not. There is, thus, no question of any province being coerced to stay in a group against the wishes of its people.

(*c*) What Mahatma Gandhi and the lesser writers in the Hindu press really fear is that confronted with the issue of staying in a Group or not, a majority of the people in the N.-W. F. P., as well as Assam is likely to vote for the Group, thus strengthening the foundation of the two Pakistan units. They, therefore, want to take advantage of the accident of the Congress being in office in these two provinces at present in order to forestal the verdict of

the people and get them now out of the Groups to which they naturally belong.

The fact of the matter is that the Pakistan areas in the north-west, as well as the north-east, are quite apart from the communal composition of their population, two well-marked geographical and economic units. Once this fundamental fact is properly presented to the people concerned, there is little doubt that many Hindus and Sikhs in both Pakistan areas, who are now dominated by unreal fears, will willingly vote for the integrity and progress of these units as such.

As regards the Sikhs, their reaction was most significant. They declared: 'The Cabinet Mission seems to have met the view-point of the Hindus and the Muslims, but the Sikh position has finally liquidated. Master Tara Singh, the Sikh leader declared that 'the whole future of the Sikhs has been entrusted to a house of 36 members of whom 23 shall be Muslims, 9 Hindus and 4 Sikhs. Can we expect any justice, any consideration or any fairplay from such a body, specially when it knows that the British bayonets are here to protect and carry out its decisions? We are already groaning under Muslim domination, which is now being strengthened and stiffened. We are doomed. We must now stand upon our own legs or fall for ever. Now or never. Unite, unite to a man. Rise, rise to a man and be prepared to die, die to a man. O Khalsa, O sons of the great Guru Gobind Singh! Shall we perish without a struggle? Accursed is he who stands aloof now!"

The Sikh leaders urged for:

(*a*) A separate Sikh State comprising the districts lying between the rivers Ravi and Jumna with minor local adjustments, and

(*b*) A separate Constitution-making body.

For the attainment of their objective, the Sikhs contemplated a *Direct Action* against the Government the Congress and the Muslim League, being the three main parties in the Interim Government, and for that purpose some 800 Sikh representatives met at Amritsar on June 9, 1946, where they arrived at the following decisions :

(1) The formation of a Council of Action.

(2) Recruitment of at least two lakhs of volunteers.

(3) Appeal to Sikhs to make any other sacrifice or to contribute at least one month's salary.

(4) A pledge to be signed before the *Akal Takht* by those who join the campaign to face death in order to secure relief against the wrongs done to them by the Plan of the Mission.

Further, the following resolution was passed on the 10th June by the Sikh Panthic Conference :

This representative gathering of Sikhs has given its anxious and earnest consideration to the recommendations of the Cabinet Mission and is of the opinion that these recommendations will perpetuate the slavery of the country rather than promote the independence of India. The recommendations are particularly unjust to the Sikhs, regard being had *inter alia* to the matters specified hereunder :

(*a*) That the Cabinet Mission, while recognising that the establishment of Pakistan would in particular affect adversely the position of the Sikhs have yet, by the compulsory grouping of the Provinces, made

recommendations, which in the words of Lord Pethick-Lawrence, Secretary of State for India 'have made it possible for the Muslims to secure all the conditions of Pakistan without incurring the dangers in it.'

(*b*) That the Cabinet Mission, while admitting that the cultural, political and social life of the Muslims might become submerged in a purely unitary India in which the Hindus with their great superior numbers will be a dominant element, and this in spite of the fact that the Muslims are nine crores in population and constitute a majority in several provinces of India have deliberately blinded themselves to the same danger to a greater degree in the case of the Sikhs under Muslim domination which will be all the more aggravated by the proposed constitution. Needless to add that even under the existing constitution the Sikhs have been reduced to a position of complete helplessness which has already exasperated them to the verge of revolt.

(*c*) That while admitting that the Punjab is the homeland of the Sikhs, the Cabinet Mission have by their recommendations, liquidated the position of the Sikhs in their homeland.

(*d*) That the advisory committee set up under paragraph 20 of the Cabinet Mission's statement is wholly ineffective to safeguard the just rights of the Sikhs.

(*e*) That, while the Cabinet Mission have made provision for the protection of the rights and interests of the Hindus and Muslims in regard to major communal issues, they have made no such provision for the protection of the rights and the interests of the Sikhs in the Union or the provincial sphere.

Therefore, this Panthic gathering expresses its strong condemnation of the recommendations of the Cabinet Mission and declares that they are wholly unacceptable to the Sikhs. This gathering further

affirms that no constitution will be acceptable to the Sikhs which does not meet their just demands and is settled without their consent.

On the same day, more than 1,000 Sikhs headed by prominent Akali leaders, took a pledge to make every sacrifice in opposing the Cabinet Mission's proposals, and decided further to commence their proposed *Direct Action* on the 23rd June, 1946 under Col. Niranjan Singh Gill, the first Dictator of the Sikh Council of Action. But fortunately such a hasty step was not taken by the Sikh community although by July 10th the Pratinidhi Panthic Board, a body fully representative of all shades of opinion with in the community, had unanimously decided upon the complete boycott of the Constituent Assembly. After the meeting of the Board, Col. Gill announced : "We do not think we are going against the wishes of Congress. We think, Congress will be fighting from inside, and we shall be fighting from outside. We have been so dishonoured that we have to take this course..."

But the Sikhs retraced their steps when the Congress invited their delegation under the leadership of Col. Gill to discuss their attitude towards the Constituent Assembly afresh at Wardha. Col. Gill spoke his mind in a Press interview at New Delhi *en-route* to Wardha : "I have no hesitation in saying that the Sikhs consider the Congress as their representative in all national matters and in the fight for the freedom of India."

Col. Gill added : " Our boycott of the Constituent Assembly is on an entirely different footing from that of the Muslim League. The only point at issue is that in the existing conditions the Sikhs must have the right to safeguard their distinct entity, honour and the place their past and present deservedly give them. I feel that the Congress should gladly not only give this right but itself defend it."

On August 9, the Congress Working Committee at Wardha adopted a resolution appealing the Sikhs to reconsider their decision regarding the Constituent Assembly, and on August 14, the Panthic Board sitting in the Golden Temple at Amritsar decided to withdraw their previous decision to boycott the Constituent Assembly and to enter it 'when the opportunity comes.' The Board also decided to take part in the Interim Government. " We are going to the Constituent Assembly," declared Col. Gill on that occasion, " with the specific purpose of removing the injustice to the Sikhs at the earliest opportunity. We shall come out of it and resort to *Direct Action* if at the first sitting of that body we fail to get the safeguards we want."

With the Congress decision on August 10th, 1946 to accept the Cabinet Mission Plan *in its entirety*, and the Sikh Panthic Board's declaration to participate in the Interim Government, the tables were turned against the Muslim League which had reversed its previous decision having decided not to participate in the Interim Govern-

ment, and to resort to *Direct Action* against the Congress and the Government 'for the attainment of an absolute, unconditional and completely sovereign state of Pakistan.' The Congress, therefore, decided finally to go ahead with the formation of the Provisional Government as a preliminary to the Constituent Assembly, and on August 16, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru revealed at a Press conference in Bombay : "Mr. Jinnah had declined to offer his party's co-operation to the Congress in the formation of an immediate provisional Interim Government, and in the circumstances, however, it is obvious that we cannot stand still because of this unfortunate lack of co-operation from the Muslim League. So far as we are concerned, that door of co-operation will always be open. We shall, whatever we may do, always be keeping in view this larger view-point and proceed with the largest measure of co-operation."

But with the Muslim League's decision to resort to *Direct Action*, and the Congress's declaration to form the Interim Government without indulging in any waste of time over further negotiations, communal tension between the Hindus and Muslims began to increase gradually all over the country. The wave of communal estrament rose higher and higher till it culminated in an orgy of unprecedented slaughter and unestimable destruction of men and material in great cities like Calcutta, Bombay, Agra and Ahmedabad ; in the far-off and obscure places

like Quetta and Garh Mukteshwar ; in the entire province of Bihar, and even under the very eye of the Viceroy in the Imperial city of Delhi. The whole country fell in the grip of terror with extensive rioting, looting and arson, but despite high tension amongst the communities, perfect peace was maintained in the Punjab throughout the course of these disturbances.

In order, therefore, to avert the danger of a ruinous civil war in the country, another series of long talks between the Viceroy and the leaders of the political parties began on September 16, 1946. During the course of talks some of the outstanding points of dispute concerning the Interim Government were partially conceded in favour of the Muslim League, and after a fortnight's parleys the Congress and the Muslim League leaders at last came upon mutual compromise and understanding on the question of the Interim Government. Consequently, on the 16th October the Muslim League announced its decision to participate in the Interim Government and sent in a list of five nominees to the Viceroy.

But the Muslim League's acceptance of the Short Term Scheme or participation in the Interim Government did not make any headway towards the solution of the Indian problem. Mr. Jinnah refused to participate in the proposed Constituent Assembly so long as the Congress interpreted it in terms of a sovereign body. The

Congress President, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, had clearly declared :

> "The Constituent Assembly's greatest measure is that although it will be brought into existence by the British Government, they will have nothing to do with it after it has been set into motion. The Constituent Assembly will then be completely sovereign and will be able to do anything. Nobody can interfere in its work. The foreign rulers may be angry with the manner in which the Constituent Assembly conducts its business, but nobody else can kill it. It is a fallacy to think that the constitution drawn by the Constituent Assembly will be sent to London for ratification so that the British Government may put its seal on it."

Obviously, that was objected to by Jinnah as a plea for 'running roughshod' over the Muslim League in the Constituent Assembly where their strength was one quarter of the house. On the 21st November, therefore, he issued a statement regretting the Viceroy's decision to summon the Constituent Assembly on the 9th December ' in complete disregard of the feelings of the Muslim League.' He also made it clear that no representative of the Muslim League would attend the Constituent Assembly so long as the Mussalmans were not assured of the Congress' intention to work on the lines of action drawn out by the Cabinet Mission in their Scheme of the 16th May and their interpretation of the same on the 25th May, 1946. That involved, according to the Muslim League, conceding to the *Grouping Scheme* by the Congress

to which it was fundamentally opposed and which it was determined to set at naught.

This looked strange in face of the Congress' acceptance of the Mission's Plan in its entirety. But the League highlights explained: "It is incorrect to say that the Congress has accepted the scheme in its entirety. The (Congress) resolution in itself says that the Working Committee did not approve of all the proposals contained in the scheme. The Congress would accept only those proposals which are to their advantage and disapprove of those portions of the scheme which would benefit the Muslims. For instance the grouping of the Muslim-majority provinces is the only redeeming feature of the scheme from the Muslim point of view. But the Congress still holds that provincial autonomy is a basic provision and that each province has a right to decide whether to form or join a group or not. If they are so keen about this basic provision, may, I ask if they are prepared to further extend its scope and allow each province to decide whether to join the union centre or not?"

That spoke of preparing the Muslim-majority provinces for a fight to secure ground and establish the proposed Groups in the country. The above speech of the Khan of Mamdot was further supported by Mr. Mohammad Ismail Khan at a social function in Secunderabad wherein he said: "*Direct Action* in the provinces where League Ministries are functioning, may

be launched in the form of disobedience by the Governments of those provinces of the Central Authority," replying to a question put by the representative of the Orient Press, as to what course the *Direct Action* will take in Sind and Bengal where League Ministries will not be resigning.

Bengal was, accordingly, the first Muslim-majority province to declare its intention to assume independence from the Centre. This was followed soon after by the Muslim League province of Sind whose Premier, Mr. Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah announced that the Bengal Premier had declared that on the day the Congress formed an Interim Government at the Centre, he would raise the flag of independence of Bengal. Sind, he added, would follow Bengal's example.

The Muslim League had, thus, launched its *Direct Action* campaign in right earnest. It had prepared its ground well at ease in Bengal and Sind, where the League Ministries were holding the Government machinery; but its real task lay in creating a field for the change-over in the Muslim-majority provinces of the Punjab and the N.-W. F. P., where strong non-League Governments stood in the way. Out of these two, the first however, was the Punjab which fell before the Muslim League activities, and of which we shall discuss in the following pages.

V

The Crisis

The growing strength of the Muslim League in the Punjab was first put to test in January 1947 at a by-election in the Dera Ghazi Khan North Muslim Rural Constituency situated in the farthest and the most backward corner of the Punjab. The result was striking. The Muslim League candidate defeated the Unionist nominee by a wide margin of over 1,400 votes despite strong barriers of the officialdom, promulgation of Section 144 in the District forbidding meetings or open propaganda, and other odds created by the Khizar Government.

The moral of the Dera Ghazi Khan victory for the Muslim League, according to a League organ, was, that there was no justification for the Ministry to continue in office, and that those Unionist Muslim members, who were not co-operating with the Muslim League, if they were to seek the verdict of their electorate, would be routed at the hands of those who had sent them to the Assembly.

As an immediate result of this, therefore,

the Khizar Ministry took up strong repressive measures against the growing power of the Muslim League, and on Friday, the 24th January, Province-wide searches were made following the declaration of the Muslim League National Guard and the Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh as unlawful bodies under Section 89 of the Public Safety Ordinance. Seven members of the Punjab Muslim League High Command, namely, Khan Iftikhar Hussain Khan of Mamdot, Mian Iftikharuddin, Mian Mumtaz Daultana, Begum Shah Nawaz, Sardar Shaukat Hayat Khan, Malik Firoz Khan Noon, and Syed Amir Hussain Shah were arrested in Lahore following their opposition to police to search the office of the Muslim National Guards. The Khan of Mamdot, in an interview to the Press said: "We are courting arrest to vindicate civic liberties in the Punjab, where an unrepresentative ministry, in order to help itself in power, is resorting to most objectionable methods to gag popular liberties."

On the following day, Mr. Ghazanfar Ali Khan, Health Member in the Interim Government and a Member of the Punjab Muslim League Committee of Action, issued a statement wherein he said: "The arrest of Khan Iftikhar Hussain Khan of Mamdot and other top-ranking leaders of the Punjab Muslim League, marks a serious development in the situation in this Province. I am not in a position to say anything about the policies which led to the development. I wish, however, very earnestly to advise the

Muslims of the Punjab that, whatever may happen, they must not lose their sense of discipline and must not allow events to drift into inter-communal conflict or violence. This is my advice to the non-Muslims of the Punjab as well. What has taken place involves no inter-communal issue at all and it will be a disaster if either community allows itself to be misled into communal quarrels."

The Government communique said that 'the Punjab Government recently decided to declare the R. S. S. S. (Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh), and the M. L. N. G. (Muslim League National Guards) to be unlawful associations under the Criminal Law Amendment Act 1908. Their reason for this decision was that in the present state of feeling, private communal armies are a danger to peace;' but the Muslim League organ viewed that 'for the wave of repression that has been launched against the Muslim National Guards, there is no justification except that Khizar Hayat has been waiting a long time to avenge his rump party's defeat at the polls. It is a peaceful, disciplined organization under the direct control of the Muslim League. It is an insult to the Muslim National Guards to place them in the same category as the Rashtriya Sewak Sangh. Significantly, no action has been taken against various bodies into whose ranks militant I. N. A. personnel and other questionable elements have been added in large numbers during the past 12 months.'

On Saturday, the 25th January, 63 persons including 16 League M. L. As. were arrested in

Lahore; women were tear-gassed and students were lathi-charged and wounded on many occasions. "Unionist-Congress terrorism against a lawful organisation and against law-abiding citizens, continues upon its insane career," wrote *Dawn*, the League spokesman from Delhi. Mr. Liaqat Ali Khan, General Secretary of the Muslim League, however, stated that 'it is a complete travesty of truth to describe the League National Guards as a private army, and this is only an excuse for the indefensible conduct of the Ministry which is clearly out to suppress the Muslim League in the Punjab.

On the following day, the Muslim League civil disobedience campaign took a new turn when the Punjab Government lifted the ban on the Muslim League National Guards and released the League leaders from the Central Jail, but the League decided to continue their struggle against the ban on civil liberties. Addressing a huge gathering outside the Mochi Gate in the same after-noon, Malik Firoz Khan Noon said: "Our fight against the Punjab Government is aimed at the vindication of the civil liberties of the people of the Province without distinction of caste or creed. Our struggle is based on a high plan of political thought and I believe that our Hindu and Sikh brethren will also join us in our common fight against the bureaucratic machine of oppression and suppression." The police, therefore, re-arrested at midnight all top-ranking Muslim League leaders including the Khan of

Mamdot, Malik Firoz Khan Noon, Mian Mumtaz Daultana, Mian Iftikharuddin, Sardar Shaukat Hayat Khan, Begum Shah Nawaz, Mr. Ghulam Muhiyud-din Kasuri, Professor Abdul Waheed, Mian Noorullah and Mian Amiruddin.

And then followed a month of provincewide demonstrations resulting in, lathi-charges, intear-gassings, shootings and arrests increasing in extent and capacity as the days passed in quick succession :

February 1st,—Punjab campaign spreads far and wide. Situation in most of the towns extremely tense. Volleys of tear-gas bombs fired at Lahore procession. 'In spite of the Goebbelsian lies by the Punjab Ministry in misrepresenting the intent and scope of Punjab's non-communal and non-violent struggle for civil liberties, and in spite of prefabricated ' communiques ' designed to mislead world public-opinion regarding its progress, the League civil disobedience campaign, on its 9th day, has spread far and wide in the Punjab.'

2nd,—' All sections of opinion, including ministerialists, openly admit that in spite of grave provocation, the Punjab Muslims have performed a miracle by behaving like a disciplined army.' Sikhs join the League procession in Lahore carrying a bi-coloured flag—green and yellow-inscribed with slogans of civil liberties ; two Sikhs, Amir Singh and Bhola Singh court arrest along with 118 others.

Mr. Jinnah, in a message from Karachi, appeals the Muslims, particularly the youth in

the Punjab to avoid communal conflicts and keep the movement absolutely peaceful. He also drew the attention of the Punjab Government, the Governor and the Viceroy 'not to indulge in any camouflage and deal with the situation boldly and frankly, and restore civil liberties of the people of the Punjab.'

6th,—14th day of the campaign ; about 13,000 arrested so far in the Punjab. Government officials nervous, out-worn and completely demoralised. Movement further spreads to rural areas.

9th,—One killed by mysterious stone-throw on the procession in Lahore. The first fatal casualty since the commencement of the Muslim League movement occurred when as the result of stone-throwing from a house-top in Beadon Road on the League processionists who were dispersing to their homes, one Muslim sustained injuries to which he latter succumbed in the hospital. The trouble was prevented from spreading by League workers who persuaded their co-religionists to disperse.

10th,—In view of the apparent failure of the Punjab Public Safety Ordinance as is proved by the daily defiance of the measure by lakhs of Muslims throughout the province, it is believed in Lahore that the Punjab is likely to be placed under martial law in the immediate future.

The editors of five Muslim League dailies of Lahore in a joint statement said : "The Muslims of Lahore gave proof of exemplary calmness and forbearance after this sad occurrence (of Beadon

Road stone-throwing) in spite of the provocation involved. Even the other communities have nothing but praise for their behaviour on this occasion. We respectfully appeal to the Punjab Muslims in general, and to the Muslims of Lahore in particular, to maintain perfect calm and abstain from all communal strife whatever the provocation. Any attempt to provoke communal trouble should be countered and should not be allowed to succeed."

12th,—Police constable in uniform and Schedule-Caste members court arrest along the Muslim masses. The Akalis, under the leadership of Gyani Kartar Sinph, express their determination to work for the attainment of a Hindu-Sikh Province where the two communities can lead their lives in their own way without interference from the Muslims. Without such a homeland, an Akali leader said the other day, they would lose their identity. The League, he added, without ever having tried had despaired of winning confidence of the minorities. It had launched for that very reason its present agitation without securing the confidence of the minorities. Civil liberties could not be the sole concern of the Muslim League in the Punjab. Under these circumstances, the Sikhs and the Hindus had no alternative left but to work in unison to secure their homeland where they could live without fear of Muslim domination which would, judging it from its present temper, take no account of their presence in the Province.

In case the Hindus did not join hands with the Akalis, he continued, they would go on to work for a Greater Sikh State in the Punjab composed of Patiala, Jind, Faridkot, Kapurthala, Nabha and Kalsia. To this territory of the States would be added predominant Sikh areas in the Province. 'All these schemes, however, nebulous at present, will one day assume a formidable shape if the Muslim League persists in alienating the sympathy of the minorities by adopting unconstitutional means to attain power,' prophesied the non-Muslim Press.

14th,—Police firing on a procession of nearly hundred-thousand strong at Amritsar, preceded and followed by an extensive use of lathi and tear-gas.

15th,—23rd day of the movement. At a meeting at the Provincial League office, Lahore, the League President, Maulana Daood Ghaznavi revealed that plans for carrying on the struggle to a successful end were finally approved. He said that their movement at present was centred round a limited front, namely, restoration of civil liberties for the people of the Punjab to enable them to carry on their political activities. There should be no misunderstanding of the fact, he emphasised, that the battle for breaking the Ministry can only be fought on the floor of the House.

Condition in five Districts officially described as *serious*; lathi-charge in Jullundur and Sargodha.

16th,—Punjab to be handed over to the

Army; anti-climax to the repeated Government assurances through their communiques that the Punjab situation was improving and that the movement was 'fizzling out.'

17th,—Police open fire on procession in Gujrat; one dead, 60 injured.

18th,—Peace parleys started in the Government House between the Punjab Governor and Khwaja Nazim-ud-din at the former's initiative.

19th,—About 7,000 demonstrators in Gujrat face lathi-charge and tear-gassing; troops called up for the first time to deal with the situation. Lahore women storm Government House. One hundred and eighteen persons, including ten Sikhs arrested for taking out a procession in defiance of the Ordinance.

20th,—"The action of the Muslim League in inviting some Harijans and Sikhs to join their processions is deeply resented in Sikh circles", wrote Hindustan Times' special correspondent at Lahore. He added: "Master Tara Singh, veteran Akali leader, has expressed his indignation at this move of the League saying that it is to carry on more propaganda to the effect that other communities are supporting its revolt against constitutionally established authority. 'We Sikhs can have no compromise with the Muslim League on the Pakistan issue. Pakistan means Muslim domination. Any type of domination is intolerable to us. Any threat, therefore, by one community to wrench power by force, would be boldly met by the minorities,

said Jathedar Udham Shingh Nagoke, M. L. A., in an interview.

He concluded: "The Akalis have started a province-wide campaign to enrol volunteers for the *Akali Fauj* to meet the 'growing menace of Muslim domination'. Now the three main communities in the Province will have three respective organisations for self-defence, namely, the Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh, the Muslim League National Guard and the Akali Fauj."

21st,—The British Prime Minister, Mr. Attlee's Statement in the House of Commons on the 20th February regarding the date of the final transfer of power to India create a stir in the Punjab. The following portions of the statement are considered as having immediate bearing on the Punjab politics:

> "His Majesty's Government are anxious to hand over their responsibilities to a Government which, resting on the sure foundation of the support of the people, is capable of maintaining peace and administering India with justice and efficiency. It is therefore, essential that all parties should sink their differences in order that they may be ready to shoulder the great responsibilities which will come upon them next year.
>
> "After months of hard work by the Cabinet Mission, a great measure of agreement was obtained as to the method by which a constitution should be worked out. This was embodied in their statement of May last. His Majesty's Government there agreed to recommend to Parliament a constitution worked out in accordance with the proposals made therein by a fully representative Constituent Assembly.

"But if it should appear that such a constitution will not have been worked out by a fully representative Assembly before the time mentioned, *i.e.*, June 1948, *His Majesty's Government will have to consider to whom the powers of the Central Government in British India should be handed over, on due date, whether as a whole to some form of Central Government for British India or in some areas to the existing Porvincial Governments or in some other way as may seem most reasonable and in the best interests of the Indian people.*"[1]

Big political developments are expected to take place in the Punjab in the near future, as the above statement, according to Khizar Hayat Khan, 'creates an entirely new situation, in which the leaders of all parties and communities must be in a position to confer with one another and to decide how the Punjab should face the future.'

As regards the reactions of the parties in the Punjab, the Staff Correspondent of the Hindustan Times aptly remarked: "The Opposition Party, in the light of Mr. Attlee's statement that power will be transferred 'in some areas to the existing provincial Governments or in such other way as may seem most reasonable in the best interests of the people', are determined to wrest power from the Coalition Party so that on the due date of the transfer of power there exists a League Ministry in the Punjab. *The Ministry will face the Opposition in the Assembly when it meets on March 3, the first day of the Budget Session.*[2]

1. Italics are mine. 2. Italics are mine.

"Sikh and Congress M. L. A.'s reiterate their support to the Coalition Party. The Unionists, on whom the fate of the Ministry depends, are again being approached by League leaders to join their camp. It is too early to say what success the League will meet in its fresh efforts to win over the Unionists.

Homeland for Minorities.—"Gyani Kartar Singh, President of the Shiromani Akali Dal, said the other day that His Majesty's Government's statement that 'power will be transferred in some areas to the existing provincial Governments or in some such other way as may seem most reasonable' means that it is left to the Sikhs not to be coerced into accepting League dictation. '*I have*,' he said, '*already chalked out a plan*[1] *for a Hindu-Sikh Province. This Province, combined with the merger of six Sikh States in the Punjab will give the minorities a homeland.*'[2] In this homeland, the Sikhs and Hindus would be able to lead their lives free of Muslim domination.'

"Humorously, he remarked: 'The Punjab is our homeland. Suppose a landlord perchance has too many tenants staying in his house, would you say that the house belongs to the tenants just because they are greater in number?'

"Master Tara Singh also reiterated his opposition to Muslim domination in the Punjab. 'We Sikhs,' he said, 'cannot co-operate with the

1. For details, see next Chapter.
2. Italics are mine.

League unless we are assured that there will be proper safeguards for the minorities. Unless there is an equitable settlement, we will proceed with the idea of partition of the Punjab. Our minimum demand is that in the Punjab, as it stands today, the Sikhs and Hindus should *each* be given 30 per cent. representation in the Legislature and in the services. Forty per cent. should go to the Muslims'."

22nd,—All the top-ranking League leaders, including Maulana Daood Ghaznavi, are busy discussing the terms of peace-offer made by the Punjab Government. An iron curtain of secrecy hangs over the deliberations of League's Big nine in Kasur Jail regarding the Government's offer for ending the League movement.

The new statement of His Majesty's Government is likely to intensify the struggle in the Punjab, for while the Muslims consider it a gain beyond what the Mission's Plan conceded to them, the Hindus and Sikhs in the Province are apprehensive of the impending danger of the Muslim domination as soon as the British withdraw their authority. As a consequence, therefore, it was reported that " there are indications that the attitude of the Hindus, Sikhs and other minorities in the Punjab, which have hitherto been neutral towards the present League agitation, is stiffening. A vigorous 'signature campaign' on a petition which is to be presented to the Punjab Government calling upon them to 'take stronger and more effective measures to

stop this lawlessness', has been initiated by the Congress leader, Dr. Gopichand Bhargava."

Dr. Gopichand called upon the Premier to suppress the movement with all the force at his command, or to allow the Congress Party to take the law into its hands and protect the people. If this is not done, he added, the people will do so themselves and they will not then be responsible for the consequences.

The Sikhs have begun to organize regiments of their *Akali Fauj*, and it was reported that 'before the fateful June of 1948 comes, and the British pack up and go, the Punjab will have private armies ready to take the present controversy between the various '*stans*' to the arbitration of arms.

23rd,—Maulana Ghaznavi takes the Government peace offer to Mr. Jinnah. Possibility that the month-old Muslim League campaign may be terminated within the next 48 hours.

24th,—The League movement enters into its second month. Muslims suspend their business for the day; transport at a standstill at many places. Huge processions and meetings all over the Province condemning the Punjab Public Safety Ordinance marked by police firing at Amritsar and Jullundur resulting in injuries to about 150 persons including the Superintendent of Police, Jullundur and 31 police constables. One Muslim died at Amritsar.

Mr. Jinnah, who had discussions with Maulana Daood Ghaznavi last night on the

Punjab situation has outlined the scope of a settlement 'honourable to both sides—the Punjab Government and the Muslim League' in an interview to the Press. His terms for the settlement were reported to be: (1) the ban on public meetings should be removed. (2) the ban on processions should be removed. (3) the Punjab Public Safety Ordinance should be placed before the Punjab Legislative Assembly at its next session with modifications, if any for the Assembly to consider and allow the House to take such decisions as the House may determine, and (4) that all those who, since the movement started, were arrested, imprisoned, convicted or detained, should be released.

"I understand," Mr. Jinnah stated, "that the Punjab League leaders are not insisting on the ban on processions being removed immediately as a compromise, although they are of the opinion that it is the right of the people which should not be interfered with and I agree with this view. Therefore, there remain the other three points and I understand the Punjab Government are willing to remove the ban on the meetings and release all those referred to in point number 4, namely, all those arrested, imprisoned, convicted or detained since this movement started, should be released. The only question that now remains is the placing of the Punjab Public Safety Ordinance before the Punjab Legislative Assembly. This has been done by other provinces and it is, therefore,

in consonance with constitutional precedents and the duty of any popular constitutional Government, because the Ordinance was enacted as an emergency measure as the Legislature was not in session. It is the duty of any Government that is based on democracy and constitutional precedents that it should place an Ordinance enacted as an emergency measure at the first and earliest moment before the Legislature.

"I hope that the Governor of the Punjab and the Ministry will realize that the Muslim League cannot acquiesce in or agree to the Ordinance continuing, ignoring the Legislature, which is going to meet shortly. I hope that they will appreciate our insistence on the course suggested by us to be adopted and not to be affected by any question of prestige or any other consideration but agree to act as a constitutional popular democratic Government. This will, in my judgment, enhance their prestige."

25th,—The Punjab Government makes peace with Muslim League. The 32-day old League movement comes to a successful conclusion; Mr. Jinnah's demands accepted by authorities. The following are the terms of settlement:

1. The ban on public meetings imposed under the Punjab Public Safety Ordinance, is lifted.
2. The ban on demonstrations and processions and carrying of arms in public promulgated under the Punjab Public Safety Ordinance to remain in force.
3. To bring forward such legislation as may be considered necessary to preserve peace and public

order in place of the present Punjab Public Safety Ordinance.

4. The release of all prisoners detained under trial, or convicted in connection with the movement other than those accused or convicted of offences under Section 325 or of more serious offences under the Indian Penal Code.

26th,—Punjab Muslim League leaders released. Public meetings to continue fight against the 'unrepresentative' Ministry of Khizar Hayat Khan.

28th,—The *New York Times* publishes an interview between their correspondent at Amritsar and Master Tara Singh, leader of the Sikhs, in which the latter said: "I do not see how we can avoid civil war although, of course, we should try."

Emphasising particularly the Sikh fear of Muslims, he said: "There can be no settlement if the Muslims want to rule the Punjab. We cannot trust the Muslims under any circumstances."

The correspondent said that the Sikh leader disclosed that the Sikhs had started to organize their own private volunteer 'army' in view of the Muslim League's agitation against the Coalition Ministry of the Punjab in which the Sikhs are represented.

Master Tara Singh was quoted as saying that he believed in the Sikhs' ability to keep the Muslims out of Eastern Punjab. "But why should we stop there?" he asked. "We would them drive out of the Punjab entirely."[1]

1. Reuter, New York, reproduced in the 'Hindustan Times' Delhi.

March 1st,—Muslim League aims at dislodging the Coalition Ministry during the brief budget session starting on the 3rd March. In case of their failure, it is learnt that the Muslim League will launch another movement demanding dissolution of the Assembly and holding of fresh elections.

In an interview to the Press, Master Tara Singh, the vetern Sikh leader, said that there was no prospect of a settlement with the Muslims in the Punjab, and that the Sikhs could not trust the Muslims whose aim was to rule the Punjab.

Appeal to Privy Council.—The Staff Correspondent of the 'Hindustan Times' reports that 'Sikh leaders who recently met in Lahore, it is gathered, decided to appeal to the Privy Council to hand over the Punjab to the Sikhs since the Province was annexed from a Sikh ruler, namely, Maharaja Dalip Singh.'

"A Sikh spokesman said: 'The Punjab was taken over from the Sikhs by the British. It was only proper and just, now that they were quitting India, that the Punjab should be returned to them.'

"Funds were being raised to fight the case in the Privy Council and legal advice was being sought from leading Indian lawyers to examine the validity of their claim, the spokesman said."

2nd,—The premier, Khizar Hayat Khan, in

consultation with his colleagues and the Coalition Party tenders his resignation to the Governor of the Punjab at 10-15 p. m. In a statement Khizar Hayat Khan said : "In the course of my statement issued on February 26, I said that His Majesty's Government's announcement of February 20 had created an entirely new situation in which the leaders of all parties in the Punjab must decide how the Province should face the future. I have since given most anxious consideration to the situation with which the country is now faced and after mature deliberation have arrived at certain conclusions which I take this opportunity of making public.

"Last year when on the invitation of the Governor, I took upon myself the responsibility of forming a coalition Government, I was convinced that the best interests of the Province and of all parties would be served by the administration being run by a non-communal party or coalition.

"As regards the constitutional evolution of the country, each party in the coalition was left free to pursue its own line. On my part I made it clear that my Muslim colleagues in the Legislature and myself fully supported the Muslim demands. I am thoroughly convinced today, as I was then, that for the purpose of securing a sound provincial administration the best arrangement is a non-communal party or coalition. The risks attendant upon adoption of any other course are too obvious to be stressed.

"On this basis, I have endeavoured to maintain a distinction between the provincial and administrative problems and those that were Central and constitutional. As long as this line could be maintained, I had hoped that the coalition, in addition to running the provincial administration on a satisfactory basis, might also serve as a bridge to make communal settlement possible. The arrangement in the Punjab might have served as an example elsewhere.

"It must, however, be confessed with sorrow that the gulf that unfortunately divides the communities, is as wide today as it was last year. It might nevertheless have been possible for the Coalition to continue to bridge it and to function satisfactorily on the basis on which it was formed, but His Majesty's Government's latest pronouncement has obliterated the boundaries between the provincial and Central spheres and constitutional and administrative problems and has thereby destroyed that very basis itself.

"His Majesty's Government have declared their solemn resolve to start immediately the process of transferring the balance of political power into Indian hands and to complete it by June, 1948. To meet the contingency of His Majesty's Government finding it necessary in the case of the Punjab to transfer responsibility to a provincial administration, it is only fair that all political parties in the Province should have a chance of evolving between them an adminis-

tration which should be ready to receive sovereign power from His Majesty's Government as soon as the process of transfer commences.

"If I were now to continue to lead a coalition in which the Muslim League is not represented this might put in serious jeopardy such chances that might otherwise exist of a settlement being arrived at between the communities in the Province.

"The basic fact in the situation is that the Province has been suddenly confronted with the main constitutional problem and in conformity with the policy to which I have throughout adhered to, the responsibility for dealing with this problem on behalf of the Muslims must continue to vest in the Muslim majority party.

"His Majesty's Government's announcement has made it imperative that parties in the Province must be brought face to face with stark realities and must come to grips direct with the problems that confront the country. It is now incumbent on me to leave the field clear for the Muslim League to come to such arrangement vis-a-vis the other parties as it might be considered best in the interests of the Muslims and the Province.

"I have, therefore, submitted to the Governor the resignation of my Government. It is needless to add that I and my Muslim colleagues will continue to support the Muslim demand for self-determination. In view of the step that I have

taken it is needless for me to stress that I shall be ever ready to promote the cause of communal harmony and the chances of communal settlement in the Province so far as it might be within my power, and shall not grudge any sacrifice that might help to achieve this much to be desired consummation."

The Khan of Mamdot, Leader of the Muslim League Assembly Party, on an invitation from the Governor, intimated him that he was in a position to form a Ministry and that he would submit the names of his colleagues in a few days. Earlier, in an interview with Mr. Bhimsen Sachar, leader of the Congress Party, the Governor is reported to have advised that an all-parties Ministry was essential in the Province for maintenance of law and order and communal peace. He further expressed the fear of major communal clashes in the absence of a Coalition Government.

3rd,—The Khan of Mamdot issued the following statement inviting the various parties including the Unionists to join the League :

"The strong and fundamental differences, which have existed so far between the Muslim League and Malik Khizar Hayat Khan, are well known. These have, however, ended with the Malik Sahib's resignation of office in order to leave the field clear for the Muslim League to assume its natural and rightful role in the Punjab politics and provincial Self-Government.

"I congratulate Mailk Khizar Hayat Khan

on the step he has taken and cordially invite him and other Muslim M.L.A.s who have so far remained outside the Muslim League fold to join their national organization. We shall receive them with open arms without discrimination or ill-will forgetting the past as if it had never existed.

Minorities.—"I have every hope that the way has also been prepared in the Punjab for proper co-operation of representatives of the minority communities with those of the majority in running the administration of the Province, and tackling the constitutional problems, with which we have been confronted by the recent statement of the British Prime Minister. I wish to assure the Hindus and Sikhs and other minorities in the Punjab that it has never been the desire of the Muslim League to impose the communal domination of the Muslims over non-Muslims. It will be our endeavour to secure the willing co-operation of all for the purpose of building up a happy and prosperous Punjab.

"One fundamental fact about the Punjab is that the interests of Muslims and Sikhs in this province are identical in so many respects that in any political alignment, the natural place for these two is by each other's side. The Muslim League had always recognised the importance of this fact and is always anxious to secure the co-operation of the Sikh Panth in bringing about a much needed revolution in the economic and social conditions in the Punjab as a basis of our

future and common economic and political freedom.

"For the first time in the constitutional history of the Punjab, a party which truly represents and is answerable to a politically conscious Muslim majority of the Province, has been called upon to form a Ministry and all classes of communities in the Province, Hindus, Sikhs and Scheduled Castes, can look forward confidently to justice and protection at the hands of a Ministry such as I am endeavouring to form. Naturally, it will be a Ministry which will keep the interests of the masses, the poor and the backward nearest its heart.

"It has not been possible so far for the Muslim League and the Congress, both of which are all-India organisations, to come to any kind of settlement which might form a basis of coalition in provincial ministries. I can only hope that the time will come soon when every provincial ministry, whether in a Muslim majority Province or a Congress majority Province, will include representatives of both.

Pakistan.—"The Muslim League has gained its present strength due to the solid support of the vast mass of Muslims in this Province who have not hesitated to pass through ordeals of fire and blood for the sake of their political rights and liberties. The formation of a ministry by the Muslim League will be a happy day in the history of their political endeavour, but the happiest and proudest day in this history will be

when Hindus and Sikhs and other minorities will all have their suspicions and fears of the Muslim-majority removed and will be willing and eager to play their part in building up a free and happy state of Pakistan."

On the same day Mr. Jinnah issued the following statement from Bombay expressing the necessity of unity among the Punjab Muslims for the achievement of the goal of Pakistan :

"At this critical moment, and in view of the grave situation that Muslims are facing, it is essential that there should be complete unity amongst us. There is no power on earth that can stop us from achieving our goal of Pakistan, provided Muslims stand solidly behind the Muslim League.

"If we fail, it will be our own fault and let us not be condemned by history and posterity that we of this generation were not able to rise above petty differences and personal equations or quarrels at a moment, when it is obvious that we should close up our ranks for our cherished goal of Pakistan. We have to struggle against all odds and we are handicapped in many ways, but let us not be held guilty of having lost our cause owing to our own folly of creating differences amongst ourselves and allowing them to exist. Let us be absolutely united, speak and act with one voice, and if we establish complete unity, co-operation and harmony among ourselves, it will not be difficult to settle with other communities or parties and the British Government.

"I, therefore, once more appeal to every Muslim to unreservedly rally round the banner of the Muslim League and let us march together and then we shall not fail."

The League high-lights in the Punjab, however, showed a desire to form a new Coalition Ministry in the Province after arriving at some settlement with the Congress and the Akalis. Mr. Ghazanfar Ali, according to *Hindustan Times*, is reported to have said that 'the League wanted to form an all-parties Government. It did not want to form a Ministry by securing a precarious majority. Such a Ministry could not inspire confidence.' But the Akali leaders were very emphatic. "No agreement with the League," said Mr. Swaran Singh and Master Tara Singh. Gyani Kartar Singh said that the position had entirely changed with the latest statement of H. M. G., and that there could be no compromise with the League on fundamentals. "We want now to settle the future of the Sikhs. The League had tried to capture power in the light of H. M. G.'s statement. We have, therefore, no alternative but to stay in the Opposition."

4th,—The resignation of Khizar Hayat Khan and the collapse of the Coalition Ministry did not come as a surprise in the political circles of the Punjab who had been expecting some such development ever since the release of the Muslim League leaders. It was reported by the special correspondent of the *Hindustan Times* that "the possibilities of establishing a Coalition Ministry

were explored. But as neither party was in a position to lay down an all-India policy, the move could not obviously be proceeded with....

"Sikhs are much better organized and much better armed than the Muslims. For some time now they have seen a civil war coming and they have been preparing for it. High British officials of the Punjab Government told me that if they had to face a similar movement (like that of the Muslim League against the Khizar Government) from the Sikhs, they would have four times more trouble. If any such movement began, it would develop quickly into communal rioting...."

It was further expressed in the same message that "if agitation develops into a head-on clash between the major communities inhabiting the Punjab, the Sikhs and the Hindus are likely to act as a united front. Most Sikh men and women are armed with *kirpans*. When the League forced the Coalition Government to withdraw its ban on the Rashtriya Sewak Sangh and the Muslim National Guards, the Sikhs realised that private armies had come to stay in the Province and that it was high time they had one such army of their own. Recruitment to the Akali Fauj is, therefore, going on now at a great pace. Into this *fauj* will go the talent of a race which has a long martial tradition and which contributed 200,000 men to the Indian army, a large number of whom are now demobbed.

"Since the day the Sikhs saw a civil war coming, they have begun to think of the Sikh

States in the Punjab as a counteracting factor against Muslim fanaticism. Attempts are being made to organize the Sikh States into a federation led by the premier Sikh State of Patiala.

"This has met with encouraging response. Those rulers who were not orthodox Sikhs, have agreed to be converted to the orthodox Sikh faith and the ten-year-old son of the Maharaja of Kapurthala took the *amrit* recently at a spectacular ceremony attended by leading Akali leaders.

"So when the rival claims of communities in the Punjab are submitted to the arbitrament of force, the Sikhs will also have the powerful support of the Rashtriya Sewak Sangh which has also been preparing for defence of Hindu rights."[1]

Disturbances started in the Punjab the same evening with heavy casualties in Lahore and Amritsar.

5th,—Punjab situation takes a serious turn; heavy toll of death in Amritsar. Multan in shambles. Curfew Order imposed in several towns; British troops called out in Amritsar.

6th,—Rioting in Jullundur, Multan, Sialkot and Rawalpindi; Amritsar now a veritable inferno.

7th,—Savage communal rioting in the Punjab, 1,036 killed, 1,110 injured. 40,000 homeless in Amritsar; streets littered with corpses.

8th,—24-hour curfew imposed in several

1. *Hindustan Times*, March 5, 1947.

Punjab towns. Many burnt to death in Multan. Arson and looting in Rawalpindi. The Working Committee of the Congress sitting in New Delhi passed the following resolution suggesting division of the Punjab into two provinces as the only solution of the communal troubles in the province :

"During the past seven months India has witnessed many horrors and tragedies which have been enacted in the attempt to gain political ends by brutal violence, murder and coercion. These attempts have failed, as all such attempts must fail, and have only led to greater violence and carnage.

"The Punjab, which had thus far escaped this contagion, became six weeks ago, the scene of an agitation, supported by some people in high authority to coerce and break a popular ministry which could not be attacked by constitutional methods. A measure of success attended this, and an attempt was made to form a ministry dominated by the group that had led the agitation. This was bitterly resented and has resulted in increased and widespread violence. There has been an orgy of murder and arson and Amritsar aud Multan have been scenes of horror and devastation.

Division of the Punjab.—"These tragic events have demonstrated that there can be no settlement of the problem in the Punjab by violence and coercion, and that no arrangement based on coercion can last. Therefore, it is necessary to find a way out which involved the least amount of compulsion. This would necessitate a division of the Punjab into two provinces, so that the predominantly Muslim part may be separated from the predominantly non-Muslim part.

"The Working Committee commend this solution, which should work to the advantage of all the

communities concerned, and lessen friction and fear and suspicion of each other. The Committee earnestly appeal to the people of the Punjab to put an end to the killing and brutality that are going on, and to face the tragic situation, determined to find a solution which does not involve compulsion of any major group and which will effectively remove the causes of friction."

9th,—Amritsar loss over ten crores of rupees. Heavy damage in Murree ; Taxila gutted. Serious rioting in villages; air-borne troops rushed to Shujabad, Mailsi and Khanewal.

10th,—Six villages burnt near Rawalpindi. Riots spread to Fatehjung, Hassanabdal and Campbellpore. Murree almost totally gutted.

Malik Firoz Khan Noon, a member of the Muslim League High Command, suggests for a settlement of the political situation in the Punjab in a Press interview: "The time has certainly arrived" he said, "when Sikhs and Muslims should sit round a table to find a solution to their political problems.

"If there is a strong and independent demand from a majority of Sikhs for a division of the Punjab, they will find that there will be a good response from the Muslim side for satisfying their legitimate aspirations.

"I am almost certain that if these two could agree, the Punjab Hindus would welcome this pleasant change in the political atmosphere. What we want is peace and prosperity for the Punjab, a province which is the homeland of

Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims, all combined together. We have lived here for centuries and we must live together."

Partition of the Punjab.—"It appears that the Congress Working Committee in Delhi have passed a resolution demanding a partition of the Punjab in the belief that the Punjab Mussalmans will dislike the idea and accept Akhand Hindustan at the Centre. The Sikh interests seemed to have had little influence in this decision.

"Lahore Division with a population of seven million, has four million Muslims. Amritsar District itself, where the most sacred Sikh temple is situated, is predominantly Muslim, particularly if the Taran Taran tehsil is taken out of the District. Amritsar town itself has a Muslim majority.

"The rivers, irrigation system, hydro-electric schemes and the Sikh holy places in the Western Punjab, not to mention the rich Sikh colonies in Montgomery, Lyallpur and Sargodha districts, seem to have played no part in the Congress decision. The Sikhs even in the Eastern Punjab will not be more than 33 per cent., the Muslims and Hindus each being the same.

The Congress Proposal.—Thinking Sikhs already know that if there is a partition of this nature, the Sikhs in the Eastern Punjab will, in due course, all be absorbed in the Congress Party who have already captured nine Sikh seats in the Punjab out of 33, the obvious implication is that the Congress by this partition of the Punjab

are hoping that this proposed Eastern Punjab State will become a part and parcel of Akhand Hindustan. But it must not be overlooked that this proposed Eastern State where the Sikhs and Muslims together will constitute a majority, may join the 'B' Group.

Alternate Suggestions.—"The suggestion was put forward on behalf of some Sikh thinkers that the Punjab, as it stands today, should be a separate sovereign State allied to neither Akhand Hindustan nor to Pakistan.

"Another suggestion that has been mooted is that the Punjab should be with B Group, but that the Sikhs should have certain guarantees provided in the constitution and enforceable by a new Federal Court in the B Group, to be set up for this and other purposes.

"It is also suggested that in this case the Muslims could have no objection to the following: The Sikhs could be taught the Gurmukhi language if the majority of Sikh Legislators so desire. The precedent exists in Switzerland where French, German and Swiss are taught in their schools.

"The Sikh share in the education grant could be handed over to a Sikh Educational Council as in the case of Washington, D. C., where 33 per cent. of the Negro population were receiving one-third of the total education grant in 1937.

"We could also provide in the constitution that in matters connected with the Sikh religion,

law of inheritance, customary and other personal laws, the majority Sikh vote shall prevail.

"The Sikhs could also be given a completely Sikh Public Service Commission to select Sikhs for the public services.

"We could also provide that our newly set up Federal Court should have the right to dismiss any servant newly appointed when not entitled to hold that post in accordance with the quotas fixed for the various communities.

"Another suggestion which has been examined, is that if the predominantly Sikh areas wish to go under a limitrophe (adjoining) Punjab Sikh State, they should be allowed to do so."

11th,—Communal trouble spreads to rural areas in the Attock and Campbellpore districts. Rural areas of Multan continue to cause anxiety.

12th,—Armed mob of 10,000 attempted to raid Mianwali town. "The Punjab is drifting towards a civil war," declared Master Tara Singh the veteran Akali leader, in an interview to the Press. He said: "I am not prepared to negotiate a settlement with the Muslim League until the present disturbances cease. The Muslim League wants to intimidate us and we are not going to submit. They want to dictate terms under threats. They are the aggressors. It is, therefore, for them to issue an appeal to their followers to stop looting and arson. I see no need for a joint appeal for peace."

Asked what would be the position if the disturbances did not cease, the Akali leader said:

"Then we must suffer."

He further said: "The Muslim League suggestions of a Muslim League-Sikh understanding was an attempt to create a cleavage between the Hindus and Sikhs. We are not going to betray the Hindus."

As regards the suggestion for an all-party Government in the Punjab, Master Tara Singh said: "We do not want a government in which the Muslims predominate. If the Muslims are sincere for an all-party Government, why did they not join the Khizar Ministry? I personally feel that there has been a Muslim Premier in this Province during the last 10 years. Let the chance of Premiership be given to the Sikhs now."

13th,—Campbellpore situation serious. Tense atmosphere in Montgomery. Rioting spreads to Ludhiana; extensive patrolling by military and police.

14,—Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru arrives in Lahore from Delhi by air. The first thing, he is reported to have said, was to restore law and order and a comparative measure of sanity which must take precedence over everything. He further said that while the public feelings were as inflamed as it was at present in the Province, any talk of negotiations for the formation of an all-party Government was simply unthinkable.

Pandit Nehru also received a deputation of Hindu and Sikh leaders to whom, it was learnt, he told that the only permanent solution of the Punjab trouble was the division of the Province

along the line of the river Ravi.

15th,—Pandit Nehru toured the Rawalpindi area. He was confident that the military authorities would be able to bring the situation rapidly under control. The Government, he said, was determined to do everything possible to meet the situation. The people, he added, should face all difficulties with courage, He said he had always loved the people of the Punjab and admired them as a brave people, and he felt sure that the Punjab and India would progress as they were already on the threshold of freedom, and the present difficulties were in the nature of a test which, he had no doubt, would be successfully met.

16th,—Pandit Nehru visits riot-stricken areas of Multan. Joint Peace Committees formed at various places in the Province. Governor's and Governor-General's Ordinances giving more powers to the military to be promulgated soon in the Punjab. Situation in main towns well in hand.

17th,—Pandit Nehru completes his three-day tour of the riot-affected areas in the Punjab after paying a visit to Amritsar this morning. Before leaving for Delhi, he addressed a Press conference in Lahore as follows:

"I propose to say something about my Punjab visit at this time. I have heard of behaviour by human beings which would degrade brutes. The first thing to be done is to put an end to every kind of disorderly action. The

second thing is to protect and rescue people who may be threatened or are in danger, more specially the women, who have been abducted or removed by force, should be brought back to their homes. Then other problems like the case of refugees and rehabilitation have to be tackled.

"There is never any need for panic whatever happens, much less today when the situation is more or less under control. The man who is panicky is a useless citizen and a danger to others.

"I propose to say nothing about that aspect except this that if politics are to be conducted in this way then they cease to be politics and become some kind of jungle warfare which reduces human habitation to the state of a desert. If there is a grain of intelligence in any person, he must realise that whatever political objective he may aim at, this is not the way to attain it. Any such attempt must bring, as it has in a measure brought, ruin and destrution.

"Let people struggle for their political aim if they want to. But they can do so as human beings with a measure of human dignity. I am not enamoured of slogans anywhere. The Punjab is specially fond of slogans. There may be times when slogans are useful and good, but when we are up against these hard facts which we face today, they cease to have any meaning, in particular slogans cursing and denouncing others are peculiarly unbecoming and objectionable. Slogans with '*murdabad*' attached to them are

not brief slogans, but indicate the mentality of the coward and bully.

"India will go on a long and distant path to her destined end of independence and nothing that has happened, is going to stop this. So, I am sure, will the Punjab as a part of India, in spite of everything that has happened, and that is likely to happen. Mighty historic forces are at work driving us all in that direction in spite of our own follies. It is up to us, however, to march ahead with dignity and with head erect and not crawl like animals in the field.

"*The Punjab has had a hard lesson. Let it learn from it and not lose itself in a sea of hatred and reprisal which can only lead to mutual destruction and infamy Let us all build together and prepare ourselves for the great things to come.*"

Simultaneously from Bombay, Mr. Jinnah directed the Punjab provincial Muslim League 'to give its unstinted and whole-hearted co-operation' to the administration in the Punjab to restore peace and order immediately in the Province, and also reminded the Mussalmans of the Punjab that it was their sacred duty to protect the minorities that lived amongst them.

Mian Mumtaz Daultana, General Secretary of the Punjab Provincial Muslim League said in a Press interview:

"The entire Muslim population would be mobilized by the Punjab Muslim League to achieve this object, because we feel that guarding the honour, security and well-being of our

Hindu and Sikh minorities is our first duty.

"The immediate task of the Punjab Muslim League is to attempt with the co-operation of others to restore peace and confidence immediately among the people of the Punjab, and we beg of everyone to hush all political controveries and ideological differences until we have created circumstances in which political controversy can be fruitful and to common advantage."

Tracing the genesis of the present crisis in the Punjab, Mr. Daultana said: "We should be very clear as to the part various parties have played in the genesis of the present trouble, which has flared up in all parts of the Punjab. For a whole year since the last general elections to the Punjab Legislature, a majority of 57 per cent. of the Muslim population of the Punjab was deprived of any share in power and administration.

Referring to the recent agitation of the League he said: "It was never our intention to overthrow a Government by unconstitutional methods. Otherwise, we would never have come to an agreement with that Government. It is, therefore, strange that a body of such high authority as the Congress Working Committee, should think that the Unionist Government was overthrown by coercive methods."

As regards the attitude of the minorities, he said: "When the leader of the Muslim League Party in the Punjab Assembly, Khan Iftikhar Hussain of Mamdot was called upon to form a

Ministry, after the resignation of the Coalition Cabinet, savage threats and provocative speeches were made by Hindu and Sikh leaders saying that they would shed their last drop of blood before the League Ministry was allowed to be formed in the Punjab. I, therefore, believe that the disturbances were deliberately provoked by Hindu and Sikh leaders. When chaos is invited, it can be checked by no one and as we have all found to our cost, it works exclusively to the advantage of none."

Concluding, Mr. Daultana said : "The Muslim League would never yield to threats and would willingly and eagerly render to others what legitimately belongs to them. But, it will not yield an inch of the share of the Mussalmans of the Punjab. Let no man deceive himself that Mussalmans are not capable of defending themselves and guarding their own."

18th,—Situation nearly normal all over the Province.

VI

The Cure

We have had a glimpse of the harrowing spectacle of bloodshed, loot, rape and arson in the Land of the Five Rivers. Let us now sit down awhile and deliberate over the ways and means to stop this campaign of hatred and enmity fostered among those who are destined by nature and circumstances to live and labour together as brothers.

How strange is the state of people who decline from the high road of reason and seek the impassable path of fanaticism and frenzied fury ! The Punjab is not only one of the most fertile lands, but also the veritable recruiting field for the soldiers and men of arms of this great sub-continent. Divided on religious basis, there are 57 Muslims, 22 Hindus, 13 Sikhs, 4 Scheduled Castes, 2 Christians, and 2 other castes amongst every hundred persons in this Province ; but almost all of these religious groups are torn asunder by bitter communal factions and diverse political ideals. Thus, while the Muslims are sworn to achieve the Free State of Pakistan, the non-Muslims, especially the Sikhs are prepared to

the last man not to concede to that at any cost. And, therefore, the result is that as soon the leaders of the Muslim League succeeded in breaking down the Khizr Coalition Ministry and went forward to form their Government as a matter of right, the entire non-Muslim Punjab was up with the anti-League and anti-Pakistan propaganda, which appeared first in the form of non-violent strikes, speeches, and processions, but thereafter suddenly burst out like a volcanic eruption in an unprecedented orgy of bloodshed and murder, and an unheard of frenzy of looting and burning. Members of one party attacked their opponents who in their turn repaid them in the same coin simply under the mad infatuation that they were doing good to their religion. While one community looted the other's shops and houses, the other was in no way slack in equalising the balance of crime on the other side. The result was an abominable loss of life and property among all the major communities. Thousands of innocent human beings fell a victim to the beastly marauders, and if this wave of senseless frenzy is left to continue in this way, there is every reason to believe that no Hindu and Sikh will remain alive in the Western half of the Punjab and, likewise, no Muslim will be expected to live in the Eastern half because of the predominating majority of non-Muslims.

The Sikhs, remembering that until recently they ruled the Land of the Five Rivers, refuse to

become a permanent minority under the Muslims in their State of Pakistan. They, therefore, urge that they should be given the right to record their verdict and to form an autonomous unit. Their claim rests on being a homogeneous and compact community of nearly six million in the Punjab, and they think themselves entitled to have their own independent State as a counter-blast to Pakistan.

What areas do the Sikhs claim as their homeland and State? "The answer to such a question is very simple and need not cause any detailed controversy," speak the authors of the *Idea of the Sikh State,* for the Sikhs do not claim for themselves any area, like the Jews claiming Palestine, where they are as a matter of fact not settled, and into which they are to be introduced as immigrants and intruders. The Sikhs, on the other hand, make a very fair and equitable claim. In the interest of self-preservation, and in order to escape the fate of a helpless people gradually effaced from the face of the earth through the pressure of persecuting majorities, they demand the right to establish themselves as the governing group along with other groups in a democratic system, in such areas as they are already occupying and which have a vital relation with Sikh History ond upon which the Sikh character is stamped. The question will naturally be asked, is there a Sikh Zone or a Sikh land, and if so, where? The answer is, " yes, there is one, and it is a broad and compact area

of which the Central Punjab is the nucleus. The Central Punjab, with the Divisions of Lahore and Jullundur with parts of the Ambala and Multan Divisions, with the area comprised by the Sikh States and Malerkotla and with certain of the Hill Areas in the North and North-East is what may be called the Sikh Zone. . . . This area has been developed by the Sikhs through agricultural enterprise : the land-owners and property-owners of this area are Sikhs ; the literature and language of this area is Sikh ; about more than 80 per cent. of the total Sikh population of the Punjab is centred in this area. . . . There is a chain of sacred Sikh Gurdwaras studded throughout this area, and standing at its frontiers, almost girding it around, and proclaiming it to be the Sikh cradle and homeland. It is this land, which by virtue of proprietorship, development, historic associations and religious sanctity already belongs to the Sikhs. The Sikhs are claiming in asking for this area, no more than what belongs to them even by the right of private property."

The demand for an autonomous State has been growing amongst the Sikhs for the last two decades. It first became significant in the year 1928 when, after the survey of the Simon Commission, the country expected some constitutional changes, and with the growing demand of the Muslims for a major share in the Punjab Legislature, the Sikhs saw a dark future for themselves. Under the circumstances, they believed that the best course to safeguard their

interests lay in carving out a new province of the presently constituted Punjab. They suggested their plan to Mahatma Gandhi and Lord Irwin in 1930, and again to Lord Willingdon, his successor, in the following year. In 1932, it was presented to the British Government in the form of the Sikh demand at the Second Round Table Conference by the Sikh delegates, Sardars Sampuran Singh and Ujjal Singh.

Their demand at that time, however, was not for an independent Sikh State. What they demanded then, was 'an opportunity for free survival and growth' by splitting up of the Punjab, so as to alienate the Western Districts with an overwhelming Muslim majority from the Province and to form a smaller Province from which the pressure of a permanent Muslim domination would be lifted. It was this demand which later on grew into the well-known *Aazd Punjab* scheme.

The Sikh demand was, according to its authors, "fully in line with what both the British Governmant and the Congress had admitted in principle and later in practice in some parts. The Congress had already visualized the redistribution of the existing Indian Provinces into 21 on the basis of language, while the British Government had, on the several occasions, actually shifted the boundaries of Provinces, as when Eastern Bengal and Assam were constituted into one Province, and the North-Western Frontier Province and Delhi were separated from the

Punjab. Out of these the latter two changes were made only for administrative convenience, while the partition of Bengal and the formation of the Provinces of Orissa and Sind were motivated by the desire to meet the demand of the nationalities inhabiting the above-named areas for free and unfettered growth in their homelands, unhampered by people not related to them by any historical or cultural ties. What the Sikhs demanded then was just such an opportunity for such a survival and growth. The Sikh demand, however, went unheeded, and the *Communal Award* was given, which saddled a permanent unalterable Muslim majority on the Punjab. The strongest and bitterest opposition to this iniquitious piece of constitution-making came from the Sikhs, out of all the political groups in India."

The India Act of 1935, which provided the Provincial Autonomy, installed the Muslim dominated Unionist Party in the seat of Goverment in the Punjab. The Ministry offered a joint platform for the rural uplift and general development of the Province, but the Sikh quarters remained lukewarm in their attitude, for they believed that the Unionists were primarily working for the benefit of the Muslim landed interests. Accordingly, at the All-India Akali Conference held at Attari in the Amritsar District on the 12th February 1940, the Sikh representatives unanimously passed a resolution 'viewing with deep concern the growing endeavours

of certain Muslims to convert the Punjab into a part of Pakistan,' and decided 'to resist such a demand by all possible means.' It was, therefore, claimed that partition alone will solve their problem as that of other minorities throughout India by thus adopting the '*balance theory*.'

The All-India Muslim-League, on the other side, passed the famous Pakistan Resolution at their session held at Lahore on the 22nd, 23rd and 24th March, 1940 wherein the partition plan was conceded in the following terms:

'That geographically contiguous units are demarcated into regions which should be so constituted with such territorial readjustments as may be necessary that the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority, as in the north-western and eastern zones of India should be grouped to constitute 'independent States'.

Territorial readjustments thus suggested were to exclude the Ambala Division from the Punjab. As this Division contains 3,099,000 Hindus, 240,000 Sikhs and 1,318,000 Muslims, its exculusion meant raising the Muslim majority in the Province from 57 to 62 per cent. This was taken as only a symbol of the rising aggressive intentions of the Muslims whose ambition to rule over and dominate others, the Sikhs proclaimed, became too manifest. They felt, therefore, that their survival and honourable existence were possible only if they could acquire an independent political power, and under the circumstances, the Khalsa National Party led by

Sir Sunder Singh Majithia, then Revenue Minister in the Unionist Government, passed the undermentioned resolution at their meeting at Lahore on the 29th March, 1940:

"That the division of India into Hindu and Muslim independent States, as envisaged by the recent resolution of the Muslim League, was fraught with the most dangerous consequences deterimental alike to the best interests of the various communities and the country as a whole: that the resolution had created a situation which might mean a parting of the ways for the Sikhs and the Muslims with whom the Khalsa National Party had been co-operating in the Provincial Autonomy regime in the best interests of the Province and the Sikh community: that the Party hoped that saner counsels would prevail and a catastrophe that was staring the country in the face would be averted: that it would be the height of audacity for any one to imagine that the Sikhs would tolerate for a single day the undiluted communal Raj of any community in the Punjab which was not only their homeland but also their holy land: that as a logical consequence of the League Resolution, the Sikhs would be fully entitled to claim back the sovereignty of the Punjab which was only held as trust by the British during the minority regime of Maharaja Dalip Singh."

The Sikh problem, therefore, required the reconsideration of the Pakistan scheme by the Muslim League. Mr. Jinnah accordingly, express-

ed his conviction during the course of a public speech delivered by him at Lahore on the 1st April, 1940, that the Sikh community had nothing to fear from Pakistan. He said: "I am sure, they would be much better off in the North-West Muslim Zone than they can ever possibly be in a United India or under one Central Government; for under one Central Government their voice would be negligible. The Punjab, in any case, would be an autonomous sovereign unit. And, after all, they have to live in the Punjab. It is obvious that whereas in a United India they would be mere nobodies, in the Muslim homeland the Sikhs would always occupy an honoured place and would play an effective and influential role."

As a repercussion of the above suggestion, a further step emerged in the old Sikh demand for splitting up of the Punjab, known as the *Azad Punjab Scheme*. It visualized 'the constituting of a new Province out of the Lahore, Ambala and part of the Multan Divisions, in which area the Sikhs would be able to have an effective voice in the administration.' This scheme was presented as the Sikh demand to Sir Stafford Cripps in March 1942, while rejecting the Pakistan scheme on the ground that the position of the Sikhs and Hindus in the Punjab was identical to that of the Muslims in India as a whole, and that if the Muslims refused to live and work in an All-India Union, the Sikhs and Hindus in the Punjab could not agree to the

Muslim domination in the Central, Eastern and Southern Punjab where they were in a natural majority.

The Cripps Plan, although it had its primary object to create one Indian Uuion, 'the creation of more than one Union being relegated only to the realm of remote possibility', yet it conceded Pakistan and afforded 'the same full status as the Indian Union' to any non-acceding provinces in these words :

'The right of any province of British India that is not prepared to accept the new Constitution, to retain Constitutional position, provision being made for its subsequent accession if it so desires.

With such non-acceding provinces, should they so desire, His Majesty's Government will be prepared to agree upon a new Constitution giving them the same full status as the Indian Union and arrived at by a procedure analogous to that here laid down.'

This created a stir in the Sikh ranks which resumed their activities for the partition of the Punjab with redoubled vigour, and on the 24th July, 1942, the All-India Akali Conference at Vihala Kalan in the Lyallpur District, passed a resolution demanding the readjustment of the boundaries of the Punjab.

Again in October of the same year at a meeting held in Delhi, a group of the Sikh and Hindu leaders suggested that since their position was identical to that of the Muslims in the Punjab

they proposed that if a line was drawn across the Lahore Division from north to south, it would separate the Muslim-majority areas of the Rawalpindi and Multan Divisions from the overwhelmingly Sikh and Hindu areas of the Ambala and Jullundur Divisions. But the scheme could not be worked out parctically, inasmuch as no such division of the geographically contiguous plain of the Punjab was possible without seriously impairing the cultural, social, economic and communal ties between the population and cutting down of the entire agricultural, irrigational and the hydro-electric systems. Another serious impediment was the separation of the Administrative capital of the Punjab—Lahore from the Commercial capital—Amritsar. The scheme had, therefore, to be given up as impracticable, since the line of division proposed was not to be a mere water-channel or a hedge-row dividing the two fields of crops. It was to be essentially an international border-line between the States of Pakistan and Khalistan or Hindustan, strong enough to form a permanent and defendable forntier on either side.

Sikh leaders, however, gave prominence to the *Azad Punjab* scheme. Gyani Kartar Singh, known as the best brain behind the Akali Party, had several talks with Mr. Jinnah to make him accept the Sikh claim and to secure their position. There was a serious move to have a Muslim League Ministry in the Punjab in alliance with the Akali Party, but the talks failed over the

latter's refusal to support the Pakistan scheme. On the 7th June, 1943, therefore, the Working Committee of the Shromani Akali Dal, the National political organization of the Sikhs, demanded the establishment of *Azad Punjab* by its resolution.

In July, 1944, Mr. C. Rajagopalacharia evolved a scheme, better known as the C. R. Formula, for the settlement of the Indian problem. It suggested a basis for terms of compromise between the Hindus and Muslims by separating the non-Muslim majority areas from the Muslim-majority areas through the medium of the plebiscites contemplated as under:

'After the termination of the war, a Commission shall be appointed for demarcating contiguous districts in the north-west and east of India, wherein the Muslim population is in absolute majority. In the areas thus demarcated, a plebiscite of all the inhabitants held on the basis of adult suffrage or other practicable franchise shall ultimately decide the issue of separation from Hindustan. If the majority decide in favour of forming a sovereign State separate from Hindustan, such decision shall be given effect to, without prejudice to the right of districts on the border to choose to join either State.'

According to this Formula, if all the plebiscites in the Punjab had gone in favour of separation, it would have meant the certainty of the 18 western districts with absolute Muslim

majority going in favour of Pakistan, and the 12 eastern districts having the non-Muslim majority standing firmly in favour of Hindustan or a separate State. But the scheme, while on the one hand it would have deprived the State of Pakistan of the granary of the south-eastern Punjab, on the other hand it would have divided the Sikh population of the province into two halves—one half being sandwiched in the Muslim Pakistan and the other similarly placed within the Hindu India. Such a situation, the Sikhs felt, would have put an end to the integrity of the Sikh nation for ever, and therefore, they thought it best to safeguard their interests by getting an independent territory in which they could build up their political power free both from the Muslims and the Hindus.

Under the circumstances, the Sikh Panthic Board, which assembled under the presidentship of the veteran Akali leader, Master Tara Singh at Amritsar on the 20th August, 1944, rejected the C. R. Formula and demanded instead the establishment of the *Azad Sikh State* on the grounds that "the facts and figures on this point are so clear and overwhelming that nothing but sheer audacity can account for any claim to the contrary, including the facetious claim that the Punjab is a Muslim Province, or that it comprises one of the homelands of the Mulims. The Sikhs have more than seven hundred historic Gurdwaras in the Punjab with rich endowments, and undying

memories of their Gurus, saints and martyrs attached to them. The Sikhs have set up and are financing over 400 educational institutions, colleges, schools, girls' seminaries and technical establishments, thus making a contribution towards the educational progress of the Province out of all proportion to their numerical strength and far in excess of any such contribution made by other communities, particularly the Muslims. The policy of, and the atmosphere prevailing in, these institutions is more liberal and non-communal than in any similar institution run by other communities."

The Sikh aspiration to have the administrative control of the Punjab is very old and deep-rooted. Ever since the decline of the Sikh rule in the 19th century, they have been dreaming of re-establishing their power and securing a basis for a democratic state ' in which the liberal and socialistic Sikh basis of life should be made the basis of general civic life.'

The Panthic demand for the establishment of the Azad Sikh State, has since received the approval of the other Sikh associations all over India. On March 16, 1946, the Shromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee finally passed a resolution in support of the establishment of the independent Sikh State as under:

"The Panth notes that at the present moment, on the eve of expected far-reaching changes in the constitution of the country, the desire on the part of the majorities to dominate

the minorities is rising with great tempo, as is evidenced by the slogans of *Akhand Hindustan* and *Pakistan.*

"It further notes that in a situation so greatly charged with aggressive communalism, the minorities, and especially the Sikhs, find themselves placed in a position in which they cannot safeguard their national existence against the high-handedness of a politically organised communal majority, which conviction is further strengthened by the experience of the working of Provincial Autonomy for nine years, resulting in grave attacks being made on the cultural, civic and political rights of the Sikhs in the Punjab.

"After giving mature and thoughtful consideration to the foregoing, the Panth is strongly of the opinion that no safeguards and guarantees of a constitutional nature, no weightage or protection, promised to the Sikhs by any of the majority communities can be considered adequate to protect the Sikhs and ensure their free and unhindered growth as a nationality with a distinct religious, ideological, cultural and political character.

"In order to ensure the free and unfettered growth of the Sikh Panth, the Panth demands the splitting up of the existing province of the Punjab, with its unnatural boundaries, so as to constitute *a separate autonomous Sikh State in those areas of the Central, Northern, Eastern, and South-Eastern Punjab* in which the over-

whelming part of the Sikh population is concentrated, and which because of the proprietors in it being mostly Sikhs, is also the *de facto* Sikh Homeland—the area, extent, the status and constitutional frame-work of such a State being left to be settled by negotiation between the accredited representatives of the Sikh Panth and the other interested parties, such as the British Government, the Hindus and the Muslims; further resolving that the above demand is the unconditional, absolute and minimum demand and political objective of the Sikh Panth as a whole.

"The Panth visualizes that this proposed state will be democratic in constitution and will have a socialistic economic structure, with full protection of the culture and rights of the minorities."

A similar claim for the Sikh State was put up before the Cabinet Mission by the Sikh leaders, but with little success. However, with the acceptance of the Mission's Plan in accordance with the Congress decision, their demand for the partition of the Punjab grew more emphatic under the leadership of Gyani Kartar Singh and Master Tara Singh. Their line of action at this juncture was distinct from the previous Sikh plans for achieving either an independent Sikh State or a Sikh zone in the Punjab, for they broke a new ground in the field of politics in expressing their determination to attain an autonomous Sikh-Hindu Province

'where the two communities can lead their lives in their own way without interference from the Muslims.' The proposed Province comprised the Ambala and Jullundur Divisions, and the Amritsar, Gurdaspur and Lahore Districts, and thus involved the separation of the Central, Eastern and Southern portions of the Punjab from the Northern and Western Punjab.

According to Gyani Kartar Singh, this scheme will secure elementary justice to the large non-Muslim population residing in this area and will allay its fears and apprehensions, for no single community in the proposed province will be in a position to dominate over the rest. The area will have a population of about 150 lakhs out of which the non-Muslims will be 62 per cent. (43 Hindu and 19 Sikh) and Muslims 38 per cent. Further, the scheme envisages the formation of a Greater Sikh State by a political union with the Sikh States of Patiala, Jind, Faridkot, Kapurthala, Nabha and Kalsia. Another point which Gyani Kartar Singh suggests, is that the proposed province shall have the freedom to join any of the *Groups* chalked out by the Cabinet Mission in their Plan. This, of course, is a pointer for the partition of the predominantly non-Mnslim portion of the Punjab from the framework of the provisions of the State Paper conceding to the Muslim demand of the North-Western group of the Pakistan States, and extending a

hope in seeking a union with Hindustan.

The above plan for a Hindu-Sikh Province combined with the merger of the six Sikh States was recognized by Master Tara Singh as well as other Sikh leaders of eminence during the Muslim League's campaign against the Khizr Coalition Ministry, and as has been said in the last Chapter, the Statement of Mr. Attlee regarding the handing over of power to 'the Central Government for British India or in some areas to the existing Provincial Governments or in such other way as may seem most reasonable' brought the Sikh demand for the Hindu-Sikh Province to the highest pitch resulting in the activities which we have noted in the foregoing pages.

The Working Committee of the Congress has also confirmed[1] the Plan of the division of Punjab into two—Muslim and non-Muslim—provinces as the best course to stop the increased and widespread violence and carnage now going on in the Province. This decision is based upon the broad fact that out of the total 30 districts of the Punjab, the Muslims are in a majority in 18 situated in the North and North-West, while in the remaining 12 contiguous districts in the East and South-East, the Hindus and Sikhs combined form a majority of the population as under :

1. See last Chapter.

(*a*) Statistics According to 1941 Census Report

Community	*Total Population in millions*	*Percentage of total population*
Muslims ...	16.22	57%
Hindus ...	6.30	22%
Sikhs ...	3.76	13%
Scheduled Castes ...	1.25	4%
Christians ...	0.50	2%
Others ...	0.39	2%
Total ...	28.42	100%

(*b*) Muslim-Majority Districts

	District	*Total Population (in lakhs)*	*Percentage of Total Population*		
			Muslims	*Hindus*	*Sikhs*
1.	Lahore ...	16.95	60.69	16.81	18.29
2.	Gurdaspur ...	11.53	51.13	25.40	19.18
3.	Sialkot ...	11.90	62.10	19.41	11.70
4.	Gujranwala ...	9.12	70.39	11.84	10.87
5.	Sheikhupura ...	8.52	63.62	9.11	18.85
6.	Gujrat ...	11.04	85.60	7.61	6.35
7.	Jhelum ...	6.29	89.51	6.48	3.12
8.	Rawalpindi ...	7.85	80.00	10.50	8.16
9.	Attock ...	6.75	90.52	6.39	2.97
10.	Shahpur ...	9.98	83.87	10.02	4.81
11.	Mianwali ...	5.03	86.17	12.23	1.37
12.	Montgomery ...	13.29	69.07	14.36	13.91
13.	Lyallpur ...	13.96	62.82	11.61	18.81
14.	Jhang ...	8.21	82.58	15.71	1.49
15.	Multan ...	14.84	77.98	16.31	4.15
16.	Muzzaffargarh ...	7.12	86.52	12.69	0.83
17.	Dera Ghazi Khan ...	5.81	88.90	10.86	0.17
18.	Baloch Trans-Frontier Tract	0.40	99.20	0.80	...

(c) Non-Muslim Majority Districts

1.	Hissar	... 10.06	28.33	64.85	6.03
2.	Rohtak	... 9.56	17.22	81.60	0.15
3.	Gurgaon	... 8.51	32.49	77.42	0.70
4.	Karnal	... 9.94	30.58	66.93	2.00
5.	Ambala	... 8.47	31.64	48.41	18.44
6.	Simla	... 0.38	4.73	76.38	2.67
7.	Jullundur	... 11.27	45.17	27.57	26.44
8.	Ludhiana	... 8.18	36.92	20.36	41.69
9.	Ferozepur	... 14.23	45.08	19.62	33.68
10.	Kangra	... 8.99	5.09	93.23	0.57
11.	Hoshiarpur	... 11.70	36.64	40.00	16.92
12.	Amritsar	... 14.13	46.50	15.35	36.14

This is how the population stands in the two areas according to the 1941 Census of the Province. The supporters of the partition plan assert that since they do not wish to be thrust into the proposed State of Pakistan against their will, they should get the right of self-determination by having a plebiscite of the area constituting the 12 non-Muslim majority districts as a separate unit instead of the entire Province which would otherwise imply determining the fate of the non-Muslim areas by the predominantly Muslim-majority votes.

Thus, once secure, the new province of the Hindu-Sikh majority in the Eastern Punjab will very much hope of linking together a non-Muslim population of 5,000,000 people belonging to

the States of Patiala, Nabha, Faridkot, Jind, Kapurthala, Kalsia, Mandi, Chamba, Suket, Sirmur and Bilaspur, and the smaller States of the Simla Hills adding a total area of some 22,000 square miles to the newly-formed Province. This they expect to be the natural result of the gravitation of the States' people against Pakistan by virtue of their territorial integrity and their social, cultural, economic and religious affinity with them.

This is the bright and colourful side of the picture of the plan. The other side, unfortunately, looks rather grim and bleak. Undoubtedly, the plan envisages the emancipation of about 8 million non-Muslims at the cost of some 4½ millions of their own kith and kin living apart in the following manner:

	Total	*Muslims*	*Hindus*	*Sikhs*
N.-W. Punjab:				
millions ...	16.87	12.36	2.83	1.68
percentage ...	100	73%	16%	10%
South-East Punjab:				
millions ...	11.54	3.85	5.62	2.07
percentage ...	100	32%	50%	17%

The 4½ million Hindus and Sikhs living in the North-West Punjab will, thus, have no other course left to them but either to remain under the shadow of the *crescent* with the goodwill of the Pakistanian overlords, or to migrate bag and baggage to the newly-carved province in the South-East. The latter may be easy for the no-

madic tribes living, say, on the steppes of Central Asia or in the oasis of the fertile Nile, but for the people who have been settled and living upon the plains of the Punjab since time immemorial with their social, economic, cultural and religious organisations extended all over, the idea of the division and migration is apt to make confusion worse confounded. The Sikhs will have to sacrifice and suffer most since they have a net-work of their Gurdwaras and holy places stretched throughout the Punjab, and the partition will necessarily divide them leaving the substantial bodies of the Sikhs on both sides of the boundary line. Besides, the economic interests of the Province are so strongly linked together amongst the various communities that the partition will further divide both the Hindus and Sikhs economically, politically and linguistically. Another point worth serious consideration is that neither the Sikhs nor the Hindus will ever like to part with their highly productive colonies and rich properties in areas where Muslims are in an overwhelming majority against their combined population. There are also districts and even parts of districts where Sikhs, although in a minority, are sufficiently strong, but will be bottled in the Muslim areas without finding any way either for an exit or for getting any help from their people in the south-east. In this way, the fate of the Sikh population of 2,44,304 in Lahore, 1,19,477 in Sheikhupura, 94,955 in Sialkot and 2,11,391 in Lyallpur will all depend upon the mercy of their

Muslim counterparts.

The plan for partition, therefore, cannot be regarded as a practical proposition, for it falls flat either in securing the economic interests or the religious immunity for the Hindu and Sikh population of the Punjab. It will divide them into smaller parts and the greatest harm will come to the Sikh community which will lose not only its huge agricultural estates in the Lyallpur, Montgomery and Sargodha areas, but also its places of pilgrimage and Gurdwaras interspersed over the Land of the Five Rivers. Thus the nearer we get to the partition plan, the more disastrous it looks for the people of the Punjab. The prospects of partition are so forbidding that nobody, who thinks seriously over the problem, will really vote for it. The Muslims do not want it. This is what they say :

"The Working Committee (of the Congress) has passed a resolution about the division of the Punjab. (It is feared that) the resolution is in the nature of a feeler and quite obviously what applies to the Punjab, would be advocated sooner or later for Bengal and Assam. In so far as the division of existing Province is concerned, it would appear in the first instance that the Congress stand is self-contradictoty . . . If on the basis of the 'least compulsion' principle, the Punjab should be divided, why then not cut the gordian knot and divide the whole country by alloting separate homelands to the major communities with areas enough for each . . . The

Hindus and Sikhs comprise 41 per cent. of the Punjab population, the Sikhs being 13 per cent. and Hindu 28 per cent. If the 12 districts in which non-Muslims are in a majority, are separated, the Muslims would still be 34 per cent. strong in those districts. The question may then be asked that if the interests of a people who are in a minority of 41 per cent. in a province, justify and warrant the break-up of that province into parts, do not similar considerations hold good for the future sub-division of the separated part where Muslims would be in a minority of 34 per cent? On the line of the Congress reasoning the creation of a Muslim *pocket* in the separated Province would become inevitable. The Congress stand also completely ignores (another) vital factor . . . the presence of a large number of Muslims in Hindu provinces is a factor which cannot be ignored."[1]

As regards the Hindus, who are pledged to a united India, one can hardly expect that they will ever favour the vivisection of the motherland. Here is what one of the most conscientious Congress leaders says about the partition plan of the Punjab:

"The Congress Working Committee's resolution advocating the division of the Punjab into two provinces was a violent departure from the traditions and principles of the Congress. Any division of the country or of the provinces

1. *Dawn*, Delhi, March 14, 1947.

on religious basis would not help us in bringing about amity, not to speak of unity.

"I confess that the resolution has surprised me not a little. By accepting religion as the sole basis of the distribution of provinces, the Congress has cut itself away from its national moorings and has almost undone the work it has been doing for the last 60 years.

"The resolution in question is a violent departure from the traditions and principles of the Congress and I am forced to the conclusion that it is the result of a defeated mentality. A sort of fear-complex seems to have worked havoc in the minds of many of us. To my mind a division of provinces on the religious basis is no solution of the communal problem. Even if the provinces were to be so divided, Hindus and Muslims will still have to live side by side and the risk of communal conflicts will remain.

"Supposing we divide Bengal and the Punjab on the basis of religion, what about the Muslims in western Bengal, and Hindus in eastern Bengal or about Muslims in eastern Punjab and Hindus and Sikhs in western Punjab? What again is going to happen to the minority religious groups in the other provinces of India?

"Are we going to have Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Buddhist, Christian, Parsee and other religious states or pockets throughout the country? The resolution of the Congress Working Committee, pushed to its logical conclusion, would

mean the creation of such religious States or *pockets*, and the result would be that the risk of armed communal conflicts or clashes would increase hundred-fold."

And as regards the third important community in the Province, here are the reactions of the main party leaders:

"I strongly protest against the demand for the partition of the Punjab made at the All-India Jat Mahasabha Conference held recently at Bharatpur," declared Baba Kharak Singh, the the 80-year-old President of the Central Akali Dal and the All-India Sikh League.

"The demand for the partition of the Punjab is a clear deviation from the path set by the great Sikh Gurus and is a betrayal of the fundamentals of Sikh religion. Such schemes are highly detrimental to the fundamental and larger interests of the Khalsa Panth, and are very injurious to the religious structure of the Sikhs."

Baba Kharak Singh further criticized the action of Sardar Baldev Singh, Defence Minister in the Interim Government, in presiding over the All-India Jat Mahasabha Conference which, he said, was inconsistent with his position as the sole representative of the Sikh Panthic Board.

A similar view was put forth by Sardar Sohan Singh Josh, leader of the Punjab Communist Party, who said in a statement to the Press: "The Congress Working Committee's

resolution, advocating the partition of the Punjab, should cause grave apprehension to all freedom-loving and patriotic Punjabis. It will not solve the communal problem. It will make the communal conflict still more intense and bitter.

"If the partition of India on a religious basis, as demanded by the Muslim League, cannot solve the communal problem—a fact the Congress has emphasised again and again—then it should be equally obvious that the partition of the Punjab will not solve the problem of that Province.

"Conflict will arise on the question as to how the dividing-line is to be drawn, and ultimately it will be the British rulers who will be called upon to decide the matter. If such a division is enforced, it will satisfy none.

"The resolution is a triumph for the opportunist Akalis. The Congress has fallen in line with them, and is now trying to fight the League with the same weapons that the League used against the Congress. Congressmen who, a few days ago, were declaring that they would not permit a purely League Ministry to be installed in the Punjab, are now saying that they will not co-operate in the formation of any Ministry at all, and will accept nothing short of partition. They would like the Governor's Raj to continue till June 1948, when the transfer of power is expected.

"The Congress looks upon the February 20

Statement (of Mr. Attlee) as an acceptance of Mr. Jinnah's slogan: '*Divide and Quit*'. The threat of the partition of the Punjab, and also perhaps of Bengal, is held up as a weapon either to force the League to accept a united Centre or to bring about a division as favourable to the Congress as possible.

"Such disasters as have taken place up to now are only a foretaste of what is coming. The Punjab is now threatened with chronic riot situation and a Police Raj worse than anything we have ever witnessed. The colossal suffering and sacrifice made by the common people to win their civil liberties has already been rendered fruitless, because of the mad game of power-politics played by the leaders.

"At this hour, the Communist Party fervently appeals to all Punjabis to end this disastrous and shameful chapter of our history. The Punjab, as the common homeland of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs, of all Punjabi-speaking people, must remain united, and must unitedly exercise the right of self-determination. There can be neither Muslim rule nor Hindu and Sikh rule in the Punjab.

"The Communist Party, standing for a free and united Punjab as an integral part of a free and united India, a Punjab that will be the bulwark of Indian freedom and Indian defence, calls upon all Punjabis, irrespective of caste and creed to work against the threatened disruption of our Province and to carry on a vigorous

campaign for unity and peace."

The liberal Sikh view on the partition plan was expressed by a leading Sikh journalist,[1] who said that the Jat Akali leader, Sardar Baldev Singh was mainly responsible in getting through the Congress resolution on the partition of the Punjab, since he wished that the Jats, whether Sikh or Hindu, should come together and form a separate province under the name of JATISTAN without giving the least consideration to the interests of the rest of Hindus and Sikhs in the Western Punjab which is generally void of the Jat element. Sikhism knows no difference between one Sikh and another whether he is a Jat, a Rajput, a Kashatriya, a Brahman, or even a Sudra. Therefore, the plan to alienate the non-Jat Sikhs of the Western Punjab would certainly be nothing short of a death-warrant for nearly one half of the Sikh population, and a poison for the united nationhood of India.

Secondly, he says, that the plan envisages a dream of the Sikhs which is hard to materialize in the light of facts, because the Punjab Government *cannot* be run by the Sikh or the Hindu or the Muslim community individually, but by people of the Punjab as a whole without any distinction of caste and creed. They should thus help in strengthening the hands of the Central Government, for it is the Punjab alone

1. Diwan Singh Maftoon, in *Riyasat*, Delhi (Urdu) Vol. 42 Nos. 10 and 12, March 10 and 24, 1947.

which has been the sword-arm of India in the past, and upon which it will depend for its defence in the future.

For the Sikhs, therefore, he concludes, the best course for their peace and prosperity is to take part in the formation of a coalition Government in the Punjab by active co-operation with the other communities, and this, according to him, is the only way by following which the Sikhs can live in the future with honour and respect.

An appeal to the leaders of the Muslim League, Congress and Panthic parties to lay aside all consideration of prestige and apportioning of blame, and to come to the rescue of bleeding Punjab, was recently made on aforesaid basis by the Punjab Joint Christian Board. It requested the leaders of the three political parties in the Punjab to issue a joint appeal to all Punjabis to refrain from acts of violence, arson and loot, and conduct themselves as law-abiding citizens worthy of receiving and retaining that freedom for which India has suffered so much and waited so long. It further appealed to the Congress and and the League high commands to permit, without prejudice to their respective policies, the co-operation of their provincial parliamentary organizations in the formation of an interim all-party coalition as a temporary measure.

We have thus seen the views of all the leading parties concerned about the partition plan. It is imperative, then, for the people of the

Punjab to come out of the storm and stress of the cammunal frenzy and evolve a scheme for the settlement of the problem by calm and quiet deliberation. A compromise must be made for a united Punjab, for the partition will shut out all future possibilities of unity in India, and will intensify the communal estrangement amongst the various groups. Divide Punjab, and every Punjabi will have to pay for it with his blood and tears. Divide Punjab and subsequent generations will suffer and bleed until they reunite the Land of the Five Rivers.

With 28 million Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs inextricably intermingled on the plain of the Punjab, a Coalition Ministry is the only solution. The Muslim League's present attitude may be given here in the words of Mr. Firoze Khan Noon, at the cost of some repetition :

" The time has certainly arrived when Sikhs and Muslims should sit round a table to find a solution to their political problem . . . What we want is peace and prosperity for the Punjab, a province which is the homeland of Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims, all combined together. We have lived for centuries and we must live together.

Sikh Demands.—" The suggestion was put forward on behalf of some Sikh thinkers that the Punjab as it stands today should be a separate sovereign State allied to neither Akhand Hindustan nor to Pakistan.

" Another suggestion that has been mooted is that the Punjab should be with B Group, but

that the Sikhs should have certain guarantees provided in the constitution and enforceable by a New Federal Court, in the B Croup, to be set up for this and other purposes.

Guarantees assured.—"It is also suggested that in this case the Muslims could have no objection to the following :

The Sikhs could be taught the Gurmukhi language if the majority of Sikh legislators so desire. The precedent exists in Switzerland, where French, German and Swiss are taught in their schools.

The Sikh share in the education grant could be handed over to a Sikh Educational Council as in the case of Washington, D.C., where 33 per cent. of the Negro population were receiving one-third of the total education grant in 1937.

We could also provide in the constitution that in matters connected with the Sikh religion, law of inheritance, customary and other personal laws, the majority Sikh vote shall prevail.

The Sikhs could also be given a completely Sikh Public Service Commission to select Sikhs for the public services.

We could also provide that our newly set up Federal Court should have the right to dismiss any servant newly appointed when not entitled to hold that post in accordance with the quotas fixed for the various communities."

A Coalition Government, will, at any rate, be more secure and stable because the opposition will not be strong enough to attempt its overthrow. The Punjab Government, to be both stable and strong, should therefore, be so composed and so related with the legislature as to reinforce the prestige of the Government and

the Law in the public mind and to promote the appeasement of communal antagonism. Such a government is bound to mean, government by compromise whereby the gulf of difference existing between the Muslims and non-Muslims in the province can be bridged for ever by tempering religious differences and creating a unity after assuring that the minorities are not subjected to the rigours of a pure majority rule in the Punjab.

But coalition can neither be strong nor stable unless the parties concerned agree to be non-communal in their behaviour and activities, and unless their respective high commands pass a self-denying ordinance in regard to their working. This will avoid all clashes amongst the various party leaders, and the provincial legislators will be free to run the coalition Government with complete liberty and without any check or hinderance from their high commands whose allegiance they have to bear under ordinary circumstances.

The Punjab crisis, therefore, calls forth for high moral qualities of self-restraint and a tacit agreement to enforce quickly the unifying and harmonising influences in order to set the country on the path of peaceful and orderly transfer of power from Britain to the people of India. The widespread conflagration of communal rioting, if becomes chronic, will not only entail a breakdown of the social and economic orders in the country, but also provoke a reaction in

favour of a *strong Government* to curb the evil forces of incendiarism, loot, murder, rape and lawlessness let loose by the under-world ruffians. Under such circumstances, people will prefer to have security of life first instead of liberty, and their enfeebled and deteriorated capacity of self-resistance will compell them to invite and retain foreign mercenaries for guarding and protecting them. Riots, thus, not only completely jeopardise our activities towards attainment of self-government, but also, on the other hand, make us dependent upon seeking protection of the British bayonets. The fact was made public in the House of Commons the other day when during the course of a debate, it was revealed that the people of the Punjab gratefully acknowledged the service rendered to them by the British troops in protecting their life and property duriug the recent communal disturbances in the said province. The move to retain the British troops in the country for the said purpose, clearly shows the helpless state of affairs in which the communal disturbances are forcing the Indian nation to a choice between the self-imposed chains of slavery and the state of anarchy and lawlessness.

The prolonged subjection of the people, together with their overwhelming poverty, illiteracy and narrow outlook are all at the root of the whole communal trouble which has been further aggravated by the divided responsibility of the leaders who are prone to excite their

co-religionists against other communities without the least compunction. They, in fact, are solely responsible for the preservation of law and order and upon them depends a peaceful settlement of the problem ; and if there is to be a lasting peace at all in this country and if a succession of massacres of thousands of innocent people is to be avoided, genuine effort should now be made by these people to create an atmosphere conducive to the smooth transference of political power to India and to canalise the national vitality, endurance and spirit of sacrifice for the greater things to come.

The partition plan offers no solution to the problem of the Punjab. "Paradoxical as it may seem," wtites professor Beni Prasad,[1] "it is a psychological escape from the stern realities of the situation. It is a gesture of a century of revivalism, a generation of separate electorate, half a generation of procrastination, a decade of misleading or misunderstood foreign influences, and two and a half years of orthodox parliamentarism. It is a milestone on the separatist roda to security. It is a confession of the failure of separate electorate as tried so far. In the logical sequence, it is only a half-way house ; if persisted in, it cannot escape the corollaries of exchange of populations and finally a drive towards complete domination either of the Hindus by the Mussalmans or of the Mussalmans by the

1. *India's Hindu-Muslim Questions* (London 1946) p. 85.

Hindus. That is an utter impossibility and the end of the blind alley. These implications are not mere abstractions; they inhere in the idea and could be overlooked only in the abnormal mists of the Indian situation. As the sky clears and the realities are perceived, the good sense of both the communities as well as the pressure of events is likely to give a new direction to politics. But so long as the idea endures, whether as a bargaining counter or a serious proposition, the danger of it is in the estrangement that it may create."

Further, as regards the much-advertised territorial adjustment, he says: "The internal frontiers of India partly represent incidents in the history of British occupation, but they have since gathered sentiments and loyalties, traditions and interests round them. To attempt a territorial redistribution is to stir a nest of hornets and divert attention for long from the more urgent tasks of political emancipation, economic amelioration and educational expansion. It can be followed up only at the risk of atomising the country. It weakens the will to reciprocal adjustments among groups who do not differ radically from one another and who can easily learn to live in amity. The present provincial system in short, may be accepted as a settled fact and from the foundation of a federal structure."[1]

A settlement through negotiation and compromise among the Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs

1. *Ibid.*, p. 118.

looks to be the only possible solution of the problem. A plan which envisages the *provincial unity with zonal autonomy* of the province, is very likely to receive support from responsible circles as well as the Governor of the Punjab for the peaceful settlement of the affairs. Under this plan the province will have the following three autonomous zones :

(1) *The Eastern Zone* comprising the Ambala and Jullundur divisions to be incharge of three ministers—one Muslim, one Hindu and one Sikh.

(2) *The Western Zone* comprising the Multan and Rawalpindi divisions to be in charge of three ministers—two Muslims and one Hindu.

(3) *The Central Zone* consisting of the Lahore Division to be under the joint charge of one Muslim and one Hindu minister.

The ratio indicated—4 Muslims, 3 Hindus and 1 Sikh provides a rough idea of a Cabinet of ministers balanced between the majority and minorities, is amendable to alteration and adjustment. While the plan guarantees full protection to minorities, it also envisages a Muslim Premier.

Furthermore, ministers in each Zone shall enjoy complete authority except for matters concerning finance and irrigation which will be vested in the provincial Cabinet. Thus, the plan offers to maintain the unity of the Punjab, but if desired otherwise, it also provides, as shown above, a basis for partition, each Zone having its own Cabinet directly responsible to the Legislature and the Governor without affecting the present structure of the Assembly.

But in order to bring a better sense of understanding amongst the parties, and to guide the people to return to the path of reason, it is necessary to set up on a permanent basis Goodwill Committees in every town and village which should consist of members from all the leading communities to the area to make an organised effort towards peace and amity among the people. Further, a Conciliation Board consisting of the leaders of the main parties in the province should be set up at the centre which should, without prejudice to their respective policies, issue a joint appeal[1] to all Punjabis to refrain from acts of violence, arson, and loot, and conduct themselves as law-abiding citizens. Secondly, it should take rigorous measures towards the voluntary abandonment of all observations of political 'days' like *the Punjab Day, the Bihar Day, the Pakistan Day, the Anti-Pakistan Day* and so on involving the taking out of processions or making demonstrations, hartals and delivering fiery speeches which will go a long way towards maintenance of peace and security of public life and property. Thirdly, it should stop all acts of retaliation by the various communities and take strict action against all those who are creating more difficulties in the way of a peaceful settlement by committing crimes under any false pretensions. Fourthly,

1. The recent appeal of Mahatma Gandhi and Mr. Jinnah calling upon people to refrain from acts of violence, is a welcome move in this direction.

all 'Direct Action' programmes on any pretext whatsoever, must be stopped forthwith, for they are bound to lead to disasterous consequences and jeopardise communal peace in the country. And lastly, all inflamatory propaganda, the like of which has caused a fresh flare-up of the communal disturbances in Calcutta, Cawnpore, Bombay, Delhi and many other places in the country, must be strongly condemned. Every community or party may be free to organize meetings to give vent to its views, but it should not be exploited by communalists for their evil purposes.

These ways and means can work successfully in putting an end to the killing and brutality now going on in the country, for whatever differences there may be amongst the parties, it is best to settle them decently and in a cordial spirit rather than by calling forth the law of the jungle and embarking upon the mad venture of 'arbitrament of arms' which leads only to the ignoble consequences like perpetual dependence upon the foreign rule which will be called upon to maintain law and order in the country. 'India is now on the eve of her full independence,' says Mahatma Gandhi. 'India wants to be independent of everybody who wants to own this country. We do not want a change of masters. We want to be masters of our own soil, though I am not quite sure how it will come out. . . . Never in history, has a ruling power left any dominion of its own free

will. This is what the British are trying to do today. It is right to believe that they are honest whatever their past record here has been. But are Indians going to demean themselves by internal warfare? Such action may even lead to the consequence of their asking British troops to remain on Indian soil in order to maintain order. I hope, they will not resort to such madness.'

Appendix

Text of the Statement of February 20, 1947, by Mr. Clement Attlee, Prime Minister of Great Britain regarding the final transfer of power to the Government of India:

It has long been the policy of successive British Governments to work towards the realization of self-government in India. In pursance of this policy, an increasing measure of responsibility has been devolved on Indians, and today the civil administration and the Indian Armed Forces rely to a very large extent on Indian civilians and officers. In the constitutional field the Acts of 1919 and 1935 passed by the British Parliament each represented a substantial transfer of political power. In 1940 the Coalition Government recognized the principle that Indians should themselves frame a new constitution for a fully autonomous India, and in the offer of 1942 they invited them to set up a Constituent Assembly for the purpose as soon as the war was over.

His Majesty's Government believe this policy to have been right and in accordance with sound democratic principles. Since they came into office, they have done their utmost to carry it forward to its fulfilment. The declaration of the Prime Minister of March 15 last, which met with general approval in Parliament and the country, made it clear that it was for the Indian people themselves to choose their future status and constitution and that, in the opinion of His Majesty's Government, the time had

come for responsibility for the government of India to pass into Indian hands.

Cabinet Mission's Work

The Cabinet Mission which was sent to India last year spent over three months in consultation with Indian leaders in order to help them to agree upon a method for determining the future constitution of India so that the transfer of power might be smoothly and rapidly effected. It was only when it seemed clear that without some initiative from the Cabinet Mission agreement was unlikely to be reached that they put forward proposals themselves.

These proposals, made public in May last, envisaged that the future constitution of India should be settled by a Constituent Assembly composed, in the manner suggested therein of representatives of all communities and interests in British India and of the Indian States.

Since the return of the Mission an Interim Government has been set up at the Centre composed of the political leaders of the major communities exercising wide powers within the existing constitution. In all the provinces Indian Governments responsible to legislatures are in office.

It is with great regret that His Majesty's Government find that there are still differences among Indian parties which are preventing the Constituent Assembly from functioning as it was intended that it should. It is the essence of the plan that the Assembly should be fully representative.

His Majesty's Government desire to hand over their responsibility to authorities established by a constitution approved by all parties in India in accordance with the Cabinet Mission's plan. But,

unfortunately, there is at present no clear prospect that such a constitution and such authorities will emerge.

The present state of uncertainty is fraught with danger and cannot be indefinitely prolonged. His Majesty's Government wish to make it clear that it is their definite intention to take necessary steps to effact the transference of power to responsible Indian hands by a date not later than June 1948.

This great sub-continent, now containing over 400 million people, has for the last century enjoyed peace and security as a part of the British Commonwealth and Empire. Continued peace and security are more than ever necessary today if the full posisibilities of economic development are to be realizad and a higher standard of life attained by the Indian people.

Task Before Indian Parties

His Majesty's Government are anxious to hand over their responsibilities to a Government which, resting on the sure foundation of the support of the people, is capable of maintaining peace and administering India with justice and efficiency. It is, therefore, essential that all parties should sink their differences in order that they may be ready to shoulder the great responsibilities which will come upon them next year.

After months of hard work hy the Cabinet Mission a great measure of agreement was obtained as to the method by which a constitution should be worked out. This was embodied in their statements of May last. His Majesty's Government there agreed to recommend to Parliament a constitution worked out in accordance with the proposals made

therein by a fully representative Constituent Assembly.

But if it should appear that such a coustitution will not have been worked out by a fully representative Assembly before the time mentioned, i.e., June 1948, His Majesty's Government will have to consider to whom the powers of the Central Government in British India should be handed over, on due date, whether as a whole to some form of Central Government for British India or in some areas to the existing Provincial Governments or in such other way as may seem most reasonable and in the best interests of the Indian people.

Although the final transfer of authority may not take place until June, 1948, preparatory measures must be put in hand in advance. It is important that the efficiency of the civil administration should be maintained and that the defence of India should be fully provided for. But inevitably as the process of transfer proceeds it will become progressively more difficult to carry out to the letter all the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935. Legislation will be introduced in due course to give effect to the final transfer of power.

Position of States

In regard to the Indian States, as was explicitly stated by the Cabinet Mission, His Majesty's Government do not intend to hand over their powers and obligations under Paramountcy to any Government of British India. It is not intended to bring Paramountcy as a system to a conclusion earlier than the date of the final transfer of power, but it is contemplated that for the intervening period the relations of the Crown with individual States may be adjusted by agreement.

His Majesty's Government will negotiate agreements in regard to matters arising out of the transfer of power with representatives of those to whom they propose to transfer power.

British Trade Interests

His Majesty's Government believe that British commercial and industrial interests in India can look forward to a fair field for their enterprise under the new conditions. The commercial connection between India and the United Kingdom has been long and friendly and will continue to be to their mutual advantage.

His Majesty's Government cannot conclude this statement without expressing on behalf of the people of this country their goodwill and good wishes towards the people of India as they go forward to this final stage in their achievement of self-government. It will be the wish of every one in these islands that, notwithstanding constitutional changes, the association of the British and Indian peoples should not be brought to an end; and they will wish to continue to do all that is in their power to further the well-being of India.

Change of Viceroy

The House will wish to know an announcement which is being made public today. Field-Marshal the Right Hon'ble Viscount Wavell was appointed Viceroy in 1943, after having held high military command in the Middle East, South-East Asia and India with notable distinction since the beginning of the war. It was agreed that this should be a war-time appointment. Lord Wavell has discharged this high office during this very difficult period with devotion and a high sense of duty. It has, however, seemed that the opening of a new and

final phase in India is an appropriate time to terminate this war-time appointment. His Majesty has been pleased to approve, as successor to Lord Wavell, the appointment of Admiral the Viscount Mountbatten, who will be entrusted with the task of transferring to Indian hands, responsibility for the Government of British India in a manner that will best ensure the future happiness and prosperity of India. The change of office will take place during March. The House will be glad to hear that His Majesty has been pleased to approve the conferment of an Earldom on Viscount Wavell.

Mr. Attlee also said: "Lord Mountbatten will remain on the active list in accordance with his wishes that his future employment in the Royal Navy shall not be prejudiced. I am sure the House will wish him well in his new task."