INDIA AND PAKISTAN

1. Introduction

Strangers approaching India ¹ usually expect to find it hard to understand. But if ever there was a country which appreciated and rewarded a genuine endeavor to understand it, that country is India. The stranger who is willing to exert a little effort may be surprised to find how much sense he can make out of India and how clear are the outlines of many of its problems. The present essay is offered in the belief that India is intelligible and desires to be understood. But this is only a sketch, and the reader who desires to improve upon it will find at the end some suggestions as to how this may be done.

The imperial setting.—The dominant influence in the shaping of modern India has been its connection with Britain. The British empire in India began right after 1750 and lasted a little less than two hundred years, thus enduring exactly as long as the Mogul regime which preceded it. Unlike the Moguls the British never settled down in India. To them home was always 5,000 miles away in Britain, from which left successive batches of green young officials and to which retired old and sun-baked veterans. In all the history of empire there is no parallel to the rule of so populous a land for so long a period by aliens from a tiny island so far away.

During most of the period of British rule in India, Britain was the leading economic and industrial power in the world. Her great advantage in technique and resources made her the strongest nation of the day. As the possessor of the world’s premier navy and merchant marine, Britain had instruments through which she could transmit her power and make it felt. British officials and soldiers in

¹ As this essay is concerned primarily with institutions and developments up to August 15, 1947, the term “India” is used to refer to the entire country before its division on that date into the Dominions of India and Pakistan.
far-off India acted with an assurance and masterfulness rooted in the material superiority of their home country over any of its rivals or possessions.

The first Britons to appear were chiefly traders from Elizabethan England. They bore letters from the Queen praying the renowned Mogul Emperor, Akbar, to let them remain in India and do business. Those were the days of the great overseas expansion of Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Merchants of Portugal, the Netherlands, France, and Britain all plotted and fought to get control of the lucrative trade of Europe with the East. The Dutch were the most successful. They gained a monopoly of the handling of spices from the islands of the East Indies, on which the highest profits were made. Excluded from the islands, British merchants made the most they could out of the mainland of India. The instrument through which they operated was the East India Company, which had first been chartered in 1600 by Queen Elizabeth.

The Company had a difficult time holding on to its monopoly in the turbulent days of the Puritan Revolution (1640–1660). After the Glorious Revolution of 1688, its privileges were taken away and conferred upon a competitor. But the old company managed to survive by joining with its chief rival at the opening of the eighteenth century, at which time Parliament reaffirmed the united Company’s monopoly of trade between Britain and India. In exploiting that monopoly the Company developed further the system of commercial factors (agents) and fortified trading posts which it had established in the seventeenth century. More important, the Company was now able to expand from a mere trading enterprise to an imperial power controlling territory and revenue. Aspirations in this direction had already been voiced in the seventeenth century, but the first suitable opportunity to satisfy them came towards the middle of the following century. By then the Mogul Empire centered at Delhi had collapsed, and no Indian group was strong enough to replace it. The British took advantage of the disorganized conditions that prevailed to make themselves masters of eastern India, including the rich provinces of Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa. Similarly, they acquired control of the key southern city of Madras and the coastal areas to the south of it. In both of these regions they in-

flicted military defeats upon their only serious European rival, the French, who also had aspired to territorial control of India.

The conquest of important areas by the East India Company set off a quarter of a century of unlimited plunder. This took three forms: outright extortion from local potentates, arbitrary exactions from Indian merchants, and drastic increase of the customary levies upon the peasantry. Company officials were astounded at the ease and speed with which they were able to amass impressive fortunes. The effect upon the population, however, was expressed in 1789 by Lord Cornwallis, who after his surrender at Yorktown in 1781, had been named Governor-General of India: "I may safely assert, that one-third of the company's territory in Hindostan, is now a jungle inhabited only by wild beasts." 2

These processes debilitated the economy of India so rapidly that Parliament and the East India Company became deeply alarmed lest India's value as a colony be utterly and irretrievably ruined. In the closing years of the eighteenth century Lord Cornwallis put an end to a number of the worst abuses, reformed the administration of the country, and reorganized the land revenue system of eastern India. Not long thereafter Parliament sharply modified the economic power of the East India Company. Under pressure from manufacturers and merchant houses—whose numbers and strength had been increasing rapidly during the industrial revolution then taking place in Britain—Parliament in 1813 ended the East India Company's monopoly of trade and threw it open to the public. Cheaply manufactured British cotton goods now descended like an avalanche upon the markets of the more accessible Indian cities. This first great wave of British machine-made exports had a devastating effect among the urban artisan classes. It virtually wiped out handicraft centers like Dacca and other cities, which for centuries had been world-famous for their fine muslins and other textiles. By the 1830s the Governor-General was reporting to the East India Company that the bones of the cotton weavers were bleaching the plains of Hindustan.

As India's economy weakened, commerce began to stagnate. The

great mercantile houses of London, Liverpool, and Glasgow, together with their British correspondents in Calcutta and Bombay, called for the placing of Anglo-Indian trade on a new basis. "India," stated one of their chief spokesmen, the founder of the banking house of Grindlay and Co., "can never again be a great manufacturing country, but by cultivating her connexion with England she may be one of the greatest agricultural countries in the world." Let India grow and ship to England raw materials such as cotton, Grindlay and many others argued, and thereby obtain the wherewithal to pay for a swelling volume of finished goods from Britain. To carry through this program the merchants campaigned for rapid steamship service to the Indian ports and for railway lines throughout the vast hinterland. Added pressure was forthcoming from the textile manufacturers of Lancashire, uneasy over their complete dependence for raw cotton on the slave-owning American South, and the Midlands ironmasters who looked forward to providing at a handsome profit the rails, locomotives, and other heavy items. Considerations of high imperial policy brought support from generals and governors. The 1840s saw the introduction of modern steamers and the beginnings of two railways. Construction proceeded rapidly until India was covered with the most elaborate railway network in all of Asia.

The railways, the iron steamers, and the Suez Canal (the latter completed in 1869) effectively linked India's economy to the European and world markets. In practice, as mid-Victorian Britain was the world's foremost economic and industrial power, they bound India tightly to the British economy. The greatly increased shipments of raw materials for export—cotton, tea, jute, wheat, oilseeds, indigo—were consumed in Britain or were shipped via Britain. India's mounting imports were supplied primarily by British factories. The handling and financing of India's trade remained chiefly under the control of mercantile houses like the ones which had originally campaigned for steamers and railways.

India, in short, was converted into a subordinate and dependent part of the metropolitan economy of Great Britain. The profound repercussions of this transformation can be understood only if they

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are seen against the background of the older structure of India’s economy and society.

**THE OLDER STRUCTURE OF INDIAN SOCIETY.**—The outstanding feature of the traditional economy of pre-British India was the self-contained and self-perpetuating character of its typical unit, the village. Most of these communities came close to being little worlds unto themselves. The only outside authority which they acknowledged was that of some local princeling, who in turn might be subordinate to some distant overlord, whether Hindu Rajah or Muslim Nawab. The chief sign of submission to that authority was the payment each year of a share of the village crops, in some periods amounting to one-sixth or less, and in others to as much as one-third or even one-half. As a general rule the responsibility of making this payment, whether in produce or in money, was joint or collective, and rested upon the whole village considered as one single unit. Within the little world of the village, social and economic relations were governed by customary patterns and conventions of immemorial antiquity. The cattle were tended and the soil was tilled by peasants whose fathers had been cultivators and whose sons would take their places when they came of age. A kind of rough equality was maintained in some parts of India by a periodic throwing together of all the lands of the village, followed by a fresh redistribution of the land among the cultivating peasants. Cloth for the garments of the peasantry generally was spun and woven by families whose ancestors had been weavers long beyond the living memory of man. The other crafts were carried on by families which in effect were servants of the village. Their occupations passed on traditionally from father to son: blacksmith, potter, and carpenter who made and repaired the implements and utensils of the village; the silversmith, who made the village jewelry; and the oilseed-presser. For their services these craftsmen received a regular stipend out of the crops of the villagers. In some areas hereditary servants and slaves attached to peasant households performed both domestic and agricultural duties, and received from their masters food, lodging, and garments.

The pinnacle of authority within the village was either a headman or council of elders; associated with them were such officials as the village record-keeper, boundary man, supervisor of water courses
for irrigation and the Brahman teacher-priest-astrologer. These hereditary and traditional divisions of occupation and function were confirmed and given the stamp of obligation by the caste system (the present character and sanctions of which are treated on pp. 563–71).

The village itself consumed most of the foodstuffs and other raw materials it produced. Its needs in the way of handicrafts were satisfied by the families of craftsmen associated with the village. It was this tight union of agriculture and hand industry which made the village economically independent of the outside world, except for a few indispensables like salt and iron. The share of the village crops which went to the local magnate and moved on from him in a diminishing stream upward to the highest political overlord sustained the structure of government and provided subsistence for the urban population. India’s towns and cities generally were little more than headquarters for the top political overlords or imperial courts. The industries which flourished in these cities provided mainly luxury goods for the upper classes or implements of war for the army. Economically the cities had a one-way relation with the countryside, taking foodstuffs as tribute but supplying no goods in return. A special class of cities included pilgrimage centers like Benares and Allahabad on the Ganges, Puri the home of Jagannath on the Bay of Bengal, and Trichinopoly in the far south. They lived off the great stream of pilgrims who flocked to them at the holiday seasons. In a number of cases these pilgrimage towns also served either as centers of administration or as commercial marts for the interchange of luxury articles from all over the country.

Relations between the imperial courts and their regional subordinates varied widely. When the center was strong, the provincial governors and local potentates were compelled to forward regularly a prescribed share of the revenues they collected. If the center became weak, then revenue payments from distant areas soon fell off. Ambitious subordinates often attempted to set up empires for themselves.

The demand of local princelings upon the villages under their control also varied widely according to time and place. The chief demand, of course, was for a share of the principal crop, but generally this was supplemented by a number of services and exactions. These might include forced labor on roads, customary “gifts” of
food or animals upon specified occasions, and payments for permission to cut wood in forests, fish in lakes and rivers, or use mills for grinding grain.

This was the structure of Indian society which, with regional variations, the British found between 1750 and 1850 as they conquered one part of India after another. The basic land relations were rooted in century-old custom and usage rather than in any formal, elaborate set of statutes, legal cases, and court procedures about property. So long as the peasants turned over to the local potentate his customary tribute and rendered him the usual services, their right to till the soil and reap its fruits was taken for granted. Local rulers who repeatedly abused this right were considered oppressive; if they persisted, the peasantry fled to areas where the customs of the land were better respected. As land was still available for settlement and labor was not too cheap, local chiefs had to be careful lest they alienate the villagers.

The position of the chieftains and other intermediaries between the villages and the imperial courts or dynastic houses was less stable than that of the cultivating peasants. As empires and kingdoms rose and fell, and rival armies marched and fought, the local rulers had to line up and choose sides. Those who picked the winner were likely to be confirmed in their status or given a better place, while the unlucky ones who guessed wrong might be degraded or slaughtered. As the local chiefs often constituted a rallying point against the center, some emperors or kings tried to weaken their power by collecting the land revenue without their participation. Instead they created tax-farmers or operated through subordinate officials controlled by the imperial court.

There was nothing in India comparable to the highly developed forms of private property in land which were the rule in late eighteenth century England. There were no landlords and no tenants in the Western sense. The right to levy the land revenues was recognized to be the very essence of political power. In effect, the supreme political authority was the supreme landlord.

II. The Countryside

THE NEW LAND SYSTEMS.—By conquering India the British automatically became lords of the land. They then had to decide upon
the kind of system they would employ to collect the land revenue due to them. In an epoch-making decision Lord Cornwallis in 1793 broke with previous tradition by introducing in Bengal a form of private property in land. He transformed the tax-farmers and revenue collectors of Bengal into private landlords, zamindars. His action sprang from two considerations: first, to find a dependable basis for obtaining annually the greatly enhanced payments demanded of the peasantry; and, second, to do this in such a way as to support "a regular gradation of ranks" which Lord Cornwallis believed was "nowhere more necessary than in this country for preserving order in civil society."

The new landlords were expected to collect a little more than £3,000,000 annually as rent from the peasantry, but they were required to pass on ten-elevenths to the British authorities; for themselves the landlords might keep the remaining one-eleventh. To persuade the former tax-farmers to accept this unusual kind of private property, Cornwallis offered them a special inducement. They were promised that the annual sum expected of them would remain permanently settled for all time to come at the level of the initial year, around £3,000,000. Thus Cornwallis renounced all claim of the state to any additional sums which in the course of time the new landlords might obtain out of their holdings, whether from rising crop prices, bringing of new lands into cultivation, or from sheer exaction. For the past century and a half, therefore, while the landlords of Bengal have continued to pay to the state £3,000,000 annually, the amounts taken from the peasantry have grown until in recent years they have ranged between £12,000,000 and £20,000,000 per year.

The hereditary rights of the cultivators to the soil they tilled were virtually ignored. As Lord Halifax⁴ declared in 1861, Cornwallis's Settlement left the cultivating peasants to the mercy of the newly created landlords. The old body of custom was submerged by the formidable apparatus of law courts, fees, lawyers, and formal procedures. For with the introduction of private property in land the purchase and sale of zamindars' holdings were explicitly sanctioned by law. All of this was too much not only for the humble peasants

⁴ Grandfather of the present holder of the title and from 1859 to 1866 Secretary of State for India in the British Cabinet.
but also for the new landlords. Most of the latter could not raise the heavy revenues inflexibly required by the government and soon defaulted or sold out to merchants, speculators, and other sophisticated persons from the cities. These new landlords by purchase were interested only in the rents they could squeeze from the land; often they delegated the collection to middlemen who contracted to pay high sums annually. The latter in turn sublet to still other classes of middlemen, so that before long the unfortunate peasantry of Bengal were supporting an impressive panoply or “gradation” of middlemen, speculators, and absentee landlords.

The new land system soon came into disfavor with the government. Partly this was because of its harmful effect upon the peasantry, but of equal or greater importance was the belated appreciation of the fact that it limited for all time the income which the state could expect from the principal source of revenue, the land. In applying the zamindari system to other parts of their territories the British shifted it over to a temporary rather than a permanent basis. Thus in making modified zamindari settlements in central and northern India in the beginning and middle of the nineteenth century, the British stipulated that the level of payments could be lowered or raised at the end of each twenty or thirty-year period.

An entirely different land system was devised for large parts of Bombay and Madras and later applied to areas in northeastern and northwestern India. Here the British generally by-passed and ignored the claims of tax collectors and other intermediaries. Instead they dealt directly with the peasantry on the land, for thereby they hoped to be able to obtain more revenue than under the landlord (zamindari) system. The peasant was recognized as holding the particular plot or plots he occupied, but his right to the land depended upon annual payment in full of a heavy money rent to the state. Because it dealt directly with the peasant or ryot, the new system was called the ryotwari settlement. As under the zamindari settlement, the first claim on the land was owed to the state, and this claim was so heavy as to resemble markedly that of a landlord. At the same time the new ryotwari system also introduced some features of private property in land. The holders were registered and empowered to sell, lease, mortgage, or transfer their right to the use of the land. In contrast to the more or less elastic demands upon the peasantry
under previous indigenous regimes, the British insisted rigorously upon prompt and complete payment of the stipulated sums. In cases of default livestock, household property, and personal effects might be attached, and the peasant might be evicted. The new land system thus made mobile both the land and the peasant, and opened the way for the growth in power of the moneylender and the absentee landlord.

**SPREAD OF COMMERCIAL AGRICULTURE.**—The middle and latter decades of the nineteenth century saw changes in India’s agrarian economy even more drastic than those immediately entailed by the British land settlements. The key to this transformation was the striking increase in the production of crops for sale in distant towns or overseas markets, rather than for consumption within the village. This is of course the familiar process of commercialization of agriculture, a development which has taken place not only in India in the last century but in most other parts of the world. In recent years India has ranked as the world’s largest producer and exporter of jute and burlap, tea and peanuts; it has been the world’s second largest producer and exporter of cotton and cottonseed oil; and has been an important supplier of linseed oil, hides, and skins. Thus India came to fulfill the hopes of British merchant-bankers and manufacturers that it would serve as one of the world’s premier sources of agricultural products. But of deeper significance is the fact that its new role has meant a new era of economic and social relations in the Indian countryside.

The speed of the peasants in expanding the cultivation of cash crops arose in great part from their search for ways of getting money to meet the steadily mounting demands upon them by the state and the new landlords. Industrial areas like Britain and western Europe offered good prices for raw materials which India could grow cheaply. Once the railways were opened it became possible for the inland areas to produce for the world market. Wheat poured out of the Punjab, cotton out of Bombay, and jute out of Bengal. As commercial agriculture and money economy spread, the older practices associated with a subsistence economy declined. In some districts the peasants shifted over completely to industrial crops and had to buy their foodstuffs from dealers. Villagers sent to market the cereal reserves traditionally kept for poor years. They became
less prepared to meet poor harvests. Years of successive drought in the 1870s and 1890s led to great famines and agrarian unrest.

To produce crops for the market the peasant applied to the moneylender for credit to tide him through the long period of turnover. In pre-British times the local moneylender extended “casual credit” to meet occasional needs of the villagers, but he occupied a subordinate place in the subsistence economy of the countryside. In many areas the state refused to help moneylenders recover debts owed by the peasants, and in cases of default the legal system commonly did not permit them to take away the peasants’ land. Usurers who tried to grind down the peasants laid themselves open to homemade rustic justice.

The new forms of land holding, land-revenue systems, legal procedures, and commercial agriculture of the nineteenth century opened up a golden age for the moneylender. The demand for his services became an integral part of economic life. The moneylender was encouraged to expand his activities by the fact that under the new order of things he could make a good and secure profit. If the peasants defaulted he could use the new legal procedures to attach their lands, livestock, and personal possessions. Furthermore, from the middle of the nineteenth century the price of land rose rapidly in value, thereby encouraging the moneylender to broaden his operations. He began to take over the peasants’ land and rent it out. The moneylenders waxed fat and grew in number.

The same railroads which carried away the commercial crops brought back machine-made industrial products to the villages. Like the skilled urban artisans in the first half of the nineteenth century, the village weavers and traditional handicraft servants had to compete in the second half of the nineteenth century with products like Lancashire cloth, which was then overrunning the markets of the world. The village artisans no longer were sheltered by the friendly backwardness of the older village community. Furthermore the union of agriculture and hand industry which had been the basis of village life was disrupted. Under the impact of new forces the village could no longer remain the compact social and economic unit that it had been. The growing tendency was for each family to make ends meet as best as it could. Deep in the interior of central India and in other areas difficult of access, the handicrafts held on
for a long time, and some still show strength today. But in the coastal zones and in the regions lying along the new railroads the ancient village handicrafts declined. The village potter, tanner, dyer, oilman, and jeweler all faced stiff competition from machine products, whether made in England or, since the close of the nineteenth century, made in the new industrial centers that sprang up in India. Over the course of the past hundred years a dwindling proportion of the village artisans have been able to subsist on what they have received for their services from the village. Millions of them have had to find other ways to gain a livelihood or to supplement their scanty earnings. In most cases the only avenue open to them has been agriculture and they have added steadily to the great pressure on the land which is one of the chief characteristics of contemporary Indian life.

As the villagers came to depend more and more on purchases from the outside of such daily necessities as oil for cooking and lighting, matches, cloth, farm tools, and cooking pots, the traditional weekly or semiweekly rural fairs were supplemented by the appearance of village shops. Soon the cloth and provision merchants were extending credit to their customers. Some found it profitable to take up agricultural moneylending as a side-line. Others developed into middlemen who bought up the village produce and marketed it in the cities. To a large extent the three functions of shopkeeping, moneylending, and marketing became combined in the same persons. The peasants, in disposing of their harvests, could not hope to bargain on equal terms with middlemen to whom they were already indebted and from whom they would soon again need advances of food grains or money for the next year’s cultivation.

Commercialization of crops and the money economy which developed with it also affected the territories of the Indian princes. But they spread less rapidly than in British India and the transformation of the traditional village economy has proceeded at a correspondingly slower pace.

RURAL ECONOMY TODAY.—The power of the landlords and the moneylenders over the countryside shows itself today in the striking concentration of landed property. Less than a million great magnates, large landlords, and moneylenders own or control more than two-thirds of all the cultivated land. With few exceptions the mem-
bers of these groups have no productive function. They do not farm their land with modern machinery nor do they apply fertilizers or worry about the latest techniques of scientific cultivation. Instead, they stay in the cities and lease out their property in tiny patches to peasants at all the traffic will bear. The income of the landlord and moneylender thus is drawn almost exclusively from rent and usury, and practically never from profits gained by growing crops on their own land. On a much smaller scale the same is true of some three million petty landlords and rent receivers, chiefly city dwellers, who obtain some income from their minor properties. There are few other ways of investing money, even for professional men such as teachers and lawyers.

Less than one-quarter of the land is owned by peasant proprietors who actually till the soil. Of this class only about one million peasants may be termed well off; many of these are half-landlord and half-peasant, for they rent out parts of their holdings to less fortunate cultivators. Except for this relatively small number of well-off peasants, India’s working population on the land consists of poor proprietors, poor tenants, and propertyless agricultural laborers. These three groups, totaling more than 100,000,000 working men and women, exist below what by nineteenth century standards would have been the barest minimum considered satisfactory. The bulk of the cultivators during most of the nineteenth century had been either small holders or tenants. Except in several deeply impoverished regions a good percentage of them managed to remain free of debt, to run their affairs with a modest competence, and to hold on to enough livestock to work their fields and to carry their produce to market.

The contemporary position is shown by the evidence on the size of the holdings belonging to peasant proprietors or held by tenants with a recognized right to continue working the lands they till. Reporting on the Punjab, then the most prosperous part of India, the Royal Agricultural Commission of 1928 found that three-quarters of the holdings were less than ten acres. Moreover—at a time when the figure of five acres was commonly accepted as the absolute minimum to sustain a family—the Commission ascertained that three out of five holdings were less than this. While details were lacking for the rest of India, the Commission concluded that
the picture was similar: the average holding “is small; and there are a very large number of such holdings under two or three acres.” Many small proprietors, unable to make a living out of their dwarf holdings, cultivate additional land as tenants or hire themselves out as laborers. Some abandon independent cultivation altogether. They lease out their tiny plots and become indistinguishable from the landless laborers.

In the two decades since the 1928 Report of the Royal Agricultural Commission the concentration of property in the hands of landlords and moneylenders has increased and the size of the units held by petty proprietors and tenants has further shrunk. A prime factor in this process was the catastrophic world depression of 1929-1933, which also had the effect of more than doubling the total debts owed by the peasantry. The level of debt is such that it exceeds in amount the total annual income of the small proprietor and tenant. A government handbook put out a decade ago by retired British officials noted tersely that “indebtedness, often amounting to insolvency, is the normal condition of a majority of Indian farmers.”

Poor peasant proprietors and tenants are becoming so dependent and tributary to the landlord-moneylender that their condition approaches that of servile or unfree labor. The clearest evidence for this is the character and extent of sharecropping. It already accounts for one-fifth of the sown area of Bengal and Bihar, one-fourth of the United Provinces, one-half of the Punjab, and for large parts of southern India, Sind, and the North West Frontier Province. Half or more of the gross produce goes to the landlord who often as not provides neither seeds nor implements nor work animals. The sharecropper hands over half the yield simply for the privilege of growing crops on the landlord’s land.

At the bottom of the economic scale come thirty to fifty million totally landless laborers. During the last two generations they have increased more rapidly than any other significant part of India’s population. The recruits to this class stem from peasants who have lost all their livestock and all their land to the landlord or moneylender. A striking number of them serve today in one or another form of unfree labor. Some are serfs who may be transferred from one master to another as the land changes hands. Others are bond servants who perform customary menial tasks for their masters.
Crop production methods remain the time-honored ones dating back to pre-British times and passed on from generation to generation. There is little or no impetus to technical progress, because the benefits of improvements generally are siphoned off by landlords, moneylenders, and middlemen. In most cases peasant holdings consist of a number of fragments scattered among the various grades and types of land in the village. The basic unit of field production on large and small holdings alike is a plot so tiny as to make modern methods irrelevant. In the Punjab two out of five peasants tilled units less than two and a half acres in size. In other provinces subdivision of holdings through inheritance has proceeded so far that units of cultivation as small as 1/600 of an acre have been found. The only important example of large-scale cultivation is furnished by the tea, coffee, and rubber plantations, originally founded and managed by British capital. But even here cultivation has been by old-fashioned hand methods and the working force has consisted of indentured or semifree labor.

Patterns of Village Organization.—The typical Indian community remains the small village. Six out of seven Indians spend most of their lifetime within the circumference of one or another of the 650,000-odd peasant settlements which honeycomb the countryside. About one hundred to five hundred families with their houses, shops, wells, gardens, fields and places of worship, constitute a typical village. Scarcely visible from the road, the village proper is reached by a path through the crops. The actual dwellings, whether of brick, stone, baked mud, or straw matting, usually huddle together along narrow alleyways. Here and there an open space surrounds a well or threshing floor. In the craftsmen's quarters, front rooms, verandas and the unpaved footpaths serve as workshops and show windows. A clump of greenery may proclaim a temple or mosque or the residence of a more prosperous villager. Just beyond the knot of houses is almost always the "tank"—an artificial pond providing water for bathing, washing clothes, and for other household and agricultural purposes. Here stands perhaps another shrine, sacred tree, or domed tomb of a Muslim saint. Often separate smaller clumps of hovels shelter the families of the lowliest villagers. And on all sides stretch the fields. In regularly flooded lowlands like East Bengal, homesteads must be built on raised earth dikes. Here one family may occupy sev-
eral tiny huts surrounding a courtyard or pool and the village site is more extensive. Similarly, in other areas such factors as vegetation, availability of water, type of crop, local tradition, number of people, nearness to the railroad, affect the arrangement of houses or compounds. But throughout India the predominant village pattern is the tight cluster of habitations within an irregular tract of cultivated soil.

Socially the village consists of one or more agricultural castes plus a handful of families from each of the artisan and specialized service castes. The craftsmen have lower status than the respectable peasant castes, but in turn outrank a substratum of agricultural labor castes and "unclean" menial castes.

Usually a small aristocratic segment of petty landlords, money-lenders and shopkeepers claims membership in the "twice-born" priestly (Brahman), warrior (Kshattriya), or mercantile (Vaisya or Bania) castes described in ancient Hindu literature. The cultivating castes are sometimes associated with the fourth and lowest of the traditional divisions, that of toilers (Sudras); more often this classification is reserved for artisans. Still further down the social and economic scale are the numerous and variously labeled out-castes, exterior castes, fifths (panchamas), untouchables, depressed classes, and so forth. These vaguely defined categories include two main types: (1) castes whose real or nominal occupation involves ritual impurities such as handling the skin of dead animals or laundering soiled linens; and (2) castes of (landless) laborers considered to be drawn from ethnic stock inferior to that of the dominant population of the area.

Each section of India has its own chief cultivating and herding tribes or castes, its own roster of necessary village servants, and its own submerged classes. Gangaikondan, a village of some 3,500 inhabitants near the southern tip of the Indian peninsula, is representative of the Tamil-nad districts of Madras. An investigator in 1934 listed 19 groups in the "caste village" and 6 more in the near-by out-caste hamlets (cheris). He counted substantial numbers of Brahmans, Vellallas (the great cultivating caste of the Tamil-speaking south), Maravars (a clan of former robbers, marauders, and cattle

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thieves), Edayars (shepherds), betel-vine growers, and fishermen. In addition there were weavers, barbers, oilseed-pressers and sellers, carpenters, blacksmiths, goldsmiths, laundymen, potters, lime-burners, musicians, and Muslim shopkeepers. The depressed classes included Pallars (both Hindu and Christian) by far the largest single caste in the village; Parayans (whence our word pariah); toddy-tappers, leather workers, a second weaver caste and broom-makers. The Brahmans formerly owned most of the village lands and although they did no actual field work, supervised the cultivation by hired Parayans and Pallars. By the time of the survey, Brahman holdings had decreased, their remaining lands were generally let out to tenants, and a goodly number of Brahman families had moved away to the cities in search of white-collar jobs to supplement their income from rents. The most prosperous Brahmans were those who engaged in moneylending as well as managing their properties. The Vellallas devoted themselves exclusively to agriculture, generally owning and cultivating their own plots. The only other caste with land-holdings of any size was the Maravars, who also cultivated fields on lease, and supplemented their earnings by such means as keeping poultry, tending sheep, and hiring out carts. In addition they extorted from the other villagers sums known as Swathanthriams—a kind of blackmail insuring protection of crops and cattlesheds, free passage for carts, and immunity of other worldly goods from banditry.

All the other castes of the village depended directly or indirectly upon the Brahmans, Vellallas, and Maravars. The specialized betel-growers had to rent land from them on which to plant their vines. Only a few of the Edayars actually owned sheep or even tended flocks. For the rest, the members of this caste were simultaneously very petty proprietors, tenants, and hired laborers. They supplied the household servants for the Brahmans. A considerable number had lost their holdings through debt and emigrated to the towns. Similarly the lowly Pallars worked on their own small fields, on rented fields, and on the fields of their high caste masters; many spent nine months of each year up in the hills as coolies on the plantations. None of the Gangai kondan Pallars or Parayans were *padiyals*, a kind of indentured farm servant common in Madras; but some families in the past had been slaves to particular Brahmans
and continued to work for them. For the right to follow their traditional calling in the local tanks the fishermen paid rent to the Brahmans in the name of the village god. Carpenters, blacksmiths, and other artisans worked both for daily wages and for customary annual payments obligating them to repair implements or furnish other services upon demand throughout the year. The two castes of weavers were trying to eke out a living by farming on the side, but as was the case with the other skilled workers, several families had already left the village. Several small cloth provision and liquor shops were run by betelmen, oil-pressers, and toddy-tappers. The Muslims who kept stores in the outcaste settlements for the Pallars, also owned and tilled infinitesimal plots.

In many Madras villages there are few Brahmans or none at all, the higher cultivating castes providing both landlords and tenants, and even moneylenders. Perhaps the most marked feature of the whole southern region is the large number of depressed castes, who, whether as free or unfree laborers, tenants or small holders, form the basic agricultural labor force.

In Gujarat, where the west coast juts out into the Arabian Sea, the broad social division is into Kaliparaj ("black races") and Ujaliparaj (all other Hindu castes). The Gujarat village of Atgam in 1927 had a small elite in terms of prestige and standard of living consisting of five families of landowning Anavil Brahmans, one family of Modh Brahmans (the village priest), five families of Banias (moneylenders), three of Parsis (liquor dealers of Persian descent and Zoroastrian faith), and one Christian family employed by a mission. Most of the other members of the Ujaliparaj were Kolis (farmers, tenants or farm laborers) formerly belonging to the Kaliparaj but now considered in the higher group because of their prosperity. The Kolis are numerous around Bombay and from their early services to European settlers comes our term "coolie." Together with Kolis in the village proper lived shepherds, fishermen, various artisan castes, untouchable Dheds (a caste of blanket-weavers here serving as policemen), and Bhangis (a depressed caste of latrine cleaners), all of whom worked on the land as well as following their hereditary trades.

In small hamlets on the outskirts dwelt the four castes of the

Kaliparaj who together constituted two-thirds of the community. Even though some of the Kaliparaj owned their own plots of land, they were socially segregated from the other Hindus, carried out their separate religious rites involving wooden images of dead relatives, and celebrated their own holidays. Upon manhood they usually became halis or bond-slaves of the landlords. In consequence of modest loans which, in effect, they would never be able to repay, they were committed to serve one master the rest of their lives, receiving in return a homesite, certain gifts of clothing, and customary wages in kind. Their wives fetched water, washed cooking vessels, and removed dung from the cattleshed of the masters' houses, while the sons were engaged as cowherds.

The mid-Ganges Valley, the heart of northern India, has a substantial Muslim minority comprising a separate set of aristocratic, agricultural, and artisan castes. A study of 54 villages in the United Provinces yielded over 50 Hindu and Muslim castes, no one of which was found in more than 30 of the villages. The largest land holdings (tenancies under absentee owners) were in the hands of the castes locally known as sharif (gentlefolk)—Hindu Brahmans and Thakores (claiming Kshattriya origin), and Muslim Syeds (descendants of the Prophet) and Sheikhs. Together they accounted for about one-seventh of the people. Five rrazil (lowborn) Hindu castes constituted the bulk of the working peasantry: Chamars (traditionally leather and hide workers of low standing but not here considered untouchable), Morais (vegetable gardeners), Kurmis (the most respectable peasant caste), Ahirs (cowherds), and Lodhas (another agricultural group). Specialized castes such as shepherds, Muslim weavers, barbers, laundymen, and oil-pressers commonly cultivated small parcels of land in addition to practicing their hereditary occupations. Only six of the villages had one family each of untouchable Mehtars or Doms whose task was to clean the privies of the high caste houses.

Further to the north and west is the Punjab, where Muslims and Sikhs (a reformed Hindu sect) form the majority of the population. Here the common term of social identification is tribe as often as caste. In the central Punjab, the Jats—Hindu, Sikh, and Muslim—are the premier cultivators. Jat villages, in many of which the work-

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7 S. S. Nehru, *Caste and Credit in the Rural Area* (Calcutta, 1932).
ing peasants are themselves the holders of the land, tend to pay more respect to husbandry and wealth than to caste prerogatives. One such village is Kala Gaddi Thamman, colonized by settlers from northern Punjab about fifty years ago after the opening of a new canal.\(^8\) In 1927 Sikh Jats were the sole landowners and provided most of their own labor. A handful of tenant farmers belonged to Muslim agricultural and artisan castes, while Christian sweepers (converted untouchable Bhangis) worked as field laborers. Of the three Brahman families, two lived on charity and religion while the head of the third was a shopkeeper and small trader. Far more esteemed in the village society were the prosperous Khatris and Aroras (two Hindu mercantile and moneylending castes). Those of the village artisans who worked at their trades ranked as menials in relation to the cultivating peasants and were paid largely in kind.

In the almost purely Muslim areas such as the west Punjab no caste distinctions separate landlords, tenants, and farm laborers. But the village servants are members of Muslim artisan castes and retain their caste designations even when they follow other occupations. The mullah (Muslim priest), ranks as a religious menial. Some larger villages have Qazis (Doctors of Muslim law)—of high social standing and economic position. And almost always a few families live on charity.

For India as a whole, a rapid survey such as the foregoing can do little more than indicate the regional diversity of patterns of village organization. Many important areas and castes have gone wholly without mention. The general picture that emerges, however, can be taken as roughly representative. High caste status is associated with land ownership or superior rights in the soil, higher living standards, and abstinence from manual labor. Similarly, the relative ranks of the various middle and low agricultural castes coincide, by and large, with their gradations from peasant proprietors or occupancy-right tenants to field laborers or serfs. The artisan castes, to the extent that they follow their trades, are regarded and treated as menials by the farming castes of good standing. The scale of their wages and customary receipts is such as to provide a level of existence as well as a social position just one notch above that of

\(^8\) Randhir Singh, An Economic Survey of Kala Gaddi Thamman (Punjab Board of Economic Inquiry, Lahore, 1932).
the agricultural laborers. Merchant and moneylending castes enjoy both high prestige and high material rewards even where they own no land; petty shopkeepers are generally drawn from other and lower castes.

Only a minority of the village Brahmans actually serve as priests, temple-caretakers, teachers, or astrologers, and few of these obtain their whole livelihood from the fees and gifts due for these services. Where Brahan landlords and Brahmans who follow the traditional priestly vocations live in the same community, the priests are often looked down upon by the landed Brahmans, and treated as a separate subcaste. Many poor Brahmans in northern India are, in effect, religious mendicants, regarded contemptuously by the entire village community.

On the whole, the Muslims, while in practice adopting many features of the caste system, have exercised in the north of India something like a moderating influence. Social distances are observed most strictly in the south, which is also the home of the sharpest economic differentiation along caste lines. Rarely has the economic service of caste shown itself so starkly as in a list of 11 prohibitions for untouchables issued in 1931 by the Kallars, a prosperous cultivating caste of Ramnad district in the far south of Madras province. Sandwiched between enjoiners against the wearing of gold jewels or clothes below the knees, or the use of music or horses in wedding processions, are the following strictures:

1. Their men and women should work as slaves of the Mirasdars [landlords].
2. They must sell away their own lands to the Mirasdars of the village at very cheap rates.
3. They must work as coolies from 7 A.M. to 6 P.M. under the Mirasdars and their wages shall be for men Rs. 0-4-0 [$0.08] and for women Rs. 0-2-0 [$0.04] per day.

Functioning of Caste.—Within the villages the ordinary cycle of daily life—going out to the fields and returning, fetching water from wells or tanks, arranging for repairs of ploughs and carts, buying and selling of foodstuffs, cloth and other necessaries, negotiating loans and land transfers, attending to births, marriages, funerals and festivals—inevitably brings all castes into frequent contact with

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each other. But each caste preserves a separate tradition of common stock, common geographical or mythological origin, and common household regimen. It is this living complex of customs governing innumerable major and minor aspects of behavior that forms the distinctive inheritance of the caste and sets it apart from all other castes.

Thus the Brahmans in a particular community may eat only vegetables, take their water from the river, and marry off their daughters before puberty, while the main cultivating caste eats meat and fish, draws water from a well, and practices adult marriage. There is no rule that holds all over India for Brahmans or any other caste. Within a given locality, however, the practices of the various indigenous castes are fairly stable and a matter of general knowledge.

An individual, once born into the caste, remains in good standing so long as he abides by the appropriate regulations whether or not he follows the traditional caste occupation. The castes are self-perpetuating, for in almost all cases marriage is restricted to members of the same caste—and indeed to members of its particular local subdivision. Often fellow castemen of two near-by villages regularly provide each other's brides. Social precedence among castes is expressed in such terms as the number of other castes from whom any particular caste will accept water or cooked food, or with whom they will share the hookah (water-pipe). As a convenient exception, certain eatables such as confectionery can be taken from a wide variety of castes, including the customary vendors.

Each caste of any social pretensions whatsoever will also provide a list of one or more lower castes whose mere physical touch is considered contaminating and necessitates immediate ritual purification. The phenomenon of so-called "distance pollution"—outcastes whose approach within a certain number of feet defiles—although much discussed in the literature on the subject of caste has been actually reported only for Malabar, a small area on the southwest coast where matriarchal families and remnants of other atypical social forms have persisted to the present day. In practice, the concept of untouchability is honored not so much by the frequent ceremonial baths as by matter-of-fact avoidance of contact wherever possible. Exceptions in the case of river ferries and buses are common and illustrate precisely how flexible caste rules can be.
Real village problems arise over issues like common use of wells, temples, and schools.

Correct caste behavior is enforced largely by the weight of religious sanction. There are also, especially in the lower castes, councils of elders which may extend in authority over the castemen of a group of neighboring hamlets. These panchayats, often informal in character, are called upon to decide matters of ritual, relations with other castes, changes in caste rules and punishment for their infraction. They can impose fines, exact penances like giving a dinner for the caste or in extreme circumstances decree the complete outcaste-ing of the offender. Caste councils may also take up collections of money for religious observances.

Within his lifetime a Hindu remains a member of the caste into which he was born. But in the course of three or four generations a caste may rise or fall markedly in the social scale. In fact, there is a constant process of formation of new subcastes, amalgamation of old ones, and appearance of new claimants to the titles of Brahman and Kshattriya. Thus the Mochis (shoemakers), in North India, have separated from the Chamars (who skin dead animals and handle raw hides). The Kayasthas (scribes), who rank next to the Brahmans in most of Bengal, were not long ago simply on the "clean" artisan level. A steady small stream of tribespeople enters the Hindu fold each generation by settling on the edge of villages and accepting the most menial occupations. From making brooms or baskets they may proceed to hire out as day laborers and eventually to rent small plots of their own. Meanwhile if they are able to find a Brahman priest to minister to their worship, to give up eating the foods deemed impure in that locality, and often to reduce their marriage age, they are on their way toward forming a new agricultural or artisan caste or being accepted into an already established one. Another source of new castes arises from religious reform movements; even those specifically directed at the removal of caste have historically been perpetuated as castes or subcastes.

**THE FAMILY.**—Side by side along the village lanes inhabited by the various castes live old-fashioned joint families and the small families more typical of today. While households of twenty or more are still to be found, the average in most parts of India is five or six. Under the joint family system sons remain under the paternal
roof together with their wives and children. The father functions as a domestic autocrat, expecting and receiving immediate obedience. Ownership of property is vested in the family as a whole; and every member of the household is entitled to maintenance from the common income. Upon the father's death the eldest son becomes head of the joint family. Should, however, a division of the inheritance be demanded, each son is entitled to an equal share. Or the brothers may set up separate households while still retaining common title to the family acres. If one or more brothers emigrate to the cities as industrial laborers, government employees, personal servants, or even professional men, the wives and children frequently stay in the family home. Although joint-family establishments are becoming fewer, very strong kinship ties are still felt to unite the individuals who would in the old days have resided together.

Marriage is a social duty incumbent on all villagers. The obligation of parents to find husbands for their daughters and wives for their sons has the whole weight of religion behind it. Matches are arranged by the heads of the families, who sometimes employ the services of a go-between. In the north, the village barbers typically carry on this occupation as a sideline. The most important criterion of suitability is proper caste status. Within many castes the matter of clans, branches, or kinship groups also arises. Astrologers may be consulted as to whether the union of a particular couple would be propitious. Dowry practices and customary gifts vary widely, and are often the subject of negotiation. The bride's family almost always pays for the expenses of the wedding, which can be quite substantial. The festivities prescribed by caste and local custom may take several days and involve most or all of the village.

Usually both parties to a marriage are in their teens—sometimes they are even younger. For almost two decades unions of boys under eighteen and girls under fourteen have been prohibited by law in British India, but there is little doubt that many such nuptials continued to be celebrated. Numerous castes, particularly the higher ones, hold to an interpretation of the Hindu scriptures requiring that girls be married before puberty. Where this rule is followed the wedding amounts to a betrothal ceremony: the child-wife does not go to live with her husband until she attains womanhood. Even
in post-puberty marriages it is common for the youthful bride to visit back and forth between her new and old homes before she finally leaves her parents and settles down as a fully married woman; from that time on she is subordinate to her mother-in-law and must conform to her behests. Both Hindu and Muslim religions permit but do not encourage polygamy. A Hindu widow of high caste does not remarry. She stays in her husband’s home, dependent upon his father or brothers. If she is the mother of sons, she retains full status within the household and will in time command the services of her daughter-in-law; otherwise she is often condemned to a lifetime as a domestic drudge. Should her husband have died before he grew old enough to consummate the union the “virgin widow” will remain under her father’s roof. There are no barriers to the remarriage of high caste widowers. In fact social pressure is put on them to take new wives. Since the only available mates are young unmarried girls, great disparity in age often results. Muslim and Christian widows, and those of many low castes are permitted to and do marry a second time. Divorce is almost unknown in the village.

No matter how poor or low caste a villager may be, he expects and receives absolute deference from the womenfolk of his own household. The wife eats only after her husband has finished. A laborer’s wife may toil with him in the fields, drudge as a servant in the home of his patron, or take daily employment with a road construction gang in addition to her home chores. In some castes of village servants the women have traditional functions: thus the barber’s wife typically serves as a midwife. High caste women usually occupy themselves with domestic tasks. In some parts of northern and western India seclusion of the womenfolk is considered a mark of status and refinement among both Muslims and Hindus. Strict “purdah” women stay in so far as possible in the inner rooms and courtyards of their houses and pull their scarves or saris over their faces when the menfolk enter. In extreme cases they may deprive themselves completely of fresh air and contact with neighbors, female as well as male. Within the same community peasant women may go about freely while those of higher rank wait for dusk to quit their four walls. For outdoor protection, Punjabi Muslim women who observe purdah don tentlike “burkas”
with tiny crocheted peepholes. South Indian women, with few exceptions, take full part in village social and economic affairs.

The most eagerly awaited event in the village family is the birth of the first son. According to Hindu practice, certain essential parts of the funeral rites can be performed only by a son. Childless or sonless women resort to the use of amulets, charms, and other forms of magic. They make special offerings to the local shrines and may even undertake long journeys to holy places of particular repute in this matter. If none of these methods suffice, a boy of the same caste may be adopted. Daughters are valued much lower than sons and, as a rule, less care and food is lavished upon them. Six is the average number of children born to a couple, but only half of these may be expected to live to maturity. High and low caste families alike have about the same number of babies.

Village mothers suckle their infants generously as long as two or three years. During these first years the baby is almost constantly in the arms of its mother, grandmother, or older sister. Young children have considerable freedom to run about in the village and in general are treated with great indulgence by men as well as women. As they turn eight or nine, boys of the working castes begin to herd animals or help in the care of the crops, while girls are taught to prepare and cook grains, pound spices, and so forth. Some villages have elementary schools attended by a number of the boys, mostly of the higher castes, and very few of the girls. Adulthood is commonly assumed to begin at about fifteen.

RELIGION.—Religion enters into all phases of Hindu life. Washing oneself in the morning, preparing and eating meals, sowing the fields take on sacramental quality when performed with the appropriate ritual. Religious merit is acquired as much by simple adherence to one’s caste conventions and family obligations as by any special acts of worship. The pious village woman will offer grains to her household image before starting on her day’s chores. On her way to the well she will stop to throw flower petals over a stone lingam in a wayside shrine. The most important deity to her is the local one she knows best—perhaps an evil spirit to be propitiated like Sitala, the goddess of smallpox, perhaps a genial character like Ayanar, the protector of the Madras Parayans. If there is a
Brahman priest in the neighborhood he will be called upon on special occasions to perform ceremonies in the homes of high caste families. The village temple, which may or may not have an attendant priest, is a place for individual homage and communion rather than congregational worship. Religious holidays are usually celebrated by the whole village; there may be processions with music, decorating of houses with lighted oil lamps, drawing fresh designs on white-washed mud walls, organizing dramatic performances of classic tales, special gifts for the deity whose day it is, or even animal sacrifices, although the Brahmans of the village would have nothing to do with this last. Holi, a widely observed festival in northern India, sanctions such jollities as masquerade, let-down of social barriers, and dousing with colored powder or water. At Ayuda Puja in the South each man worships his plough, chisel, blowpipe, pen or other tool of trade. Wandering holy men—Hindu saddhus, Muslim fakirs, Buddhist monks—are everywhere welcome to expound their own gods and gospels. But there is no real organizational hierarchy of priests. The relation between the village's own gods and the celestial figures in the populous Hindu pantheon is at best vague. Nonetheless, Siva, Vishnu, Brahma, and the other great names of Hindu mythology are generally known throughout the countryside. Hundreds of thousands of villagers from every corner of India annually stream to the holy cities such as Hardwar where the Ganges enters the plains, the cathedral shrines like the famous "Black Pagoda" of Konarak, and other pilgrimage points associated with the common Hindu tradition.

The great sectarian divisions of Hindudom, such as the distinction between Shaivites and Vaishnavites (respectively followers of Siva and Vishnu), are not matters of creed decided between an individual and his conscience but particulars of religious custom inherited in the same way as caste. Thus one group may mark the forehead with a sandal-paste trident, another with three parallel lines. But devotees of both would on occasion worship at the same shrine, and give a few coppers to its attendant priest. New cults arise frequently, usually among the lower castes, and after a few generations shake down into fairly stable sects or subcastes. The elaborate ethical and philosophical doctrines of the ancient Vedas
and Upanishads are kept alive mainly in Brahman families which have been able to devote years to the study of the scriptures in the original Sanskrit.

There is widespread belief in the rebirth of the soul in the form of a man of higher or lower caste, or a heavenly being or even an animal or insect, according to the deeds of the individual. Associated with this belief in transmigration is the injunction against injury to any living creature. The cow is held in particular reverence. Cows are not worshiped (the commonly seen bovine idol is Nandi, the bull who is Siva's "vehicle"), but to the Hindus it is a great sin to kill them. Persistence of fertility cults is indicated by widespread worship of representations of the male and female sexual organs (linga and yoni). Other popular divinities such as the elephant-headed Ganesh or the Serpent Gods of the south take animal or part animal form.

Village Muslims, where they are few, are scarcely more distinguishable from their Hindu brothers in religion than in customs. Though idolatry is strongly forbidden to followers of the Koran, they may even worship at the shrines sacred to the local cults. Or perhaps the grave of a Muslim pir (saint) will serve the same purpose. Characteristically Muslim areas preserve Islamic traditions and customs better. Good Muslims do not eat pig or drink wine. Of peasants who work in the fields, only a minority find time to perform the five lengthy daily prayers, each of which must be prefaced by a thorough washing. They do attend mosque services on Fridays and observe the fasting month of Ramzan, during which no food is taken from after dawn to before dusk. At harvest time, the first deduction from the pile of threshed grain is a gift to the mosque for "the soul of the Prophet." For holidays there are the three Ids (on which goats or cattle are slaughtered), and particularly the dramatic Mohurram when elaborate processions of tinselled paper caskets commemorate the death of the Prophet's grandsons. Whoever can afford it attempts to make at least once the great pilgrimage to Mecca, and returns with red-dyed beard. Doctrinally, the majority of Indian Muslims are Sunnis rather than Shias; but the local mullahs are usually quite innocent of fine theological distinctions.
Village temples and mosques often have title to plots of land, sometimes at quitrents considerably lower than the general level of revenue assessment. A trustee or group of trustees manages the fields and expends the money realized from sale of produce on upkeep of the building, festivals, charities and so forth. These funds may also be used to pay a schoolmaster who holds his classes right in the temple or mosque.

Throughout the countryside, and more particularly in spots of great sanctity are to be found Hindu maths, Sikh gurdwaras (both similar to monasteries) and Muslim wakfs (foundations). Great merit can be achieved by willing property to these religious establishments, which house and support great numbers of priests, theological students, and holy men of all varieties. Villagers come from great distances to offer their small contributions and receive blessings. In recent years there have been charges of corruption against these institutions, but they are still highly venerated by most of the people.

The cultural life of the village is almost completely bound up with religious observances and religious holidays. Where small libraries exist, most of the books are vernacular versions of the ancient religious epics. Traveling theatrical troupes perform the same classic tales. Young men sometimes organize hymn-singing sessions. A handful of literate landholders or shopkeepers may subscribe to big city newspapers and perhaps read items aloud to their cronies. Radio receivers and phonographs are extremely rare. In different parts of the country various sports such as wrestling and cock-fighting have a long-standing popularity.

VILLAGE ADMINISTRATION.—The two indispensable village officials are the headman and the accountant. The headman is responsible chiefly for collecting the land revenue and secondly for assisting the authorities in matters of law and order and of the general welfare. As a sort of petty magistrate he is sometimes empowered to try minor cases, such as affairs of robbery or assault. The accountant keeps up to date the records of land holdings, rights, and transfers. According to its size a single village may have one or more headmen and accountants. In addition, there are usually a number of watchmen charged with protecting houses and crops, particularly at night. The watchmen also serve as news bearers and messengers.
Upon their oral report of births, deaths, and crimes the village vital and other statistics depend.

Although village functionaries today serve under and by appointment of the district officials, the posts are in many cases hereditary. They may carry with them grants of tax-free land as well as small stipends. The headman and accountant are almost invariably men of high caste. Since they act as intermediaries in all relations between the government and the other villagers, they are in a position to exercise great local power. The accountants, who can distort or falsify entries in the village register by a stroke of the pen, are subject, not surprisingly, to widespread corruption. Watchmen and streetsweepers, if there are any, are generally drawn from the lowest castes, often “untouchables.” Since they are frequently servants of the village rather than of the state, they may depend for payment on customary daily donations of cooked food from certain households or on shares of grain distributed at the harvest. Only large villages have police stations with regularly employed full-time constables. Subordinated to district and subdistrict apparatus, the administration in most villages is a formal affair carried out without popular support, and with little reference to local needs.

The typical poor villager mistrusts and fears government in any of its manifestations. He considers the policeman a bully to be avoided, the accountant and headman as potential sources of harm to be conciliated or bribed. In many areas where the collection of land revenue and of rent is conducted as a single operation the villager draws no distinction between agents of the landlord and agents of the government.

Quarrels over land and attempts to recover unpaid debts often end up in long expensive legal suits. Once a villager becomes embroiled in litigation he has not only to pay his lawyer but also to take off time from his field work to attend court in the district town. Not infrequently both parties to a controversy are financially ruined by the time final judgment is handed down.

Some vital works, like the clearing of silted up irrigation ditches, are accomplished by cooperative effort of the villagers in accordance with ancient traditions. But where these old practices have broken down, or in fields where they never existed, the village simply goes without. Thus the vast majority of communities have no sewage
arrangements, no safe drinking water, no public school, and no authority competent to settle civil disputes.

Village medical facilities generally consist of the services of the hereditary midwives, the *mantrams* (charms) of the priest, the patent preparations offered for sale by the shopkeeper, and the folklore preserved by the old men and women. Occasionally district surgeons or "lady health visitors" make tours, particularly for purposes of vaccination. A handful of villages enjoy a high quality of medical attention supplied by Christian missionaries or Indian social service organizations.

Fevers and stomach disorders such as dysentery are the villagers' most common complaints. Malaria is endemic in the river deltas and has spread to many other spots. It is believed to account for a million deaths per year, and makes a constant drain on the health and energy of vast numbers of people. Epidemics of cholera, plague, smallpox, and other diseases visit the villages every few years, taking a heavy toll each time.

In recent years attempts have been made to revive the *panchayat* (council of elders) form of village rule characteristic in most of India in the days when villages were self-sufficient political units. While the creation of panchayats has been authorized by numerous laws, they have actually been set up in perhaps one out of ten villages. Invariably the new *panches* (members of the council) whether appointed by the district officers, coopted by the headmen, or elected by some or all of the villagers have turned out to be the most prosperous members of the community—the high caste landlords, merchants, and moneylenders. A few of these panchayats have had considerable success in settling disputes and preventing recourse to superior courts. Other panchayats have concerned themselves with village improvements. Usually a single project such as the sinking of a well or the construction of a school building occupies the energies and resources of a panchayat for a year or more. Funds are derived from contributions by higher governmental bodies, from fines and fees, from sale of fishing rights or fruit picking concessions, and in some cases from small additional tax levies. Nowhere have they been sufficient to underwrite a consistent program of expansion of village services.

TRIBESPEOPLE.—All along India's mountainous northern border
and in the less accessible hilly and jungly tracts of the interior dwell tribes of people separated from the main body of plainsmen by custom and culture.

They number somewhere between twenty and thirty millions, according to the criteria of enumeration. Individual tribes vary in size from a few hundred (such as the primitive Toda dairymen of the Nilgiri Hills described in W. H. R. Rivers classic monograph) to more than two million. In the latter category are the Gonds of Central India, who include in their ranks shy foresters, ordinary villagers, and a few wealthy and educated rajahs.

The most backward tribes are to be found in the densest forests and jungles. Often naked or dressed only in leaves they flee at the approach of strangers. For food they gather nuts, berries, and roots or snare birds and small animals.

More numerous are the tribes who practice shifting or axe cultivation. They make small clearings in the woods by chopping and burning, and then sow seed in the ashes. After two or three years the plot is abandoned and a new clearing made in the same manner. In addition these tribes often weave baskets, hunt, and fish, or collect and sell such natural products as lac and resin.

Still other tribes are composed of settled agriculturists who keep poultry and cattle, cultivate with a plough, spin and weave cloth, and make pottery. Some of the Assam hill dwellers have developed an elaborate system of irrigation for their terraced hill-side rice fields. The tribes who inhabit the arid reaches of Baluchistan are sheep and cattle-herding nomads rather than farmers; they also engage in carpet-weaving.

The typical problem of tribal life at all levels of advancement is insufficiency and unreliability of the food supply. Although there are exceptional groups of outstanding health and physique, the great majority of tribespeople are undernourished and ravaged by disease.

To the extent that tribes have remained isolated they have preserved their characteristic institutions more or less intact. Hundreds of tribal languages still persist, although tribesmen today often speak the dominant Indian language of the area as well as their own tongue. Many of the tribes are subdivided into clans, each identifying itself with a particular animal or vegetable totem. Economically, the tribal villagers pool their labor and resources and share the fruits.
Where land is tilled it is either held in common or periodically re-distributed. The high point of social life is communal dancing and singing, usually associated with ritual. Bachelor's halls, where the young men sleep under a common roof until marriage, are frequent, and sometimes there is a similar arrangement for the girls, sometimes for both together. Adult marriage is the general rule, together with ease of divorce and a considerable tolerance of extramarital sexual activities. Some tribal societies are matriarchal and on the whole the position of women is high.

In religious beliefs and practices there is a great deal in common between most tribal faiths and popular Hinduism. Tribal gods are many, but they are easily accommodated in the Hindu pantheon. Some characteristic features of tribal worship, however, are at variance with modern Hindu precept. Under this category come animal sacrifices or sacrificial hunts and the use of home-brewed liquor in religious rites.

It is among the tribes and particularly the more primitive ones that such curious religious practices as swinging from a pole by metal hooks passed through the flesh are occasionally found; all too often they have been given wide currency as though they were generally representative of Indian life.

The vigorous and warlike Pathans on the northwest frontier are, of course, militant Muslims, while Buddhist traditions are preserved by some of the peoples who nestle on the Himalayan slopes.

The period of British rule and modernization has speeded up the process of contact between the tribespeople and the Indians of the plains. New land systems have provided a basis upon which outside landlords and moneylenders established themselves in areas where tribespeople had hereditary cultivating rights. Eventually the original occupants were driven to the hills or reduced to depressed castes of agricultural laborers. At the same time, railway construction, tea and coffee plantations, and coal mines provided a demand for hard manual labor which attracted many tribespeople away from their ancient pursuits. Every advance in rail or road communications and every attempt to exploit mineral or forest resources brought more tribespeople face to face with the shops, ploughed fields, and caste rules of village India.

In the course of their incorporation into village life, the tribes-
people have generally suffered a loss of their traditional culture without gaining much from their new neighbors. Songs, dances, languages, marriage, birth and death rites have progressively decayed. Only with great pains and, in some cases, with direct violation of deeply felt religious prohibitions have they learned to till the soil in accordance with approved local methods. Except in a very few instances tribespeople have been relegated to the lowliest caste status.

British administration of tribal areas was initially concerned with the stamping out of practices offensive to Western standards such as human sacrifice, head-hunting, blood-feuds, and trial by ordeal. Towards the end of the nineteenth century this process was well-nigh complete. Another problem of the early period was presented by the periodic raiding and looting forays of hillmen into the plains. For a long time official policy vacillated between sending punitive military expeditions and paying money subsidies as bribes for good behavior. The Santals of the east central uplands, after several bloody risings, were eventually pacified and settled on reserved lowland areas suitable for cultivation. On the northwest frontier, where no steps were taken toward providing an adequate livelihood for the tribespeople, there has been constant recurrence of trouble.

As in the rest of India, official land revenue settlements in the tribal districts tended to establish clear-cut ownership of land in the place of former customary relations. Thus many chiefs were transformed into landlords and the economic structure of the tribe was fundamentally altered.

At a later date the enactment and enforcement of forest protection laws, which were widely hailed by Indian opinion as essential for the preservation of a great natural resource, worked a great hardship on the forest-dwelling tribes. Forbidden from practicing axe-cultivation and to a large extent from hunting, many groups were totally at a loss for a means of subsistence. Similarly the excise laws which prohibited home production of liquor disrupted longstanding tribal customs. In large part indigenous brews were replaced by the stronger and more intoxicating distilled spirits obtainable in the villages, and drunkenness became a serious problem.

In recent years governmental agencies, missionary organizations,
individual reformers and nationalist leaders have all called attention to the sad plight of the tribespeople and have asked special consideration of their economic and social needs. But there is great controversy as to how these needs can best be served, whether by custodial isolation from the “tainting” influence of the modern world, by religious or educational uplift, or by more intimate relations with the rest of the Indian community.

III. The Cities

Urban Life and Livelihood.—One out of every seven Indians lives in a town of 5,000 or more. The large cities which have sprung up or expanded during the last century have functioned economically in a role supplementary to the needs of the British metropolitan economy. They have served as centers for handling the outward movement of raw materials and the inbound movement of manufactured goods from abroad. The factories which have come into existence in these cities are either devoted to consumers’ goods and other light industries, or they are workshops for maintaining transport services, particularly the railroads. The only field of heavy industry in which Indian enterprise has challenged Britain’s supremacy has been the fabrication of steel; and even here Indian production has been limited both in volume and range of output.

Indigenous enterprise made slow headway in the nineteenth century partly because it came up against the power of the entrenched British mercantile houses. These houses had evolved a form of business enterprise peculiar to India: the managing agency. Under this system a single business organization runs the affairs of a dozen or more concerns operating in a number of different fields. The system arose when British merchant houses, like those which had pressed in the 1840s for the opening up of India, themselves later founded banks, opened coal mines, built jute factories, or started tea plantations. Over the last century the great British concerns have played a predominant, almost quasi-monopolistic, role in the economic life of India. In Great Britain, as well, these houses occupied a vital economic position. From the ranks of their officials were recruited more than one Governor of the Bank of England. Lord Catto, who presently holds the post, was formerly the head
of Yule and Company, the largest of these concerns. Indians desir­
ing to enter fields in which British managing agencies already op­
erated came to find it sound or advisable to place themselves under
the protection of one or another of these houses.

Throughout the nineteenth century would-be Indian captains of
industry received little if any of the help from the state for “infant
industries” which was so common in Europe and America. To Brit­
ish industrialists and shippers the idea of Indian protective tariffs
behind which local industries might develop was anathema. The
British had come to regard India as a country predestined for raw
material production, a land in which machine industry would be
an unnatural, misdirected, artificial development. When the Gov­
ernment of India after 1858 enacted low customs duties on textiles
for the sole purpose of raising revenue, the Lancashire millowners
forced the abolition of the imposts. When the desperate financial
need of the Government of India later compelled their reenactment
the Lancashire interests succeeded in having them matched by In­
dian excise taxes of nearly the same amount. The first tariffs of even
a moderately protective nature did not come into operation until
the 1920s. Up to that decade British managers of the railroads fol­
lowed a policy of purchasing railway stores in England, even when
Indian articles of the same quality were available at cheaper prices.
And right down to 1947 the great British shipping lines were able to
operate at will in the Indian coastwise trade.

The birth of modern industry in India has therefore been a pro­
longed and painful process. The total number of factory workers
has never reached 1 percent of the population. And over the last
fifty years the urban craftsmen and other hand workers have de­
clined, not only in proportion to the rest of the population, but
even in absolute numbers. It is the exceptionally slow rate of in­
dustrialization combined with the decline of the handicrafts which
explains the otherwise astounding fact that over the last half-century
India has become more and more of an agricultural country. Back
in 1891 three persons out of five gained a living from the soil; in
recent years the proportion is about three out of four.

There are two chief centers of modern industry in India: Cal­
cutta with its environs, and Bombay and Ahmadabad in western
India. Heavy industry is concentrated in the Calcutta area. At
Jamshedpur 150 miles west of Calcutta is the well-known Tata Iron and Steel Works, which produces annually about one million tons of finished steel. The coal mines which supply Tata's needs and most areas of India as well are concentrated around Asansol about 150 miles northwest of Calcutta. They employ some 250,000 miners who turn out each year about 25 million tons of coal. Near Asansol is the only other sizeable steel works in India, that of the Steel Corporation of Bengal (SCOB), with a capacity roughly one-third that of Tata.

The heart of industry in and around Calcutta itself is the spinning of jute and its weaving into burlap, in both of which fields Calcutta leads the world. More than 100 jute and burlap mills employing close to 300,000 workmen stretch along both banks of the Hooghly River, whose tortuous channel connects Calcutta with the Bay of Bengal. Calcutta's services as India's greatest rail hub and one of its two chief ports require a wide assortment of transport and engineering workshops and small metal-working plants, which together form the city's second largest industry. With these shops should be mentioned its three government ordnance plants; these are the best equipped in India and turn out rifles, machine guns, shells, and a few pieces of field artillery.

The mills and mines of the Calcutta-Asansol-Jamshedpur industrial complex employ altogether about a million workmen. The Tata works is the only important segment of industry which has always been owned by Indians and directed by an Indian managing agency house. Much of Calcutta's industry is still run by British managing agency houses and up to recent years most of it was British-owned. This is not surprising, since Calcutta is the oldest center of British influence in India and served as its capital up to 1911. Calcutta's Clive Street remains the home of the British banks in India, which to this day are the most powerful in the country.

The great industry of Bombay and of Ahmadabad 300 miles to the north is the spinning and weaving of cotton. Bombay has about 100 cotton mills employing more than 150,000 workmen, while Ahmadabad also has 100 mills but only about 100,000 workers. But whereas Ahmadabad economically is nothing but a cotton town, Bombay matches Calcutta as a great port and even exceeds it as a center of diversified light industries. These include the manufacture
of tires, bicycles, and ordnance, and the assembly of automobiles.

In addition to the two great clusters of mills and shops in Calcutta (resting on jute grown in Bengal) and in Bombay (based on cotton of the Deccan), there are about a dozen smaller industrial centers of lesser rank. Cawnpore, an important transport point in the middle of the United Provinces, boasts a number of textile mills, railway shops, and leather tanneries, and some specialized metal-working plants. The State of Mysore, towards the southern tip of India, has sponsored a variety of industrial establishments, most of which are located in the rising town of Bangalore. Scattered widely in southern India are a number of textile mills, some old and antiquated, others relatively new and modern. In northern and eastern India are a number of sugar-refining factories, paper mills, and cement plants; most of these have come into being since the war of 1914-18.

India's industrial position on the eve of war in 1939 may be summed up with three facts: the value of capital invested in industrial plants was two billion dollars; net annual output was worth one billion dollars; and total factory employment was roughly two million workers.

For India as a whole, the great bulk of the town dwellers are not factory workers but either hand artisans, unskilled laborers, or domestic servants. Estimates of the size of these three groups vary, but the total number of persons employed in them is perhaps twenty millions. All three of these groups are employed by or otherwise subordinate to and dependent upon the urban middle classes. The hand artisans carry on their ancient crafts either at home or in tiny sweatshops. Most of them are at the mercy of the merchant-moneylenders who finance them. Often they have fallen into a relation of debt-slavery to their creditors, to whom they are bound to sell their products. Domestic servants work for money wages which are so small as to be little more than nominal. Custom prescribes, however, that the servant be provided lodging, clothing, maintenance during illness, and days off on certain holidays.

Large numbers of unskilled laborers are employed in construction and road building, and on docks and railways. Generally, they are not hired directly, but are engaged in groups through contractors. Since no regulations govern the terms of their employment or the conditions of work, the common laborers are completely de-
pendent upon the contractors, many of whom have been known to pay their labor less than five cents a day.

The bulk of the middle classes in the cities consists of petty traders, shopkeepers, middlemen, sweatshop owners, and small absentee landlords. From their families come lawyers, schoolteachers, and the lower ranks of government employees, such as clerks. For the middle classes generally, the struggle to make ends meet is a hard one, and only a small percentage of them achieve a moderate degree of comfort. In this more fortunate group fall the larger merchants and the successful lawyers, whose main practice is taken up with corporation law and suits about land.

**BIG BUSINESS.**—Genuine economic power and influence in Indian hands is confined to a few thousand rather well-entrenched Indians who have successfully established themselves as industrialists. The degree of concentration is impressive: "500 important industrial companies are managed by 2,000 directors. 1,000 of these directorships are held by 70 men. At the apex of the pyramid stand 10 men holding 300 directorships. This oligarchy in industry is a closed preserve. The son succeeds the father." 10 Perhaps even more striking than the concentration of control is the narrowness of the three tiny social groups from which have come the leading Indian industrialists: the Parsis of Bombay, the Marwaris of Rajputana, and the Jains of Gujarat.

The Parsis are a community of 100,000 most of whom live in and around the city of Bombay. They are descendants of Zoroastrians who fled from Persia at the time of Islamic invasion by the Arabs more than a thousand years ago. For some centuries the Parsis were merchants and shipbuilders. They got on particularly well with the British after the latter conquered India. Prominent Parsis served as contractors for the British Government while others acted as brokers for British firms. With the economic opening up of India in the middle of the nineteenth century, a few of the most enterprising Parsis established factories on their own. They were among the first Indians to set up cotton textile mills both in Bombay and in cities of the interior. The most famous Parsi was J. N. Tata. Despite the doubts of his countrymen and the scoffs of British engineers and

government officials, he succeeded, relying almost solely on his own resources, in founding the great Tata Iron and Steel Company. Besides textiles, iron and steel, his descendants have large holdings in such key fields as electric utilities, chemicals, and machine tools. The Tata interests are today probably the strongest single Indian business group.

The chief Indian rivals of the Parsees in recent decades have been the Marwaris, who originally were a caste of moneylenders and merchants from Indian states in the deep interior of Rajputana. This relatively backward area was not opened up until the railway-building days of the 1870s. Thus until that late date the Marwari traders were sheltered against the competition of British houses, which had already overwhelmed many of the larger Indian mercantile firms in the chief ports. Quick to take advantage of the new economic opportunities presented in the late nineteenth century, the Marwaris moved south to Ahmadabad and Bombay, and east to Cawnpore and Calcutta. Along with the Parsees they were among the first to set up cotton textile mills. From these they have expanded into every conceivable type of business in India. The wealthiest of the Marwari houses, that of the Birla Brothers, has interests in cotton textiles, sugar mills, paper companies, cement plants, jute mills, insurance companies, newspapers, and weekly magazines. Birla Brothers is a power to be reckoned with in Bombay, Calcutta, and Delhi. Another Marwari outfit, the Singhania group, exercises the dominant business influence in Cawnpore.

The Jains of Gujarat profess a variant Hindu faith dating back to a religious teacher of the sixth century B.C. In pre-British times the Jain mercantile community consisted of small traders and petty local bankers. Like the Marwaris, the Jains began their rise to prominence in the second half of the last century. In the cotton textile industry their holdings are today second only to those of the Marwaris. The best-known Jain concern is the house of Dalmia, which controls cement plants, airlines, sugar refineries, vegetable oil mills, a daily paper and periodicals.

Wealthy Muslims, whose income was derived chiefly from the land, did not attempt until quite late in the day to enter the fields of industry and banking. Up to the present not a single Muslim concern has holdings of comparable dimensions with those of the
Parsis, Marwaris, or Jains. Of the substantial Muslim merchants and grain dealers, the best known is the Calcutta house of Ispahani, founded by immigrants from Persia.

The few great Indian houses have risen to their present position by dint of great effort in the face of many difficulties. Clashes among themselves and with their British competitors were frequent and severe in the opening decades of the twentieth century. In recent years, by which time the Indian houses may be considered to have "arrived," all the established firms have tended to work together to prevent outsiders from intruding into their domain. In organization and structure the dominant Indian firms of today resemble the old British managing agency houses.

The war years from 1939 to 1945 brought unprecedented profits to the large mercantile and industrial firms. Prolonged and intense shortages of food and cloth have prevailed since 1942. Many leading textile manufacturers and food merchants took advantage of this to extract fabulous prices from helpless consumers. Of some it is literally true that their normal sphere of operations became the black market. The Singhania mills of Cawnpore were heavily fined by Indian courts for flagrant activity in this direction. Connivance by government officials, both British and Indian, in such black market operations became widespread and led to a sharp decline of standards both of private business and of public conduct. By 1947 the Reserve Bank of India issued an open and official warning that if such practices were not checked, they would cause a breakdown of government and society.

A fifteen-year program for national economic development jointly authored by representatives of the leading Indian business houses was put forward early in 1944. The Bombay Plan, as it was called, proposed a great expansion of industry. It relied heavily for capital on the sterling balances India had accumulated in London during the war (Britain's unpaid five billion dollar debt to India for wartime purchases and services). It also envisaged a considerable degree of governmental regulation of economic enterprise. At the time, the Bombay proposals evoked much official and unofficial interest in planning. But developments since the end of the war have been little influenced by any blueprint. Pressure from industry has already forced the government to drop most of the wartime eco-
nomic controls, let alone introducing any new ones. And the ques-
tion of repayment of all or part of the sterling balances is still un-
settled.

The postwar years have been marked by a series of understand-
ings between the Indian houses and some of the largest manufactur-
ing interests in Britain. Birlas, for example, has reached agreement
with the leading British firm of Nuffields for the assembly and for
the manufacture later on, of automobiles in India. Tata has con-
cluded an arrangement with the British cartel, Imperial Chemical
Industries, Ltd., for the manufacture of dyes for the Indian textile
industry. There have also been negotiations in the direction of simi-
lar links with important American concerns.

URBAN SOCIETY.—The heart of every Indian city is a web of
long narrow bazaar streets, thronged from morning to night with
men, animals and carts of all descriptions. The wares offered for
sale range from foodstuffs and cheap cooking vessels to tissue-thin
fabrics and elaborately wrought jewelry. Back of the crowded rows
of tiny shops stretch line upon line of squalid tenements. With one
room and sometimes a veranda per dwelling, the low Calcutta
bustees and the many-storied Bombay chawls resemble transplanted
and closer-packed village huts. The cheris of Madras are nothing
but clusters of mud and thatch hovels built by the occupants upon
any available space.

In the midst of these mean alleys rise great temples and mosques,
royal palaces—perhaps still inhabited—and stately mansions of
former grandees. Often these buildings date back many centuries
and are of great architectural beauty.

The “cantonment” area is usually quite separate from the rest of
the town. Here, along broad tree-lined avenues, stand spacious
houses each in its own sizable walled compound. Army barracks,
law courts, clubs, Christian churches, colleges, and other public
buildings of recent construction dominate the scene. Originally Brit-
ish enclaves, these residential suburbs have lately attracted more and
more of the well-to-do Indians.

Only the chief cities have blocks of fairly commodious flats, large
office buildings, and glass-windowed stores. Even in Calcutta, Bom-
bay, and Madras, however, the modern downtown section is but
a tiny enclave surrounded by several square miles of straggling bazaars, slums, mill districts, and better residential quarters.

The first Britons who came to India as traders, missionaries, and adventurers quickly found their own level in the variegated life of the great courts at Agra, Golconda, and Murshidabad. Later, as the East India Company expanded its operations, small colonies of English businessmen, soldiers, and administrators grew up in Bombay, Madras, and Calcutta. Except for occasional exchanges of courtesy visits with the Indian gentry, these little settlements kept very much to themselves. As a general rule relations between the English and Indians of rank were generally correct, often civil, seldom cordial. Some Britons distinguished themselves by their interest in Persian poetry, Hindu metaphysics, or ancient Indian epics. But on the whole the Indians were regarded as "men benighted." Any gestures in the direction of Western styles or customs excited mild amusement.

The expatriates, for their part, were quick to adopt such Indian ways as conduced to their own comfort. Above all they delighted in the cheap availability of great numbers of household servants, who were invariably docile and unused to such amenities as days off. As the number of Englishwomen in the various settlements increased, social life for the higher ranks of army officers and civilians became a gay whirl of balls, picnics, supper parties, and amateur theatricals. The Rebellion of 1857 put an end to this joyous era. The reported and imagined excesses of the mutinous troops and their supporters aroused the Anglo-Indians, as the British residents then called themselves, to cries for bloody revenge. For half a century thereafter the "white sahibs" tended to regard the "natives" with mingled fear and loathing. British soldiers and their officers became notorious for the vigor with which they insisted that Indians offer the customary signs of inferiority and submission. Self-conscious isolation was the order of the day for all ranks of the English, from the lesser officials of the upcountry "stations" to the Viceroy himself. In food, dress, household furnishings, and amusements the attempt was made to reproduce English existence as closely as possible, despite such difficulties as the Indian climate. English children were educated only with their own kind; usually they were sent home for their schooling.
In the most recent years the growing strength of nationalism and of the Indian business community has led to somewhat more equitable social relations. English and Indian government officials, professional men and industrialists lunched together and occasionally dined in each other’s homes. In rare cases, genuine friendships cut across the customary barrier. But right up to the actual withdrawal of British political rule, there remained in Bombay and Calcutta “European” clubs in whose premises no Indian could set foot except as a servant.

Marriages between the English and the Indians have not been tolerated by the social arbiters of either group. The descendants of these unions, typically of British Tommies or subordinate employees and Indian women, today constitute a separate community of about one hundred and forty thousand and are known as Anglo-Indians. Living in the large cities, they are employed almost entirely by the Government, particularly as policemen and on the railways. They generally wear Western clothes, profess Christianity, and try to identify themselves in so far as possible with the “European” population. In social contacts they are usually limited to British enlisted men and converted Indian Christians.

The one Indian group which has come nearest to being socially acceptable to the British is the older aristocracy of princely families and landed gentry. With their secure and in many cases vast incomes from rent, the rajahs, nawabs, and zamindars have been able to maintain palatial residences in the big towns as well as at their ancestral seats and to entertain on a lavish scale. The elements of Western culture which they have adopted most enthusiastically are horse-racing and motor cars. Although many have been willing to overstep caste or religious precepts in their personal lives (such as the prohibition against alcohol), they are generally supporters of orthodoxy and opponents of social progress.

It is the new Indian middle classes who have given the modern and modernized cities their characteristic flavor and culture. Drawn from many different castes and areas they have come to share common commercial or professional pursuits, common conditions of urban home life, and a common position in the national scene. As a group, the middle classes constitute the most Westernized element in Indian society. From them have come the pioneers of social
change and religious reform. Culturally they have been torn be­
tween an intense admiration for Western forms and a deep desire
to vindicate the traditions of their own country.

Internally the middle classes are divided into “communities”
defined in terms of religion, caste, and language or region of origin.
A few of these communities, such as the Parsis and the Marwaris,
have already been mentioned. In the latter case the name is applied
to the western branch (associated with the Marwar district in
Rajputana) of the Agarwals, a trading caste of Vaisya rank. The
Kashmiri Pandits are a Brahmans group, originally from Kashmir,
who held high posts under the Mogul emperors and produced many
scholars of Persian, the official language of the Delhi court. Many
of them have played important roles in current Indian politics, and
the present premier of India, Jawaharlal Nehru, is numbered among
them.

A wealthy and important Muslim trading community is the Khojas
of Bombay, who as Shias of the Ismaili sect follow the religious
leadership of the Agha Khan. The Nattukottai Chettis, a Madras
caste of Tamil-speaking Shaivites, are well known as bankers in
Burma, Ceylon, Malaya, Fiji, and South Africa, as well as India.
The Rahri Brahmans of Bengal take their title from a riverside tract
and include in their ranks the well-known literary family names
of Bannerjee, Chatterjee, and Mukherjee (actually Anglicized ver­
sions of Bandopadhyaya, Chattopadhyaya, etc.). Bengali Brahmans
were among the first Indians to write novels, poetry, and history in
English. Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, the renowned poetess and nationalist,
is a Chattopadhyaya by birth.

In the sphere of home life each one of these separate communi­
ties preserves to a considerable degree its own food and dress habits,
its native language, its particular birth, death, and marriage cus­
toms, and often its tutelary gods and goddesses. Men returning from
their daily work will doff their European clothes and put on the
more comfortable dhoti (draped loincloth), pajama, or skirt of their
native district. Outside the home there is greater uniformity and
much less regard for caste restrictions. English and to a much larger
extent Hindustani have become common languages. Men whose
wives observe caste rules devoutly in their own kitchens sit down
to luncheon in restaurants together with members of totally differ-
ent communities. Even at home, tap water from municipal pipes which may have been touched by any number of low castes is not considered polluting. Castes which refused fish will take cod-liver oil on a doctor's prescription. Some "advanced" members of the present generation have gone so far as to contract intercaste marriages.

Reinterpretation of caste rules to conform with the needs of everyday urban existence and even occasional direct flouting of them do not mean that caste is unimportant to the city middle classes. In some ways modern developments have even served to strengthen caste influence and solidarity. Thus formerly caste councils or panchayats were restricted in scope to a small group of neighboring villages or a single town. During the course of the present century many new associations have sprung up uniting all members of a caste who speak the same language wherever they may be domiciled. The new organizations defend caste interests and status in such matters as the rank assigned by the decennial census. They often collect and administer funds which provide scholarships for needy young men of the caste. Sometimes they attempt to codify or change caste regulations on subjects such as age of marriage, amount of dowry, or widow remarriage. Other urban projects frequently restricted to members of a single community are cooperative apartment houses, student dormitories, credit societies, and even joint stock companies.

Indian movements for the purification of the Hindu religion and the reform of the caste system date back at least to the time of Buddha (about the fifth century B.C.). The distinguishing feature of the movements of this kind of the past hundred years is that they have been initiated by the urban middle classes and owe much of their stimulus to contact with both Christianity and Western rationalism. The great reformer Ram Mohan Roy founded in the early 1800s an organization known as the Brahmo Samaj, which campaigned for monotheism, the brotherhood of man, and widow remarriage. The Arya Samaj, started half a century later, took on the character of a fundamentalist Hindu revival and agitated for a consolidation of the numerous present-day castes into the four traditional Varnas (Qualities) mentioned in the old Vedas. Among the Muslims, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan in the early years and Sir Mu-
hammad Iqbal in the present century were outstanding reinterpreters of Islam in a modern setting.

The field in which European influence has been welcomed most warmly by the middle classes is education. After several decades of sporadic and very limited assistance to Sanskrit or Persian academies conducted under religious auspices, the East India Company in 1835 announced an official education policy along the lines of Macaulay's famous "Minute" which condemned all Indian culture as barbarous. The object of instruction was declared to be the promotion of European literature and science, and the chief medium was to be English. Efforts were to be concentrated on the upper groups in Indian society with the prospect of a filtering down of benefits to the great masses. In the years that followed, government middle and higher schools, colleges, and eventually universities were established at the district and provincial headquarters. Government grants were extended to private Indian secondary schools and to the growing number of Christian mission schools.

The middle classes came to look upon English education as the stepping stone to social and economic advancement. Great sacrifices were made to enable sons to complete their college courses and thereby qualify for government service or the growing profession of law. Before the end of the century the number of graduates was already outstripping the possibilities of employment, but the stream of aspiring B.A.'s continued to grow. Thousands of young men went to England to continue their studies, and in particular to gain the coveted degree of Barrister-at-Law. The most recent years have brought a considerable widening of Indian collegiate curricula both in the addition of more scientific and technical subjects and in increased attention to India's own cultural heritage. There has also been a great increase in the number of girl students at every educational level. Of some eighteen universities of today, Calcutta is the oldest and best known. It confers degrees in Law, Medicine, Science, and Commerce, among others; possesses a cyclotron for research in theoretical physics, and has achieved international recognition for its statistical studies.

The daily and weekly press both in English and in the dozen-odd important Indian vernaculars is read with attention and wields considerable social as well as political influence. Circulation figures
of individual newspapers range as high as 50,000. The cinema is perhaps the most popular form of urban amusement. Huge billboards advertising new screen plays abound in the large cities, and the Indian moving-picture industry—centered in Bombay—is one of the world's largest. The pictures usually deal with modern social problems or historical and mythological heroes, and are always embellished with music and dancing.

The working population of the cities is, to some extent, organized into its own communities according to caste and region like those of the middle classes. Hand artisans such as gold or silversmiths may be found following their traditional caste occupations. Certain castes from the Kathiawad peninsula provide the cooks in well-to-do Bombay Hindu homes. Large numbers of low caste Malayali-speaking workmen from the southwest coast are employed in the Bombay bidi (hand-rolled cigarette) sweatshops.

Most of the town laboring classes have been recruited within the past fifty years from the ranks of landless or almost landless peasants. As the Tamil proverb puts it, "After ruin, go to the city." At first, close ties are maintained with the home village. Frequently only one member of a family emigrates, or agricultural laborers may seek town work in slack seasons. Among the workers who stay in the cities and bring up their children in the shadow of the mills, there is a tendency in the course of a couple of generations to coalesce into a fairly homogeneous group.

Where the untouchables or depressed classes are involved, the assimilation is by no means complete. In the eating sheds outside factories separate arrangements for the mid-day meal are usually made for the castemen and the untouchables. But they frequently work on the same machines and they sit together at union meetings. Every large city has a sizable proportion of depressed classes: they form one-eighth of the population of Madras and about one-fifth of the industrial workers of Bombay.

Slum conditions place an almost unbearable strain on family life. It is by no means unusual for a tiny single-room dwelling to be shared by two or more households of adults and children, each with its own smoky little cookstove. Many working class families in Bombay sleep at night on the city streets, with a single length of cloth stretched protectively across the mother, father and young-
sters. When the wives as well as the husbands work (during the war women accounted for 10 percent of the factory employees) the young children must be taken along on the job or left untended in the gloomy rooms. Maternal and infant mortality rates in the large cities are double and triple the rural figures; tuberculosis attacks ever increasing numbers of slum-dwellers. Prostitution and alcoholism have become prime social problems, particularly in the coal towns. In the balance, the economic opportunities offered by the city to the worker are purchased at the cost of extreme drabness and discomfort in daily life.

POPULATION.—In the present century India has begun to exhibit the rapid pace of population increase previously experienced by societies in process of modernization. Up to 1920 growth or stability varied sharply from decade to decade according to the occurrence and severity of famines and epidemics. Presence or absence of disaster raised or lowered the death rate while births held fairly stable.

Since 1920 there has been a sustained period of growth. This has been due not to any rise in the birth rate, which in fact has declined slightly, but to a consistent and significant fall in the death rate. This fall primarily reflects improved control over epidemic diseases, which, it must be emphasized, has been accomplished by public health techniques rather than by any rise in urban or rural living standards of the great bulk of the people. The extent to which the Bengal famine of 1943 and the recent communal disturbances have interrupted the trend is as yet unclear.

At the time of the 1941 census India's population was 388 millions; today the figure for India and Pakistan together must be near 420 millions. The recent rate of increase (about 1.2 percent per year) is by no means phenomenal. India is in fact growing no more rapidly today than did Britain in the last century or the United States as recently as the 1920s. But the base is so large that even this small percentage amounts to an addition of nearly five million persons per year.

The future prospects for the population trends in India and Pakistan depend directly on the speed and thoroughness with which the transformation of society and economy—now begun—is carried through. On the one hand the present death rate (about 30 per 1,000) is still so high that further advances in medicine and sani-
tation could bring it down considerably, thereby contributing still further to a population increase. On the other hand the high birth rate (about 45 per 1,000) cannot be expected to fall until and unless greater urbanization and higher standards of living for the vast majority of the people encourage voluntary reduction.

In the short run the question is not one of controlling fertility but of providing a better livelihood. There is no question that modern agricultural techniques could double the present food yield of India's cultivated soil. But this is not possible without a profound reorganization of peasant-landlord relations throughout the Indian countryside. India's "population problem," in effect, is a matter not only of social structure and economics, but of politics.

IV. The Rulers and the Unruly

THE GREAT REBELLION.—The first century of British power in India—from the Battle of Plassey in 1757 to the Rebellion of 1857—saw the defeat of every Indian power or prince who would not bow to British rule. Three-fifths of India was taken over, divided into provinces, and ruled directly by British officials—this area was generally called "British India." The remaining two-fifths of the country was left in the hands of Indian potentates on condition that they acknowledge their submission to the "Paramount Power" of the British and consent to varying degrees of control or interference.

Rather slowly the British took a number of steps toward the modernization of India. Slavery, infanticide, and widow-burning (sati) were outlawed. Modern postal service, a free press, and a system of Western education were introduced. Indian reformers like the distinguished scholar and publicist Ram Mohan Roy and the great merchant Dwarkanath Tagore welcomed these measures and founded societies to organize popular support for them. Along with the opening up of the Indian economy in the 1840s and 1850s through railways, telegraphs, and steamships, the process of social and political change was greatly accelerated. One princely house after another was pushed aside and its territories absorbed into British India. Land settlements rode roughshod over the claims of conservative upper classes and dealt directly with the peasantry. Unlike the urban merchants and educated middle class, the older aristocracy
resented British reforms and innovations. By the middle of the century they felt that their very existence was menaced, and more and more came to believe that the only way to preserve themselves was by driving the British out of India. In 1857 the drain of British troops from India for expeditions to Persia and China convinced them that a favorable moment had arrived. When mutiny broke out in the ranks of the East India Company’s army over the issue of the famous greased cartridges, the dispossessed princes and bypassed nobility and former tax-farmers joined with the rebellious sepoys and called upon the people in city and country for support. The British struck back with all the force they could muster, but it took them more than a year to crush the revolt. During the hostilities rulers and ruled gave little quarter to each other.

STRUCTURE OF EMPIRE.—After the suppression of the rebellion Parliament ended the power of the old East India Company and vested complete control over India in a newly created department called the India Office. At its head was the Secretary of State for India, a full-fledged member of the British Cabinet. As Secretaries came and went with the turn of political tides in Britain, the substance of power was in practice exercised mainly by the seasoned advisers and permanent staff of the India Office, whose initial personnel had been taken over largely from the old East India Company. Typically, the Secretary was a man who had never set foot in India.

Within India the peak of authority was the Governor-General who was now also the Viceroy or representative of the Crown. Throughout the period since 1858 successive Governor-Generals waged a losing battle against the tendency for policy questions and other basic decisions to be made in London rather than India. Steamship, telegraph, radio, and airplane all combined to make the authorities in the field ever more subordinate to the hub of Empire. The Governor-General was left with prime responsibility for deciding how the policies set by London could best be carried out under the conditions existing in India. He was assisted by a number of appointed departmental chiefs, who sat together with him to form the supreme executive body of the Government of India.

Below the central government came the half-dozen-odd provinces into which British India had been divided for purposes of imperial
administration. Their boundaries reflected the uneven course of imperial conquest rather than any genuine ethnic or historic divisions. For the bulk of British India, in fact, the provinces were little more than convenient clusters in which were grouped the 250 basic units of administration, the districts. Only at this level of authority did the ordinary Indian come into direct contact with the power of the British Raj (rule). The District Officer—whether officially known as “Collector” or “District Magistrate” or “Deputy Commissioner”—was all-powerful in his domain. He set and collected taxes, caught and tried offenders against the law, and did everything else that could be expected of a general factotum. The typical area over which he held sway was larger than Rhode Island but smaller than Massachusetts, with a population on the order of one million.

The several levels of administration were cemented together by the Indian Civil Service which provided the corps of highest permanent officials in the central government, the provinces, and the districts. Up to the War of 1914–18 the I. C. S. was staffed almost exclusively by Britons, many of them sons and grandsons of former East India Company officials. Upon retirement and return to their native country senior I. C. S. officers were often given key posts in the India Office in London, thereby contributing a further measure of continuity to the policy-making operations.

The Search for Friends.—While the imperial administrative framework was being tightened and revamped, even more fundamental changes were taking place in imperial social policy. Despite the success of British arms in putting down the Rebellion, both Conservative and Liberal party leaders of Britain realized that India could not be held by the sword alone. It was essential to find and cultivate groups or classes who could serve as “steadfast friends and supporters” of British rule. After reflection upon the character of the Rebellion, especially in its storm center, the region of Oudh in the heart of the Ganges Valley, British statesmen rejected a policy of relying upon and seeking direct support among the peasantry. One scant year before the Rebellion, the dynastic ruler of Oudh had been deposed and his lands annexed by the British. A land revenue settlement had at once been made directly with the occupying peasants, while the claims of tax-collectors, local chiefs, and other
would-be landlords had largely been ignored or rejected. The level of payments set by the new British administration, however, was substantially enhanced. When the Rebellion of 1857 broke out, the discontented chieftains of Oudh threw themselves behind it ardently. To the dismay of the British, who had hoped to be regarded as popular benefactors, the peasantry of Oudh followed the lead of their displaced masters and took sides with the rebels.

From this behavior the architects of imperial policy drew the conclusion that the people of Oudh and other provinces were deeply attached to their former masters and lacked the "independence of mind" to back the British against them. For the preservation of the Empire it was held to be "of greater consequence to secure the aid of the landed interest than even to deserve the gratitude of the masses of the people." Acting upon this conviction, the Government of India speedily restored the landed gentry of Oudh to their former station and confirmed their prerogatives. In the style of English country squires they were appointed magistrates, and Government officers were instructed to treat them courteously and to look upon them as "gentlemen of property and station, whose interests are identified with those of the Government, who are its natural born adherents, not opponents." Throughout the rest of British India similar steps were taken. Ranking government officials advised the landed gentry and other privileged orders of the high esteem in which they were held, and sought their advice and aid in the tasks of local administration.

The ruling princes who had remained loyal to the British crown were rewarded with what amounted to security of status. Leading imperial authorities acknowledged that but for the fidelity of Hyderabad, Gwalior, and the Sikh states of the northwest, the Rebellion might have engulfed the entire country and swept away the British Raj. Queen Victoria issued a solemn proclamation of respect for "the Rights, Dignity, and Honour of Native Princes . . ." and a simultaneous repudiation of the policy under which Governor-General Dalhousie had from 1848 to 1856 taken over the territories of one princedom after another. The climax of the post-Rebellion

policy toward the princes was reached in 1881, when the fertile and populous state of Mysore in southern India was given back to its long-dispossessed ruling family after fifty years of direct British administration.

In a related phase of post-Rebellion policy the British abandoned their role as social reformers. In an effort to bind more closely to the Empire the conservative upper classes who embodied and benefited from social and religious orthodoxy, Britain formally promised respect and protection to all religious faiths and observances. Simultaneously, army reforms frankly took as their point of departure communal divisions and regional antagonisms. In analyzing the causes of disaffection, the military authorities concluded that sufficient precautions had not been taken by the East India Company to prevent the growth of fellowship, brotherhood, and common national sentiment among the different Indian elements in the old army. Soldiers of various origins had been mixed together rather heterogeneously so that "their corners and angles and feelings and prejudices" tended to get rubbed off. To guard against such developments in the future, a guiding principle of multiple segregation—communal, caste-wise, and territorial—was recommended and adopted. Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs were not to be allowed to serve in the same companies. Furthermore, even members of the same community were to be allowed to serve only in units of the same territorial origin. The clearest statement of this basic principle of military policy was given in 1858 by the well-known administrator, Lord Elphinstone:

The safety of the great iron steamers, which are adding so much to our military power, and which are probably destined to add still more to our commercial superiority, is greatly increased by building them in compartments. I would ensure the safety of our Indian Empire by constructing our native army upon the same principle; for this purpose I would avail myself of those divisions of race and language which we find ready to our hands.12

STIRRINGS OF NATIONALISM.—By the 1870s vigilant British observers began to detect new signs of unrest. The world depression

of that decade slashed the income of the peasants who produced crops for export, while tax collections were inexorably maintained. Successive droughts helped bring years of famine to large areas. In the cities the rising classes of educated professional men and merchants began to form local and regional organizations which petitioned for the appointment of Indians to responsible public offices. Alarm ed by the outbreak of peasant riots, high government officials urged the moderate and loyal advocates of constitutional reform to unite their forces in order to guide public feeling along peaceful lines. Thus the celebrated Indian National Congress was formed in 1885 with the private blessing of the Viceroy. Its first president, Allan Octavian Hume, was an Englishman recently retired from the I. C. S.

The new organization caught on rapidly, and its provincial branches soon covered all of British India. Some of its early sessions attracted more than a thousand delegates, including Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Parsis, and a sprinkling of British merchants and retired officials. It put forward a program of mild administrative reforms intended to insure preservation of the Empire by reforming it in time from within. As a long-range goal the Congress aimed at parliamentary self-government within the imperial framework.

Governmental enthusiasm for the growing middle class forum soon cooled. Civil and military officials in up-country Oudh, Agra, and other areas where the 1857 Rebellion centered had never ceased to see mutiny around every corner. They hastened to attack the Congress as a seditious and dangerous body, a purveyor of grievances. The same Viceroy who had earlier encouraged the organization now publicly termed it a "microscopic minority." When Congress attempted at Christmas, 1888, to hold its annual session at Allahabad on the Ganges, it was refused the use of public meeting grounds. And the provincial Governor arranged to spend the holidays away from the city which was his capital. Only one year earlier, the Governor of Madras had welcomed and mixed with the delegates, and had sent his own brass band to entertain them.

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, the outstanding Muslim political and intellectual figure of the day, was much disturbed at the rise of the Congress, and enjoined his co-religionists to shun it. He had been depressed by the harsh policy pursued toward the Muslims by the
British in the decade after 1858. The authorities blamed the rising primarily upon influential classes of the Muslim community, who had attempted, so the government believed, to reestablish the Mogul Empire. After the Rebellion, Muslims were regarded as unalterably hostile to the British Raj; as such they were generally excluded from government employment and were kept out of the professions. Sir Syed set himself very early the task of reconciling the Muslims and the British. In arguing with the British for a reversal of policy, he contended that the revolt was far more than a Muslim rising, that many Muslims had remained loyal, and that wise policy could reconcile even those who had been hostile. To his Muslim brethren, he pleaded for the ending of anti-British sentiment. In spite of fierce attacks by orthodox Muslims, he went ahead to found the Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College (later called the Aligarh University, the most influential center of Muslim education in India), where advanced Western education and the religion of Islam were taught together. Convinced that British rule had brought "astonishing" advances to the people of India, Sir Syed saw the Congress as the fomenter of "unreasonable discontent." In this work Sir Syed received funds and support not only from the Muslim middle class and other advanced Muslim elements, weak as they were, but from government officials as well. Abandonment of the anti-Muslim policy was made plain to all when the Governor-General in 1877 laid the foundations of Sir Syed's college and later appointed Sir Syed to sit on his Legislative Council. To combat the Congress Sir Syed stated his views forcefully in a public address in 1887 at Lucknow. He followed this up by organizing the opponents of Congress into a "United Indian Patriotic Organization" with himself as secretary.

Sir Syed's pronouncement did not immediately deter Muslims from working with the Congress. During the succeeding two years, in fact, more Muslims than before appeared at its annual sessions, though they hailed mostly from the busy ports of Bombay and Calcutta rather than from the upper Ganges Valley where Sir Syed's influence centered. Even there a pronouncement was obtained from the outstanding Muslim divine of Lucknow that "it is not the Muslims but their official masters who were opposed to the Congress." Up to the eve of the war of 1914, however, Muslim participation was on a small scale. Sir Syed's opposition undoubtedly played a
major part in this, as did the undeniable hostility of government to Congress. The weakness of the Muslim middle classes as a whole also had a retarding effect upon their entry into political affairs generally. In particular many Muslims kept away from Congress when strife developed within it between champions of militant Hinduism and the original leaders.

The Westernized founders of Congress admired the better aspects of parliamentary government and European society, and wished to reproduce them in India. The tediously deliberative pace of their political activity failed to satisfy the younger generation of middle class politicians born and raised after the Rebellion. They lost all patience in the world depression of the 1890s, which struck India even harder than the great crisis of the 1870s.

As prices of India's exports of foods and raw materials touched new lows, another series of droughts hit the hapless peasantry. The worst famines in all of Indian history followed, which, combined with epidemics of plague, resulted in a death toll officially estimated at more than 10,000,000. In those years talk of the benefits of Western civilization seemed ironic indeed; as elsewhere in the colonial and Oriental world, fresh efforts were made in India to vindicate the superiority of indigenous traditions against the much-vaunted rational and capitalistic culture of Europe. Restless Indian nationalists now carried forward the work of reviving and popularizing India's ancient heritage of Hinduism. Others developed the cult of such figures as Sivaji, the great Maratha hero of western India whose work contributed so largely to the breaking up of the Mogul Empire. Poona, the former capital of Sivaji's empire, and Calcutta became centers of rituals, festivals, and gymnastic societies, which were extremely popular among middle class students.

In response to repeated Indian pleas for increased participation in government, three successive Acts of Parliament in the first three decades after 1858 provided for the appointment of a few Indians to the Viceroy's Legislative Council, the election of some members of municipal and provincial councils, and later the indirect election of a minority of the Viceroy's Legislative Council. During the same years a few Indians were admitted to posts in the subordinate ranks of the Civil Service. This disappointing rate of progress led the younger nationalists, particularly in Bengal, to call
for large-scale agitation and even the use of force. Alarmed at the militancy and potential dangers of the new doctrines, the government revived and utilized long-forgotten ordinances, including an authorization to deport any Indian from his own country without trial or public charges.

A drastic attempt to provide a counterpoise to the "rapidly growing strength of the educated Hindu community" was combined with a long overdue administrative reform when Lord Curzon in 1905 halved the huge, sprawling, province of Bengal. Rather than following any linguistic or historical principles, Curzon carried the dividing line right through the heart of the traditionally united Bengali-speaking area. The predominantly Muslim eastern and northern districts were proclaimed a separate province, whose first governor, Sir Bampfylde Fuller, jocularly remarked that he had two wives, one Hindu and one Muslim, and the latter was his favorite. Popular outrage against the partition of Bengal exploded into a six-year long campaign which proceeded rapidly from meetings and parades to boycotts of British goods and assassination of officials. Politically, the movement developed the most anti-imperial slogans since the Rebellion, with swaraj (self-rule) the chief demand. As unrest spread to the Punjab, the Government ordered further curtailment of the rights of press and assembly and sentenced opponents of partition to long-term deportation.

Right in the middle of the antipartition agitation, Lord Minto, Curzon's successor as Governor-General, received an impressive delegation of several dozen Muslim chieftains, landed magnates, and others of great wealth or station, headed by the Agha Khan. The deputation asked that the Muslims be considered a single bloc with interests distinct from the rest of the body politic. They prayed the Viceroy for the introduction of a separate Muslim electorate in the constitutional changes then contemplated. Lord Minto replied on the spot that he was "entirely in accord" with the general principle proposed and guaranteed that their rights would be respected. Capitalizing on the success of their mission, the members of the delegation founded at the close of 1906 the All-India Muslim League. Like that of the Congress two decades earlier their program began with a solemn profession of loyalty to the Empire. Their chief aim
was to defend and further the political rights of Muslims, whose
needs they undertook to voice to the Government “in temperate
language.” Alongside of this goal, but subordinate to it, they re-
corded a desire to promote friendly feelings between the Muslims
and the other communities of India.

In London, where Parliament was discussing the proposed re-
forms, Lord Morley, the Secretary of State for India, explained the
core of his policy to the House of Lords. In India, he stated, there
were three classes of people to be considered: the small group of
irreconcilable extremists who nursed “fantastic dreams that some
day they will drive us out of India”; secondly, the advocates of
self-government ("colonial autonomy") and lastly, the would-be
cooperators who sought only a larger share in the administration
of India. The essence of the reforms was to draw the second class,
the advocates of "colonial autonomy, into the third class, who will
be content with being admitted to a fair and full co-operation." In
short, Morley announced he would march forward “with unfalter-
ing repression on the one hand and vigour and good faith in re-
form on the other. . . .”

Finally passed in 1909, the Morley-Minto reforms permitted
members of the provincial and central legislatures to criticize the
British administrators of India more freely than in the past, but re-
frained from giving the legislatures any authority whatsoever to
control the actions of those administrators. As Lord Minto had
promised, the principle of communal representation was formally
adopted. The number of members of the legislatures was greatly in-
creased largely to provide places for special representatives of the
Muslims, wealthy landlords, and the European and Indian mercan-
tile communities. The disproportionate representation allotted to
specially favored groups provoked the foremost organ of British
opinion in India, the Statesman of Calcutta, to remark that the Re-
forms Scheme “amounts to little else than the provision for includ-
ing in the Legislative Councils more landowners and more Moham-
medans.”

Meanwhile the antipartition movement led by the irreconcilables
gained in strength. In 1911 on the accession of George V to the
throne the reunion of Bengal was suddenly announced. Simultane-
ously, the capital of India and residence of the Viceroy were shifted from Calcutta to Delhi—a center of Muslim influence and the former headquarters of the Moguls.

Muslim reaction to the reunion of Bengal—a measure prepared in secret and sprung from them by surprise—was one of shock and indignation, which soon grew among the educated middle classes into a wave of anti-British sentiment. Prominent Muslim writers now undertook a passionate vindication of Islam (a liberalized Islam) against the supposed superiority of the West. They rushed to the defense of such Islamic countries as Persia and Turkey (the “sword of Islam”) which were seen as the victims of Western imperialism. From criticism of Britain abroad, Muslim publicists moved swiftly to a nationalist position within India. The period of unqualified loyalty of the Muslim League to the British was brought to an end by the adoption in 1913 of a plank calling for “self-government” for India.

The wartime hope.—The World War of 1914–18, with its severe economic drain upon India and its ideological identification of the Allies with democracy and national self-determination brought in its train vastly increased discontent at the continuance of India’s subject status. Neither extensive application of punitive measures nor limited concessions in the direction of representative government succeeded in preventing the growth in the immediate post-war years of the first real challenge to imperial rule since the Rebellion. Little hint of the conflict to come was evidenced in 1914 when the onset of European hostilities evoked gratifying expressions of loyalty to Britain from the leaders of the Congress and the Muslim League, as well as from the princes and other conservative elements. After a quarter of a century of aloofness, British Governors in the early war years resumed the practice of honoring Congress sessions with their official presence. Official statements and private intimations encouraged the widespread belief that if India aided generously in the prosecution of the war she would be suitably rewarded with a new and favorable constitutional settlement.

The most influential Muslim writers and journalists held apart from the new wave of good feeling. When they persisted in expressing pro-Turkish sentiments and in poking fun at British war propaganda, their newspapers were shut down and they themselves interned. Other small groups of revolutionary-minded nationalists
seized the opportunity to obtain aid and arms from Turkey and Germany with which they plotted to overthrow the British Raj. In the Punjab, which was the chief army recruiting ground, the heavy pressure exerted by government officials to raise “voluntary” loans and contributions and to enlist large drafts of “volunteer” soldiers occasioned deep resentment. A conspiratorial organization known as the Ghadr (Revolt) Party developed among the Punjab peasantry and received guidance and aid of emigrant Sikh communities in far-away California and British Columbia. The severe measures employed to break up the Ghadr and similar secret societies drew popular sympathy to the revolutionary currents. In their 1916 sessions at Lucknow, the Congress and the Muslim League reaffirmed their support for the British war effort, but called for an end to repression and release of political prisoners. At the same time the two organizations initialed an agreement on the form of government for India which they hoped the shortly anticipated constitutional revisions would provide.

The imperial authorities realized that the pace of reform would have to be speeded up or it would lag dangerously behind the march of popular sentiment in India. In August, 1917, the Secretary of State for India, Edwin S. Montagu, made his famous declaration to the House of Commons that Britain’s aim in India was “the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realization of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire.” Shortly thereafter Montagu departed for India to consult with the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford; the outcome of their deliberations was the Montagu-Chelmsford Report of 1918 which became the basis for the Government of India Act of 1919.

Montagu’s efforts to cultivate the support of the moderate nationalists met a cool reception from British officials in India, whose great concern was to nip in the bud what they conceived as a growing threat to the very structure of imperial rule. While Montagu was still in India, the Government appointed a special committee to advise on measures for dealing with “criminal conspiracies.” This Rowlatt Committee in due course recommended a new set of seditious laws extending the Government’s expiring wartime powers and providing for peacetime trial of political prisoners before special tri-
bunals without benefit of counsel, jury, or the right to appeal even against sentences of death. The Rowlatt proposals were instantly denounced by all shades of nationalist opinion. Early in 1919, however, while Montagu’s reforms were still undergoing the lengthy process of parliamentary consideration, the Government of India introduced and passed one of the Rowlatt Bills. The speedy enactment of this drastic and unpopular statute gave rise to suspicion that India’s wartime contributions and aspirations were to be disregarded.

**Gandhi’s Doctrine of Non-Violence.**—Initiative in organizing protests against the Rowlatt Bills was seized by a leader newly risen to prominence in nationalist circles, Mohandas K. Gandhi. Gandhi was a native of Gujarat in western India, where for several generations his forbears had served as chief ministers for some of the small Indian states on the Kathiawad peninsula. After completing his legal education in England, he set up practice in South Africa. There he attracted world-wide attention as the moving spirit of a series of campaigns by the resident Indians against political and economic discrimination. In the course of these struggles Gandhi developed his renowned technique of *satyagraha* or passive resistance.

Gandhi’s basic aim was to make “religious use of politics” for promoting an inner spiritual revival among men. His chief and abiding object of attack was not so much any one of the institutions of society as the evil embedded in men’s minds. His method itself was only one part of a whole philosophy of non-violence, derived from Tolstoy’s pacifism and Jesus’ “Sermon on the Mount,” as well as from the ancient Hindu concept of *ahimsa* (non-injury to living creatures).

*Satyagraha* (a coined word literally meaning “truth force” or “soul force”) is the type of pressure which can be applied to remedy insufferable conditions without exceeding the bounds of non-violence. A Gandhian *satyagraha* campaign does not begin until a vow has been taken first by the leaders and then their followers to “adopt poverty, follow truth, cultivate fearlessness,” and “observe perfect chastity.” After this self-purification, the *satyagraabis* vow not to submit to the injustice against which they are protesting, and to endure cheerfully all penalties for their refusal. The success of

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this extraordinary program in dramatizing the plight of the Indians in South Africa, and obtaining some concessions from the authorities was due in part to the strength of Gandhi’s personal influence. An indefatigable worker, a gifted speaker and writer, he had limitless confidence in his own beliefs and unusual powers of persuasion.

Returning to India during the war years with his South African laurels, Gandhi gained new stature by conducting two important struggles among the peasantry. Under his leadership indigo-growing cultivators of Champaran, Bihar, won release from enforced planting of the dyestuff, and overtaxed peasants of the Kaira district of Gujarat gained a tax reduction. He also helped to persuade the Ahmedabad textile-mill owners to pay higher wages to their striking factory hands by resorting to a fast. Since he believed a large part of India’s economic ills were due to the growth of a factory system, he introduced and popularized the idea of a revival of hand-spinning in peasant households. In the political field he soon took his place in the top ranks of the Congress.

The Rowlatt Bills shocked Gandhi to the core. He believed that inevitably they would wither the projected Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms that the latter would emerge as a “whitened sepulchre.” He called for passive resistance to the new law and designated April 6, 1919, as a day of protest and mourning, to be marked by a country-wide hartal (shutdown of shops and business—an ancient political technique in India). The hartal was an extraordinary success. At meetings in some of the most famous mosques, Hindu leaders were invited to appear and address the throngs. Hindus and Muslims publicly accepted water from each other. An atmosphere of high tension between the people and the authorities erupted here and there into rioting. Apprehensive officials, particularly in the Punjab, directed swift and severe pacification measures. Gandhi, upset at the outbreak of violence, concluded that he had erred in calling upon untrained people to offer satyagraha. A week after the hartal he called off the passive resistance. Meanwhile, the “restoration of order” in the Punjab proceeded. At Amritsar, the holy city of the Sikhs, soldiers were ordered to rake with gunfire a peaceful crowd of unarmed men, women, and children, in an enclosed square. The commanding officer later testified that he had aimed at “producing a sufficient moral effect” throughout the province.
THE SWELLING TIDE OF DISCONTENT.—Details of the Amritsar massacre and the other happenings in the Punjab seeped out through heavy censorship to rankle in the minds of all Indians. The substance of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms, finally promulgated from the throne at the close of 1919, fell far short of offering the "Home Rule" for which the nationalists had campaigned. While providing, for the first time, a partly elected central legislature the new constitution left the prerogatives of the Secretary of State and the Governor-General almost intact. In the provinces the governors and other officials were to continue to exercise full authority over land revenue, police, and other key departments. A separate sphere, including such subjects as health, education, and fisheries, was handed over to the provincial legislatures as a trial of "self-rule."

A belated government investigation of Amritsar eventuated in a report, issued in March, 1920, which Gandhi promptly characterized as "thinly disguised official whitewash." In May, feelings of indignation among India's Muslims rose to new heights because of the draft Treaty of Sèvres which the Allies, led by Britain, decided to impose upon Turkey. Under this treaty and related undertakings Turkey was to be partitioned among the powers and to lose all semblance of authority over Mecca, Medina, and Jerusalem. The Indians argued that these holy places should not be allowed to pass completely out of the hands of the Caliph (head) of Islam, a post claimed by the Sultan of Turkey. For India's Muslims the Khilafat agitation—as the activities on behalf of the Caliph came to be known—was both an attempt to soften the drastic penalties inflicted upon an Islamic nation and an expression of anti-imperial sentiments. To Gandhi, the Khilafat was not only a just demand in itself, but also an issue which furnished "an opportunity of uniting Hindus and Mohammedans as would not arise in a hundred years."

Parallel to the mounting political dissatisfaction in the Congress and in the Khilafat movement, there occurred unprecedented stirrings among the underprivileged populace in city and country. The first half of 1920 witnessed the birth of the labor movement in India, as shown in a wave of industrial strikes involving one and a half million workers. Simultaneously, in many parts of India the desperate peasantry formed local movements against oppressive landlords and sought counsel and support from nationalist leaders who had
gained public fame. In Allahabad, Jawaharlal Nehru, young son of the wealthy nationalist lawyer who was then president of the Congress, was compelled by Oudh peasants to come and see for himself the inhuman condition to which they had been reduced by the landlords. He found “the whole countryside afire with enthusiasm and full of a strange excitement.”

This high pitch of hope and excitement was part of and related to the immense tide of unrest and nationalism which swept the colonial world all the way from Morocco to China in the wake of World War I. The world economic crisis of 1920, which brought a ruinous fall in farm prices to the Indian countryside and a wave of unemployment in the cities, added to the reservoir of dissatisfaction.

Of the Indian leaders of the day, Gandhi was unique. The bulk of the nationalist leaders moved primarily among the middle classes and were familiar only with middle-class problems; in Nehru’s words they were largely cut off from their own people and “lived and worked and agitated in a little world apart from them.” To Gandhi it was clear that the people were moved by a deep fury at the unredressed wrongs done to the Punjab and at the savage treatment being meted out to Turkey; and it was also obvious to him how deep-seated was the unrest among the peasantry and urban labor. He knew that to organize a mass movement under such conditions was fraught with risk; but he felt that “the risk of supineness in the face of a grave issue is infinitely greater than the danger of violence ensuing from organizing non-cooperation. To do nothing is to invite violence for a certainty.”

In the spring of 1920, therefore, Gandhi publicly pronounced British rule “a curse to India,” and termed it “satanic.” He called for a new satyagraha campaign in the form of “civil disobedience” or “noncooperation” with the Government. Satyagraha was to be applied in four successive stages. In the first, Indians were to give up all titles and renounce all honors they had received from their imperial masters. The second and main stage called for a triple boycott of the government legislatures, law courts, and schools. This was intended to make the functioning of the government collapse; at the same time, to strengthen India’s home industries, foreign goods were to be boycotted, and hand-spinning and hand-weaving
were to be encouraged. As a “distant” third stage, to be employed only if the first two were not efficacious, Gandhi listed withdrawal or resignation of soldiers and policemen from government service; fourth and lastly came the suspension of payment of taxes.

**CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE, 1920-1922.**—The main features of Gandhi’s program were endorsed during the summer of 1920 by the Muslim leaders of the Khilafat agitation. The Khilafat leaders, steeped in the martial traditions of a militant faith, held no brief for nonviolence. They accepted Gandhi’s doctrine as an expedient in order to get the immense non-Muslim backing for their cause which Gandhi held out to them. Later, and in the face of important opposition, Gandhi persuaded the Congress to adopt his plan of campaign. The worldly and wealthy leaders of the Congress prided themselves on their modernity and sophistication. Gandhi’s asceticism and piety, his rejection of Western science and medicine as well as material progress, were alien to their temper. But they realized, partly because of Gandhi’s own work, that India was passing through “a revolutionary period” and that their older techniques would not suffice. In part Congress accepted nonviolence as a policy necessitated by the fact that the masses of the Indian people had long been disarmed by law and were therefore unacquainted with the use of arms. The Muslim League followed the lead of the Congress, and both organizations changed their basic goals from self-government inside the Empire to “the attainment of Swarajya by the people of India by all legitimate and peaceful means.”

Leadership of the noncooperation campaign was assumed by the Congress and exercised by a top committee of fifteen, the “Working Committee,” headed by Gandhi. For the first time the Congress organized itself on a “grass-roots” basis, establishing branches or units right down to the village level. The Congress thus lost the overwhelmingly urban character which it had had during its previous thirty-five years of existence and became the first modern mass political party in India.

Gandhi scored his first important success in November, 1920, when the bulk of the electorate boycotted the first elections held under the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms. From this he moved on to the initial stages of the noncooperation campaign. Students all over the country responded eagerly to his call to boycott govern-
ment schools and colleges. Professors deserted their posts and joined
with nationalist leaders to found a number of new universities,
notably the Benares Hindu University and the Jamia Millia Islamia
near Delhi. Huge bonfires of imported British cloth dramatized
the boycott of foreign goods. Large sums were quickly raised to
support the campaign, women throwing in their jewelry for the
cause. In the cities militant Congress and Khilafat youth organized
themselves as volunteers; Hindus and Muslims together, they paraded
through the streets in large numbers, shouting slogans and picketing
shops selling foreign cloth. They paid scant attention to government
declarations that this was illegal. By the end of 1921 most of the
Congress and Khilafat leaders were in jail. Heavy pressure was
brought to bear on Gandhi, particularly by the remaining Khilafat
spokesmen, to intensify the campaign by moving on to mass civil
disobedience, including nonpayment of taxes. Some even proposed
abandonment of nonviolence, which irritated Gandhi intensely. At
long last, he served an ultimatum on the Government in February,
1922, that unless the authorities released the volunteers from prison
and desisted from “virulent” repression, he would begin mass civil
disobedience in Bardoli, a small subdistrict of Gujarat.

Just at this critical moment word came from Chauri Chaura, a
tiny hamlet in the United Provinces, that peasants who had been
attacked by the police had turned upon the constables, forced them
to withdraw to their station and set fire to the building, thereby
burning or beating to death 22 persons. This news Gandhi treated
as a direct, personal, divine warning, and he at once persuaded the
Congress Working Committee to call off the entire noncooperation
movement in all of India. The Government took advantage of the
ensuing confusion to arrest Gandhi himself on charges of promoting
“disaffection” and sentenced him to six years’ imprisonment.

DECLINE AND REVIVAL OF THE CONGRESS.—The abrupt suspension
of civil disobedience brought mass political activity to a sudden and
staggering halt. Cooperation between the Congress and the Khilafat
movement evaporated in an atmosphere of bitter mutual recrimina-
tions. Erstwhile lieutenants of Gandhi fanned the flames of com-
munal rivalry and disorder by heading antagonistic Hindu and
Muslim proselytizing organizations. The Khilafat campaign suffered
a final and crowning humiliation in 1924 when the Turks under
Kemal Pasha abolished the office of Caliphate, and banished the deposed Caliph from the country. Within the Congress, which was greatly reduced in numbers, the influence of conservative and orthodox Hindu elements rose.

Gandhi, upon his release from jail in 1924, turned his attention to social rather than political problems. He campaigned against untouchability, for Hindu-Muslim unity, and for a program of rural reconstruction based on spinning and other village industries. During the same years Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose, a fiery Bengali, emerged as the leaders of a new left wing in the Congress. Nehru openly avowed himself a socialist, and he and Bose devoted much time to the student movement and to the problems of industrial labor.

The imperial authorities had been deeply perturbed by the scope of Congress influence shown in the civil disobedience movement. In the consequent readjustment of policy few opportunities were overlooked for creating or strengthening opponents of the Congress. The princes, who had been kept separate and disunited in the first half-century after the Rebellion of 1857, were now invited to join an advisory Chamber of Princes which met for the first time in 1921, right in the midst of the noncooperation campaign. In the same year the Government appointed special representatives of the “Untouchables” to seats in the provincial legislative councils. To dissuade the chief Indian business interests from backing the Congress with their prestige and funds, the Government for the first time levied protective tariffs on a number of commodities, beginning with steel. The principle of communal representation, under which the Muslims already received a disproportionate share of elective seats, was extended to the recruitment of personnel for the government services. In an attempt to relieve peasant discontent a number of officials undertook village reform activities emphasizing better farming methods and cooperative credit societies.

The 1919 Act embodying the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms required that at the end of ten years a parliamentary committee reconsider the working of the reforms. In the fall of 1927 a review commission was appointed consisting exclusively of British members of Parliament and headed by Sir John Simon. Nationalist opinion in India was quickly beside itself with anger at the idea that a
jury of seven Britons was to decide India's constitutional future. When the Simon Commission came to India, Congress took the lead in organizing a boycott against it. Outstanding Indian political figures, Moderates and Muslim Leaguers as well as Congressmen, refused invitations to confer with the visitors. Wherever the members of the Commission traveled, they were greeted by hartals and strikes, and their ears resounded with the cry shouted in unison by enormous crowds of demonstrators, "Simon go back! Simon go back!"

The reaction to the Simon Commission produced a great awakening. Already both agrarian and industrial unrest were on the up-grade. The political influence of the trade unions was reflected in a growing left-wing demand within the Congress for a new all-out struggle to win complete independence. At the Congress session in Calcutta at Christmas, 1928, there was a unique demonstration by mill hands. Tens of thousands of them marched in orderly and disciplined procession to the meeting grounds; took over the platform despite appeals from Bose and Jawaharlal Nehru; proclaimed their support of complete independence; and marched themselves off.

The following year a group of several dozen leading trade union officials—some of whom were well-known Communists—were arrested, whisked away to the small cantonment town of Meerut, and tried for "conspiring to deprive the King-Emperor of the sovereignty of British India." Independence-minded Congress leaders and the Indian public generally took offense at the flimsy nature of the case against the prisoners, who were in fact charged with no overt act, and contributed generously to their defense.

As the work of the Simon Commission drew to an end, it was announced that a Round Table Conference would be held in London. Various delegates from India and from the princely states would be invited by the British Government to sit together with representatives of the British political parties. When the Viceroy, Lord Halifax, was unable to give assurances that the conference would actually proceed to frame a Dominion Constitution for India, the Congress refused to participate.

The rapid onset in 1929 of the world economic depression strengthened and deepened the militant tide within the Congress. Reluctantly the older leaders came to the conclusion that another open struggle was unavoidable. Gandhi felt that there was a serious
“danger of unbridled but secret violence breaking out in many parts of India owing to understandable and pardonable impatience on the part of many youths.” Opposed to this “insignificant” but growing party of unorganized violence stood the might of the British Government in India, which Gandhi termed the party of “organized violence.” The conviction grew upon him that “to sit still would be to give rein to both the forces above-mentioned.”

**CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE AGAIN, 1930–1934.**—With Gandhi at the helm, the Congress annual session at the end of 1929 adopted “complete independence” as its creed and authorized the launching of a new civil disobedience movement in which nonpayment of taxes was explicitly sanctioned. To celebrate the new creed and arouse the people for the new struggle, the Congress Working Committee named January 26, 1930, as Indian Independence Day. At immense meetings held all over India on that date people pledged allegiance to a Declaration of Independence which began as follows:

We believe that it is the inalienable right of the Indian people, as of any other people, to have freedom and to enjoy the fruits of their toil and have the necessities of life, so that they may have full opportunities of growth. We believe also that if any Government deprives a people of these rights and oppresses them, the people have a further right to alter it or abolish it. The British Government in India has not only deprived the Indian people of their freedom but has based itself on the exploitation of the masses, and has ruined India economically, politically, culturally, and spiritually. We believe therefore that India must sever the British connection and attain Purna Swaraj or Complete Independence.

In its broadest outlines the second civil disobedience campaign of 1930–1934 employed the same devices as its predecessor of the previous decade. Chief emphasis was laid on the boycott of government offices and schools, and on the shunning of liquor, opium, and, especially, foreign cloth. Gandhi launched the campaign in March, 1930, by publicly defying the hated government monopoly of salt. At the head of a group of picked disciples from his retreat near Ahmadabad, he marched southward to the Arabian Sea. On its shores he flouted the law by making salt, using kettles to boil out the sea water. At this signal the various boycotts were put into operation all over the country with remarkable effectiveness. Popular action, however, went far beyond them. Without waiting for sanc-
tion from above, peasants in the United Provinces, Gujarat, and in western Bengal began "no-rent" movements; in eastern Bengal local terrorists raided the Chittagong armory and made off with much ammunition; and in the key city of Peshawar on the northwest frontier, the townspeople took complete control of the place and actually ran it for ten days.

The magnitude of the mass response to Gandhi's call for civil disobedience alarmed the authorities, who in May, 1930, placed Gandhi himself under arrest. This set off a fresh series of hartals and strikes, the most spectacular of which occurred in Sholapur, an important textile town in the southern part of Bombay province. There the aroused mill workers followed the example of Peshawar by setting up a regime of their own, yielding control only after martial law was proclaimed. Throughout the rest of 1930 the Government mobilized all its resources to break the Congress movement by repression: the order of the day included police charges on Congress Volunteers, firings on unarmed crowds, punitive expeditions into the countryside, confiscation of the property of Congress and Congressmen, and mass imprisonment. All these measures failed to bring the Congress to terms; its staying power was stiffened by the extraordinary activity of women of all classes, educated and illiterate. Casting off their traditional restraint, they threw themselves into the fight, many taking the lead of great processions. In sustained resistance to the authorities first place was taken by the city of Bombay. Its businessmen directed a comprehensive boycott of all British enterprise, while its militant industrial workers, the most highly organized labor group in India, again and again challenged the police and the military for command of the streets. In their parades the red flag of the trade unions flew side by side with the Congress flag, and in some places even overshadowed it.

While the civil disobedience movement was under way, the Round Table Conference opened in London. In view of the imposing strength which the Congress was demonstrating all over India, the British Government came to feel that the whole elaborate process of constitution-making inaugurated by the appointment of the Simon Commission three years earlier would be jeopardized, unless the Congress could be persuaded to take part. Accordingly, in January, 1931, the Viceroy set Gandhi free and negotiated a pact
with him under which Gandhi called off temporarily the Civil Disobedience Movement and agreed to attend the next session of the Round Table Conference.

This suspension of civil disobedience had a frustrating and demoralizing effect in the Congress ranks quite similar to the termination of the previous campaign in 1922. These feelings were deepened during the course of Gandhi's fruitless visit to London as the sole representative of the Congress at the second Round Table Conference. Shortly after his return Gandhi himself was rearrested and Congress was declared an outlaw organization. The Government spared nothing in its efforts to break up the Congress; arrests far exceeded all previous records and were accompanied by systematic confiscation of Congress funds and property. While the Government was disappointed in its hopes of putting a speedy end to civil disobedience, it did disorganize the Congress further and keep it on the defensive. Eventually the immense mass civil disobedience of 1930 petered out into civil disobedience on a scattered, individual basis, and then was terminated altogether in 1934.

A Mass Base for the Congress.—The debacle of the second civil disobedience campaign caused many nationalists to lose confidence in the older heads and policies of the Congress. A reassessment of values and objectives took place, accompanied by a search for a more effective program. This was particularly true among the left wing, where discontent and more than a trace of disillusionment had already been manifested in the twenties. The significant new development in the middle thirties was the determined effort of the left to found or strengthen independent organizations among the peasantry and urban labor and to make them the mass base for the Congress.

The trade union movement, which had been disrupted and disunited during the protracted Meerut conspiracy trial, emerged with renewed vigor in 1934. The strikes of that year in part reflected the appearance of a more militant leadership—in which, as in the twenties, a number of Communists were prominent—and in part were simply a phase of the wave of industrial unrest which swept many countries in the aftermath of the great depression.
National federation of all the union groups was achieved in part by 1938 under the aegis of the All-India Trade Union Congress, and completed in 1940.

Perhaps the most distinctive popular development of the thirties was the formation for the first time of a countrywide peasant league. Various local organizations of poor cultivators had already campaigned against evictions and for reduction of rents, debts, and taxes. Long-term goals, including the abolition of landlordism, the cancellation of peasant debts, and a revolutionary redistribution of land, were added when the local bodies joined together in 1936 to form the All-India Kisan Sabha (peasant league). Its founders (mostly left-wing Congressmen) stressed the need for close cooperation of the peasantry with the national movement for independence. They argued that, compared with the peasantry, the landlords and moneylenders were few and weak, and would not last long if they were not supported by the power of the British authorities in India. In enrolled membership the peasant league quickly outdistanced the organized urban workers; its annual conferences drew many thousands of delegates from all over the country.

Inside the Congress itself the left wing began to operate as a more coherent group than in the twenties. Militant Gandhians who had moved on from working for rural reform to an interest in socialism and a demand for thoroughgoing agrarian change cooperated with the new Congress Socialist Party. This was founded in 1934 by a group of students and intellectuals whose aim was to persuade the Congress to adopt as its goal not only the ending of empire but its replacement by a democratic and socialist society. With this objective the Congress Socialists restricted their membership to individuals already enrolled in the Congress, and made particular efforts to win over to their viewpoint prominent personages in the Congress hierarchy. At the same time the Congress Socialists participated actively in many of the organizing drives of the unions and the peasant leagues. The Communists, a party proclaimed illegal and hunted down by the Government, could not operate as a public group, but a small nucleus continued to carry on underground. Attacks upon them by the imperial authorities brought them a measure of popular sympathy. A number of Communists took part as indi-
viduals in \textit{kisan} and labor activities, and a few held places in some of the councils of the National Congress.

In 1936 Jawaharlal Nehru, the foremost public exponent of the left trend, was elected Congress President. Nehru proposed the collective affiliation of the peasant leagues and trade unions to the Congress. The older Congress leaders, while believing in uplift of the poor, had mixed feelings about the growth of organizations of workers and peasants under independent leadership, and strongly opposed the idea of bringing them into the Congress as units. Nehru's proposal was defeated, but the Congress incorporated many of the basic demands of the peasant leagues and the trade unions in its own agrarian and labor program.

On this radical social platform the Congress contested the first elections held under the Act of 1935. The new constitution had in the main been written arbitrarily by the British authorities after the end of the Round Table Conferences; some changes were inserted while the measure ran the gauntlet of a Parliament in which Winston Churchill and other imperial diehards attacked the Cabinet for every modification proposed in the prevailing system of autocratic, centralized rule. The most important innovation was contained in provisions which extended the range of authority of the provincial legislatures and the popular ministries responsible to them. The provincial franchise was enlarged to include one quarter of the adult population. As a balance, the new scheme provided both at the center and in the provinces for a formidable extension of the system of communal and special electorates. A section slated to go into effect at a future date outlined means for joining British India and the princely states into a countrywide federation, in which the states would enjoy representation and power out of all proportion to their population, area, or resources.

Congress declared that its aim in seeking office was "not to submit to this Constitution or to cooperate with it, but to combat it, both inside and outside the legislatures, so as to end it." The polls held early in 1937 after the greatest electoral campaign in Indian history completely confirmed the Congress as the only major political force in the country. It received nearly 70 percent of the votes cast, while all other parties were restricted at best to purely local successes.
The assumption of office in seven provinces by the Congress had an immense psychological effect upon the people. In the eyes of the peasantry, Nehru tell us,

Government was no longer an unknown and intangible monster, separated from him by innumerable layers of officials, whom he could not easily approach and much less influence, and who were bent on extracting as much out of him as possible. The seats of the mighty were now occupied by men he had often seen and heard and talked to. Sometimes they had been in prison together, and there was a feeling of comradeship between them.  

Feelings of exuberance spread, carrying along the message and raising the prestige of the Congress. Its membership grew amazingly, from some 600,000 late in 1936 to more than 3,000,000 early in 1938 and 5,000,000 in 1939. Of these, however, only one out of thirty were Muslims.

The initial measures of the new ministries were aimed at relief of the peasantry and improvement in the conditions of urban labor. But they were far from the “thorough change” promised in Congress electioneering. In part this was because the Act of 1935 had parcelled out a limited share of authority to the provincial ministries, leaving the substance of power largely in the hands of the Governor-General, the provincial governors, and the civil services. In part, however, the gap between promise and performance resulted from the character of the Congress ministries. They were composed chiefly of seasoned figures in the Congress, who had been designated for their positions by the conservative and right-wing Congressmen who ran the party machinery. The latter had many ties of friendship and kinship with large landlords and wealthy industrialists, and tended to look with disfavor upon popular pressure for drastic restrictions on these vested interests.

The inevitable clash between the ministries and the mass organizations did not take long to develop. Some of the same ministers who upon entering office had received popular acclaim for releasing numerous political prisoners—a few of whom had been kept in jail since the first civil disobedience movement back in 1920—now shocked the country by using the kind of repressive measures which

they had previously condemned. In certain instances police were ordered to open fire on processions of peasants or used to help break strikes. Constructive measures, particularly in the field of education and health, did not awaken the enthusiasm that they might have, when they were accompanied in Bombay, for example, by a severe abridgment of labor's right to strike, and in Bihar, by a public pact between the ministry and the landlords.

The discontent within the Congress erupted in dramatic fashion in 1939. By that time the left wing groups had lost their patience with the provincial governments. They demanded an end to the policy of "drift," and called for a new mass struggle. In an unprecedented show of strength the Congress left reelected Subhas Bose to the presidency, defeating the candidate of the conservatives. But the old guard retained control of the Working Committee and were soon able to force Bose's resignation.

REBIRTH OF THE MUSLIM LEAGUE.—The abrupt termination of civil disobedience by Gandhi in 1922 had separated from the Congress the great body of Muslims organized in the Khilafat movement, and the gulf was widened by the communal controversies of the twenties. In contrast to the united effort of 1920–22, Muslim participation in the second civil disobedience campaign was on a significantly smaller scale. With the exception of certain groups in the North West Frontier Province and in the Punjab, Muslim organizations generally stood aside. In part this occurred because the Congress, despite its secular platform and noncommunal structure, could not escape the markedly Hindu flavor of Gandhi's leadership and doctrines. The latter inspired a distrust among Muslims which was not dispelled by the prominent place in the Congress hierarchy occupied by a number of staunch Muslim nationalists.

In its great election drive of 1936–1937, the Congress made no special effort to appeal to the Muslims. Of the hundreds of seats set aside for the Muslims under the system of special electorates, the Congress ran candidates for little more than one-tenth. Its neglect was soon capitalized by the Muslim League, which took a fresh lease on life during the election campaign.

The president of the League at this time and the guiding spirit of its transformation into a great popular party was a prominent Muslim politician, Mahomed Ali Jinnah. Like Gandhi a Gujarati
in origin and a barrister by profession, Jinnah first entered public life in 1906 as private secretary to the then president of the Congress. Jinnah’s marked abilities brought him rapid fame. Soon after 1912, when the League shifted its course to nationalism, Jinnah was invited to take part in its deliberations. As an outstanding figure in both the Congress and the League, he was dubbed “ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity” in recognition of his efforts to bring the two organizations together. His election to the League presidency in 1916 led to the conclusion of a Congress-League “pact” to press for a common program of constitutional reform.

The climate of the Congress in 1920 under Gandhi’s ascendancy became increasingly uncongenial to Jinnah. He argued that Gandhi’s essentially spiritual program would not work, that nonviolence was suited more for saints than for ordinary mortals. Like other moderates of the day who did not seem fully to appreciate the depth of popular discontent, Jinnah believed that opposition to the Government should be expressed through proper legislative channels. When Congress proceeded with plans for mass action, he withdrew.

In the great upsurge of nationalist struggle that followed, the Muslim League was completely overshadowed by the Khilafat and noncooperation movements. When it emerged from obscurity in 1924, Jinnah was again called upon to serve as president. As in 1916 his principal object was to achieve an agreement on constitutional demands among the leaders of the various Indian parties and factions. But the effort came to nought and Jinnah retired to London, where he later attended the Round Table Conferences. Upon his return to India in 1934 he once again took up the reins of the League, and started it on the road to mass leadership of India’s Muslims.

At the polls in 1937 the newly revived League did rather poorly, gathering only a small fraction of the total Muslim votes. But the aftermath of the elections brought Jinnah fresh and powerful allies. The immense popular support won by the Congress under a radical land and labor program astounded a wide range of conservative elements. Uneasiness affected landlords, title-holders and princes, Hindu as well as Muslim, and concern spread among the British business community, particularly in Calcutta. These various groups came to see in the League a possible alternative outlet for the energies of one section of the rapidly awakening peasants and townsfolk.
From the frightened vested interests the League was able to raise a war chest, with which it proceeded like the Congress in 1929 to establish a network of local chapters in villages, rural districts and urban areas. The program which the League presented to the Muslim public reflected both the Muslim desire for the freedom of India and the Muslim demand for reassurance on the status of their own community. It set as a goal the establishment in India of "a federation of free democratic states" in which full safeguards would be provided for all minorities. Socially, the League announced its concern for popular welfare and for "means of social, economic and political uplift of the Musalmans." Lest this plank seem too radical to the wealthy backers of the League, Jinnah simultaneously decried talk by Nehru and other Congressmen of India's hunger and poverty; this, said Jinnah, was "intended to lead the people toward socialistic and communistic ideas for which India is far from prepared."

The chief appeal of the League was to middle class Muslims in the towns. To them the League announced that rule by the Congress in the provinces meant Hindu rule. All lucrative positions, contracts, and special subsidies would go to Congress supporters, while Muslims would be relegated to menial posts. To Muslim peasants the League explained that the half-hearted and hesitant manner in which the Congress was putting into effect its radical agrarian program was due to a desire to protect Hindu landlords. No opportunity was lost to ascribe to the Congress a policy of keeping the Muslim community politically and economically backward. Islam was depicted as in immediate danger of destruction.

The League campaign proved highly effective in the United Provinces and Bihar, which contained eleven million Muslims, forming a small but important part of the population. Hundreds of new branches were opened and tens of thousands of new members enrolled. In the Muslim majority areas Jinnah succeeded in recruiting to the League banner the British-favored conservative Muslim premiers who headed the ministries of Bengal and the Punjab. With this added backing and prestige the League proclaimed itself in June, 1938, "the one and only authoritative and representative organization of the Indian Muslims."

Since the Congress professed to speak for India's nationalists of all
creeds—Muslim as well as Hindu—the gulf between the two parties widened. Talks and exchanges of letters between the leading figures on both sides failed to achieve any degree of reconciliation. When the Congress in 1938 barred its ranks to members of “communal organizations” including the League, the break was complete.

For its part the Government proceeded to accept the League’s self-estimate at face value. As the power and membership of the Congress, in the eyes of top Government of India functionaries, assumed dangerous proportions, imperial encouragement was increasingly extended to the League. Its officials were treated as though the League was the sole influential Muslim voice meriting serious recognition. In point of fact the League’s control over the provincial ministries of the principal Muslim majority areas, the Punjab and Bengal, was by no means certain or dependable. In the two overwhelmingly Muslim provinces, Sind and the North West Frontier, the League had little influence at all. In short, by a policy of favoring the League, British officialdom was throwing its weight behind an anti-Congress organization whose main strength lay in the non-Muslim provinces where Congress ministries were in power. The importance assigned by the imperial authorities to the League helped it to obtain later on the unique status among the Muslims which it already claimed in 1938.

THE UNTOUCHABLES IN POLITICS.—Every part of India, as has already been noted, observes its own rules of social gradation and each section has its own roster of castes and tribes considered impure by the rest of the population. The constitution of the depressed classes into a political entity dates back to 1921 when British Provincial Governors appointed to the legislatures a number of individuals—some of high caste origin—to speak in the name of the untouchables. Until 1931, however, no official definition of the depressed classes had been established. The census of that year inaugurated an all-India category of Exterior Castes, but the criteria for inclusion varied from province to province and even according to the discretion of the individual enumerators. Thus arbitrarily delimited, the Exterior Castes were found to total over fifty millions or about one out of seven Indians.

After the census, the imperial authorities moved ahead with plans for detaching the depressed classes from the general body politic
by organizing them into a new communal electorate. The program ran into formidable opposition from Gandhi. In his view Hinduism neither included nor sanctioned discrimination against the Harijans (Gandhi's own term for the degraded castes, literally "Children of God"). He warned repeatedly that continued practice of such discrimination might lead to the breakup of the whole structure of Hinduism. While still in South Africa he had introduced untouchables into his own household, and in the twenties he devoted much of his time to campaigning for the right of Harijans to enter Hindu temples. He rejected vehemently the idea of treating them as a separate community, apart from the rest of the Hindus. In 1932 when the creation of special depressed-classes constituencies was announced, Gandhi secured their virtual abolition through one of his most famous fasts. Subsequently he intensified his efforts on behalf of the Harijans.

In the elections of 1937, Congress candidates won most of the seats reserved for the depressed classes except in Bombay Province, the home of the outstanding untouchable leader, the American-educated Dr. B. R. Ambedkar. The Congress in office included a small number of untouchables in its ministries. Some legislative progress was registered in improving the civil and social status of the depressed classes. On the whole the representatives of the untouchables were dissatisfied both with the number of positions granted to them and the degree of social reform accomplished.

The People vs. the Princes.—Around and between the provinces of British India spread in crazy quilt array the substantial territories left in the hands of the princes. By the twentieth century these enclaves, twenty large and 500-odd small, contained about a quarter of India's population. The peculiar relation of the rulers to the paramount power, which had chosen for reasons of high policy to underwrite their position, allowed them to maintain absolute autocracy without fear of popular revolt. To keep the princes in line, the imperial authorities stationed in the states a corps of high-ranking officials known as Residents, who were responsible directly to the Viceroy. To these Residents was reserved the right to intervene in state affairs in cases of injustice, oppression or gross maladministration; but in practice the right was seldom exercised. On the other hand the paramount power accepted full responsibility for
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protecting the princes against insurrections, whether arising out of misgovernment or out of widespread demand for popular rule.

Thus buttressed by the whole weight of British power in India, the states with few exceptions preserved into the present the practice of arbitrary personal rule. Advisory councils, legislative bodies, or other representative institutions seldom existed to temper the sway of the rajahs, maharajahs, thakores, and nawabs who appointed and dismissed diwans (ministers) at will. No clear line separated state funds from the privy purse, which often accounted for a lion's share of the expenditures.

For the people the recognized varieties of forced unpaid labor included construction and repair of roads and palaces, cultivation of special crops as wild-animal bait for hunts, and carrying luggage of visitors. Special fees were collected for marriage, for the right to hire palanquins for wedding processions, and for other religious and social observances. Trade monopolies of such necessities as salt and kerosene were either auctioned off or assigned to royal favorites, and resulted in prices for such commodities much higher than those prevailing in British India. The land revenues and other taxes were augmented by additional exactions on the part of local officials.

Political activity in the states arose slowly and in the face of great obstacles. The All-India States' Peoples' Conference met for the first time in 1927, and persuaded the Congress session of that year to adopt a resolution calling on the princes to introduce responsible government. Subsequently, the Conference collected and publicized information on abuses and outstanding examples of misrule, and presented the case for the princely subjects to the Round Table Conferences in London. At the time of the second civil disobedience campaign, the ferment in British India was reflected in spontaneous movements for elementary political rights in a number of states, notably Kashmir in 1931. A series of local conferences in all parts of princely India in 1937 signalized a widespread popular awakening in the states. Demands were put forward for abolition of forced labor, for land reform, for civil liberties, and for government responsible to the people. Before long, full-scale conflict was raging between the rulers and their subjects from the Punjab States in the north to Hyderabad and Travancore in the south, and from
Rajkot in the west to the Orissa states on the east. The people dramatized their program by marching in processions, holding meetings, and by circularizing pamphlets and newspapers, and in some places by offering satyagraha. The princes and diwans struck back by outlawing the popular organizations; banning public assemblies; prohibiting entry into the states of books, journals, and political figures from British India; expelling local leaders or subjecting them to rigorous treatment in jails; and intimidating the populace by fines, seizure of property, police charges into unarmed parades, and, in a number of cases, firing by soldiers. But sustained popular pressure achieved a modest degree of reform in one principedom after another. Obligatory labor services were transmuted into taxes, commissions were appointed to investigate grievances, advisory legislative bodies were authorized, and in a very few instances, the principle of rule by law was incorporated into new constitutions.

Although the States' Peoples' Conference was never formally linked to the Congress, many individual Congressmen in the years after 1934 held posts as national officers of the Conference and assisted in its organizing drives. Within the Congress a sharp controversy developed as to whether the states' peoples' fight should be waged under the Congress banner. Gandhi held out firmly for noninterference by Congress in the affairs of the princes who, he insisted, could be persuaded to act in the best interests of their subjects. He argued that the states' peoples' movement would gain self-confidence by standing on its own feet. Gandhi intervened personally, however, by undertaking a fast when trouble broke out at Rajkot, where his own father had served as prime minister. The Congress Left attacked the princely system as a whole. They believed with Nehru that "The Indian Princes have hitched their wagon to the chariot of imperialism. They have both had their day and will go together." As 1939 drew to a close, the issue of noninterference or aid to the states' peoples was overshadowed by the outbreak of war, and, in fact, it was never resolved.

THE WARTIME CRISIS, 1939–1942.—The coming of war was no surprise to the Congress, whose focus of attention had been broadened, largely under Nehru's influence, to a deep concern with India's place in the shifting world scene. After Munich the Congress formally dissociated itself from British foreign policy, and recorded
its opposition to "Imperialism and Fascism alike." India, the Congress declared, would not "permit her man-power and resources to be exploited in the interests of British Imperialism. Nor can India join any war without the express consent of her people."

When war actually broke out on September 1, 1939, the imperial authorities went ahead as if Congress did not exist and had never indicated any stand on foreign policy. The Governor-General automatically declared India a belligerent. Parliament in London passed in eleven minutes a bill permitting the suspension of the provincial autonomy sections of the 1935 Constitution under which the Congress ministries had been functioning. The Congress responded with a solemn reaffirmation of its position and a request that the authorities declare "in unequivocal terms what their war aims are in regard to democracy and imperialism and the new world order that is envisaged." Making its conditions clear, the Congress proclaimed that "if the war is to defend the status quo, imperialist possessions, colonies, vested interests, and privilege, then India can have nothing to do with it." On the other hand, "if Great Britain fights for the maintenance and extension of democracy, then she must necessarily end imperialism in her own possessions, establish full democracy in India, and the Indian people must have the right of self-determination by framing their own constitution through a Constituent Assembly without external interference." In any event, declared the Congress finally, the real test of any British declaration of aims would be its application to the present; the only way of convincing the people that a declaration is meant to be honored, is by giving "immediate effect to it to the largest possible extent."

The British reply was a vaguely phrased offer by the Viceroy to appoint an all-party advisory committee. Congress pronounced the Viceroy's statement "wholly unsatisfactory" and began to talk of a new noncooperation campaign. As a first step in this direction, the Congress ordered its ministries to resign, in all of the eight provinces it controlled. The trade unions and peasant leagues struck out on their own with antiwar strikes and demonstrations; the Government answered by seizing and imprisoning as many of their militant leaders as it could find.

When the Congress met for its annual session in March, 1940, it flatly concluded that "Great Britain is carrying on the war funda-
mentally for imperialist ends and for the preservation and strengthening of her Empire, which is based on the exploitation of the people of India, as well as of other Asiatic and African countries.” Before Congress took any action to follow up this sharp declaration, the entire world was stunned by the sudden fall of France to the Nazi invaders. The Congress rushed to express its sympathy with a Britain whose forces had been driven off the European Continent and which stood exposed to the formidable menace of Nazi military power. Under such circumstances the Congress leaders felt Britain could not long refuse to come to terms. The Working Committee announced that the Congress was prepared to abandon nonviolence in the sphere of foreign affairs and cooperate with Britain in the defense of India. For its part of the bargain Britain would have to declare the complete independence of India, and as a first step in giving effect to such a declaration, allow a provisional National Government to assume office in Delhi. When this offer was rejected by the British Cabinet, then headed by Winston Churchill, the Congress fell back upon nonviolence and invited Gandhi to resume direction of its activities. Toward the end of 1940 Gandhi launched a limited form of satyagraha, which began on an individual basis, something like the closing phase of the unsuccessful 1930–1934 civil disobedience. The central aim of this campaign Gandhi declared, was not to hinder the war effort, but primarily to register India’s moral resistance to its enforced and involuntary participation in the war. Following a procedure outlined by Gandhi, selected Congressmen made public declarations, often after giving advance notice to the police, that it was wrong to support the war. Thereupon they were arrested, and in May, 1941, as many as 14,000 were in prison for offenses of this character. In August, 1941, the issuance of the Atlantic Charter aroused hope in India of fresh political advance. The hope turned into bitterness and cynicism when Churchill announced that in his eyes the Atlantic Charter did not apply to India, but rather primarily to regions under the Nazi yoke.

The devastating Japanese attack upon Pearl Harbor in December, followed by the rapid conquest of Hong Kong, Singapore, and Rangoon, did serve to precipitate developments in India. Four days before the Japanese entry into the war, the British released Jawaharlal Nehru and other Congressmen who had courted arrest.
As after the fall of France in June, 1940, so again in January, 1942, during the humiliating fall to the Japanese of every bastion of the British Empire in Southeast Asia, the Congress indicated its willingness to take part in defending and governing India, provided that its basic demand for freedom was conceded and provided the interim government would be allocated real power. In anticipation of a fresh round of negotiations, Gandhi was again temporarily relieved of the Congress leadership. In March, 1942, as the Japanese outflanked Rangoon and approached the eastern land frontier of India itself, Prime Minister Churchill sent a special negotiator to India in the person of one of the members of his own War Cabinet, Sir Stafford Cripps. The latter had indicated for some years a considerable degree of sympathy for the demands of Indian nationalism and it was widely believed that he would be empowered to make significant concessions to the Congress viewpoint.

The Cripps Offer, as it came to be known, consisted of a short-term proposal for greater participation of Indians in the “counsels” of the Government, and a long-term perspective of India’s emergence fairly soon after the end of the war as one or more Dominions. By raising the possibility of a division of India, the Cripps Offer shocked and angered the Congress leaders. In their eyes the “unity of India” was both an incontrovertible fact and a condition essential to preserve. Their main interest, however, was focused on the question of transfer of wartime governmental functions and powers to Indian hands, the extent of which the Congress had repeatedly termed the acid test of British intentions. Since the major share of India’s budget was for the army, the Congress was particularly anxious to exercise civilian control over all aspects of military affairs apart from actual wartime strategy and operations. In this sphere the Cripps plan granted what appeared to Nehru and his colleagues no more than the right to run a Ministry for “Canteens and Stationery.” Largely over this issue the negotiations broke down in April, 1942. Cripps flew back to London, and the political situation in India deteriorated rapidly.

ORIGINS OF PAKISTAN.—Although the Cripps Mission failed, the Churchill cabinet’s post-war proposals which it brought to India had a far-reaching effect on subsequent political developments. The most novel provision of the Cripps Offer allowed to any province
the right to stay out of the projected Indian Union. This new departure in imperial policy was a concession to the demand for Pakistan, raised barely two years before by the Muslim League.

From the outbreak of war the League had enjoyed renewed evidences of imperial favor. In refusing the Congress' request for an immediate and substantial transfer of power, the Viceroy cited as justification the "lack of prior agreement between the major communities." In effect, the Viceroy was treating the two parties, the League and the Congress, as though they spoke for socio-religious communities and not for political platforms—the League for the Muslims, the Congress for the Hindus. Furthermore, he was in practice treating them as equals, although in the sole election held throughout British India under the 1935 Constitution, the League had received little more than 300,000 votes, whereas the Congress had rolled up more than 10,000,000.

When the Congress ministries in the provinces resigned, the League was quick to capitalize on the situation. It called upon its members and friends to celebrate, in December, 1939, a "Deliverance Day" of thanksgiving and relief. On the day following this League celebration the Governor-General, in a long-delayed reply to a letter from Jinnah, assured him that the Government fully appreciated:

the importance of the contentment of the Muslim community to the stability and success of any constitutional developments in India. You need therefore have no fear that the weight which your community's position in India necessarily gives their views will be underrated.

As if to demonstrate unmistakably to the world that it was unsound to consider the Congress a communal or "Hindu" body, the Congress at its annual session in March, 1940, elected as president Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, one of the best-known Muslim political and intellectual figures in India. Congress supporters took care to point out that his election was no novelty, for over the half-century since Congress had been formed in 1885, half a dozen Muslims had preceded Azad in the highest office of the Congress.

Azad had scarcely finished delivering his presidential address to the Congress when the Muslim League began its momentous 1940 session at Lahore, and proceeded to pass Jinnah's resolution embody-
The idea of grouping Muslims in a single political unit was adumbrated in the presidential address of Sir Muhammad Iqbal to the Muslim League in 1930. Iqbal, a great poet and probably the most influential Muslim writer since Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, suggested joining the Muslim-majority provinces of northwestern India into a single Muslim self-governing state, which would form one part of a loose all-India federation. This notion of setting up a “Muslim India” within a federal India was speedily welcomed and supported by British figures from the chief imperial security agencies, the Indian Army and the Imperial Police.\footnote{Cf. Col. M. L. Ferrar, co-author of Whither Islam (London, 1932), and John Coatman, who had served seventeen years in the Imperial Police and had been Information Officer for the Government of India during Lord Halifax’s term as Governor-General, in his Years of Destiny: India, 1926–32 (London, 1932).}

Active political propaganda for the partition of India was first launched in 1933 by some Indian Muslim students at Cambridge University. In opposition to the scheme of federation then being discussed at the Round Table Conference, they advanced the slogan of a separate and distinct nation, based on the 35 million Muslims in “the five northern units of India, viz., Punjab, North West Frontier Province (Afghan Province), Kashmir, Sind and Baluchistan.” Prominent Muslim League spokesmen at the Round Table Conference paid little heed to what they then considered as “only a student’s scheme,” impracticable and “chimerical.” Even in 1937 Jinnah and the League were still thinking in terms of a united India based on a “federation of free, democratic states.” As the breach between Congress and the League rapidly widened, the League became more and more attracted to the aim of gaining for itself a completely independent territorial entity.

In its 1940 resolution, the League did not specify clearly what areas were to be included in Pakistan, nor did it indicate what opportunity, if any, would be given to the inhabitants to indicate whether they actually wished to be separated from the rest of India. Even within the League itself it was by no means clear that the demand had been made for more than bargaining purposes. In the
chief provinces where the Muslims were a majority—Punjab, Bengal, and Sind—initial support for Pakistan was at best lukewarm. Active opposition was immediately forthcoming from the North West Frontier Province and from the Nationalist Muslims affiliated to the Congress. Their views that partition of India would be a national disaster were supported by several Muslim organizations in the Punjab and Sind, by the convocation of Muslim divines in India, and by some of the smaller Muslim sects. Representatives of all these groups shortly arranged a well-attended conference in Delhi, which formally condemned the idea of dividing India and repudiated the League’s claim to be the sole, true voice of India’s Muslims. In accordance with the common policy of ignoring the existence of non-League Muslims, the Governor-General took little notice either of this conference or of other indications of Muslim disapproval of Pakistan.

Carrying this support for the League one step further, the Cripps Proposals took Pakistan for the first time out of the realm of talk and dealt with it as a feasible political expedient. After the Cripps Mission the impression spread among the Muslims that the British considered Pakistan a reasonable claim and one that should be granted.

**THE WARTIME CRISIS, 1942–1945.**—The disappointment of the Congress with Cripps shortly gave way to a painful realization that Britain’s wartime defeats in Europe and the Far East, instead of speeding concessions to nationalist opinion in India, were, if anything, leading to a hardening of British policy. Feelings of resentment quickly mounted and were intensified throughout the spring of 1942 by the apparent inability of British armed forces to defend India. Japanese divisions overran Burma, Japanese warships closed the Bay of Bengal, and Japanese airplanes bombed harbors and towns on India’s east coast.

Within the Congress there was great confusion and conflict of opinion as to what course of action should be followed. Nehru urged the need for organizing guerillas and following a “scorched earth” policy in the event of a Japanese invasion. Gandhi proposed non-violent resistance to the Japanese but did not expect an attack. When impatient nationalists—particularly of the Congress Socialist persuasion—called for an immediate struggle to shake off British con-
trol, Nehru argued against harming the cause of China, the Soviet Union, and other victims of aggression. Gandhi, while "straining every nerve to avoid a conflict with British authority," summed up popular indignation by warning the British to "Quit India!" or face a new noncooperation movement. On the whole, the conservatives in the Congress felt that the threat of civil disobedience would be sufficient to wring new terms from the British.

After several months of intense discussion the All-India Congress Committee on August 8, 1942, issued its fateful "Quit India" ultimatum. The critical resolution reaffirmed the Congress willingness to organize India's defense, and its great reluctance "to jeopardize the defensive capacity of the United Nations." At the same time it authorized Gandhi to start, when he saw fit, "a mass struggle on nonviolent lines" to vindicate "India's inalienable right to freedom and independence." Gandhi indicated publicly that his first step would be to negotiate with the Viceroy.

But the Churchill Government was in no mood to negotiate. A few hours after the August 8 resolution was passed, and before Gandhi could even finish drafting his letter to the Viceroy, all of the Congress leaders and most of its key personnel were seized and imprisoned. Congress was at once declared an outlaw organization. At this moment a small group of Congress Socialists took the lead in calling on the people to cut telegraph wires, blow up railroad bridges, storm village police stations and so forth. These instructions were carried out in many places, and scattered local uprisings continued for several months in the face of the most extreme military and police measures. Official reports estimated that 940 Indians were killed in the course of the suppression. When the movement collapsed, the cup of nationalist frustration was full to overflowing. For the rest of the war, most important Congress leaders and large numbers of their supporters remained in jail and the Congress suffered an utter political eclipse.

The League meanwhile enjoyed from 1942 to 1945 the period of its most rapid growth and the greatest spread of its influence. This was particularly true in Bengal, Punjab, and Sind, where the League for the first time really caught on among the Muslim populace. In those three provinces alone the League claimed by the end of 1944 a membership of nearly 900,000. In this process the League
shed its predominantly urban character and rolled up an impressive following among the peasantry. Simultaneously the League won over to its side or reduced the importance of the Muslim organizations and leaders who previously had worked with the Congress; the outstanding exception to this was in the North West Frontier Province, where pro-Congress sentiment remained strong.

As the popular following of the League grew, friction inevitably developed between younger middle class members, who identified themselves in part with the impoverished Muslim public, and the rich landlords and knighted gentry who controlled the League ministries. In the Punjab the clash over policy and discipline between the ministry and the younger groups became so acute that in 1944 the pro-British premier and most of the League representatives in the Punjab Assembly were expelled from the League. A similar conflict raged in Bengal. There the ministry, with the aid of the British members of the provincial legislature, managed to remain in office, despite the fact that its corrupt and incompetent regime was held in great part responsible for the disastrous Bengal famine of 1943. In Sind the clash was so bitter that in 1945 the Provincial League split into two hostile factions which were reunited only after heavy pressure from Jinnah.

The dissensions within the League resembled the conflicts which took place from 1937 to 1939 between the Congress left wing and the Congress ministries. One striking difference, however, is that the League issues were fought out on a provincial rather than on a country-wide basis. On the central level Jinnah and the right-wing landlords continued virtually unchallenged in their tight control of the League machinery. The League produced no one like Jawaharlal Nehru to speak on a national scale for its more progressive elements.

To a much smaller degree than for the League, the years after 1942 were boom times also for India's Communist Party. Its leadership of labor and peasant anti-war demonstrations had caused the imperial authorities to hunt it down with renewed vigor in the first two years of the war. On December 15, 1941, under the influence both of the Japanese onslaught in the Pacific, and of the earlier Nazi assault on the Soviet Union, the Communists had dropped their campaign against the war and raised the new slogan of "a people's
role in the people's war.” Six months later, as the Congress appeared to be moving in the direction of a new noncooperation campaign, the Central Government lifted the long-standing ban on the Communists and permitted them to function as a legal party.

When the “Quit India” resolution was under discussion in August, 1942, the handful of Communist members of the All-India Congress Committee voted against it, on the grounds that Congress should not run counter to the world-wide anti-Fascist war effort. With similar arguments they tried to dissuade the people from sabotage and other violent expressions of their anger at the arrest of the Congress leadership. During the years when the bulk of the Congress was immobilized they attracted public notice by their activities on behalf of price control, food rationing, and famine relief. This was considered reprehensible by many Congressmen, who held that any participation in official programs, even local food committees, was little short of treason to the martyred nationalist movement. But these same activities helped the Communists to extend their influence in the peasant leagues and trade unions, both of which advanced in strength and membership in the second half of the war.

A new development in Communist theory still further alienated the rest of the Congress. This was the declaration by the Communists in 1942 that India consisted of no less than 18 separate nationalities meriting recognition; and that the demand for Pakistan was a just one, in so far as it expressed the strivings toward statehood of the “Muslim nationalities.” Although the Communists themselves proposed a single multi-national union of India modeled on the Soviet example, Congress spokesmen charged them with aiding and abetting the League campaign for “vivisecting” the motherland.

During the period that the Congress leadership was in jail several attempts were made by Congressmen who had opposed the August, 1942, resolution and had not been arrested to find a basis for agreement between the Congress and the League. Their purpose was to set up a popular government at the center, in order to deal more effectively with the wartime food and clothing shortages that were causing so much suffering. During these same years, while the Congress was paralyzed, the British authorities manifested a much less cordial attitude to the idea of Pakistan. The Viceroy, addressing the Central Legislature early in 1944, proclaimed the desire of His
Majesty's Government "to see India a . . . united country." In this setting, Jinnah and Gandhi, shortly after the latter's release on grounds of health, came together in September, 1944, for a series of talks. But they could not agree on a basis for Congress-League cooperation. In 1945, upon his return from an extended stay in London, the Viceroy announced his intention of forming a new Executive Council whose members would be drawn from the leaders of Indian political life. The Viceroy stated that he would select "equal proportions of Muslims and Caste Hindus." He called a conference at Simla to which he invited representatives of the various groups. Nehru and other imprisoned members of the Congress Working Committee were released so that they might attend.

As soon as the conference met, the issue arose whether the Congress could nominate a Muslim, such as Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, for a cabinet post. The League insisted that no other organization could nominate Muslims; the Congress rejected the implication that it spoke only for caste Hindus. The conference broke up and the Congress-League deadlock persisted.

THE ROAD TO PARTITION.—The two events of outstanding importance in India's most recent history have been its sudden partition into two separate countries and the simultaneous withdrawal of British political power. When the war ended in August, 1945, there was little outward indication that fundamental changes would occur rapidly. The first pronouncements by the new Labor Government headed by Clement Attlee were cautious affirmations of intent to resume negotiations for constitutional change upon the basis of the unsuccessful Cripps offer. The pace of development, however, was forced by a wave of mass unrest, which expressed the feelings of suffering, bitterness, and frustration repressed during the six long years of war. Unrest first showed itself in the fall and winter of 1945-1946. It has been sustained to the present not only by the political conflicts of the last three years, but by the daily hardships of postwar life. Prices have continually risen, black-marketing is widespread, industrial lay-offs are common, demobilization and re-conversion have been thinly cushioned. Both urban labor and restless peasants have tried to prevent the stabilization of economic conditions at the unsatisfactory pre-war level. Factory owners and landlords, enriched by wartime profits, have had the resources
to resist popular pressure. Clashes have been frequent and severe.

After the ban on it was lifted in June, 1945, the Congress throughout most of India again became the chief vehicle for voicing popular discontent. The Labor Government's failure in 1945 to make a new departure in British policy toward India was criticized unreservedly by the Congress, which termed Attlee's initial statement "vague, inadequate, and unsatisfactory." The influence of the Muslim League at the same time continued to spread. The League declared in ever more forthright terms its demand for a real transfer of power and its opposition to rule either by Britain or by the Congress (the latter invariably being labeled the "Hindu" Congress).

The most dramatic issue around which popular feeling crystallized in the closing months of 1945 was that of the "Indian National Army." This army has been associated primarily with the name of Subhas Chandra Bose. The latter became estranged from the Congress in 1939, was later placed under house arrest by the British authorities, and slipped out of India in the winter of 1940-1941. He turned up in Berlin, where he broadcast over the Axis radio that India's freedom could be achieved through the assistance of Britain's enemies, Germany and Japan. Bose became the leading spirit and "Marshal" of the Indian National Army (I.N.A.) with headquarters in Japanese-held Singapore. His troops were drawn largely from Indian soldiers who, along with their British officers, had surrendered to the Japanese early in 1942, at the capture of Singapore. In organization and leadership the I.N.A. disregarded communal lines. It played a part in 1944-1945 in several engagements against regular troops of the Indian Army. At the end of the war in August, 1945, the I.N.A. men fell into British hands and were moved to prison camps in India. Subhas Bose escaped by air from Rangoon, but later died in an airplane crash in Formosa.

When the Government of India announced its intention of trying some I.N.A. personnel for treason, the Congress at once came to the defense. It recorded the opinion that "it would be a tragedy if these officers, men and women were punished for the offense of having labored however mistakenly for the freedom of India." Protest meetings under Congress leadership were held all over India. By November, when the first trial of I.N.A. officers took place, public feeling had grown to the point where they were the outstanding
heroes of the day. I.N.A. poems, portraits, photographs appeared everywhere. In the popular mind the key fact was that I.N.A. men had actually fought against the British authorities. By November the campaign seemed to be moving under its own momentum, gaining in breadth and intensity as it went. Police firings on pro-I.N.A. demonstrators led to some of the greatest processions Calcutta had ever seen, with Congress, League, and Communist flags flying together.

The unrest originally set off by the I.N.A. issue spread until it seriously affected even the ultimate safeguards of the empire, the armed services and the imperial police. In the regular Indian Army substantial funds were collected for the I.N.A. defendants. It became clear that Indian soldiers could not be relied upon, if they were sent into action to curb their fellow countrymen. Strikes by Britons in R.A.F. units, weary of years of service away from the British Isles, helped set off demonstrations by men of the Indian Air Force. In February, 1946, the core of the Indian Navy at headquarters in Bombay, struck en masse. The naval strikers appealed for public support which the Communists (whose headquarters are also at Bombay) hastened to organize. In the clashes which followed, hundreds of Indians were killed and wounded. Shortly thereafter, the police in the imperial capital, Delhi, went on strike. Their action was copied by the police of Patna, the capital of Bihar Province. Even Gurkha soldiers from Nepal, veritable Grenadier guards of empire, demonstrated in a cantonment of the Delhi zone against their British officers.

Prime Minister Attlee replied with a dramatic gesture in the direction of the Congress. Waiving his previous statements, he announced in February, 1946, that Sir Stafford Cripps and two other members of the British Cabinet would leave shortly for India. They would have full power to work out an immediate constitutional settlement, though of course Parliament would have to approve it. Amplifying this in March, Attlee declared that if India wanted independence she could have it. In words the Congress had long wanted to hear, he declared that no minority could be allowed to veto India's progress.

The response of the Congress to the announcement of the Cabinet Mission reflected the new line-up of forces within the Congress
in the post-war period. After the release of the Congress heads from prison in the summer of 1945, the "Old Guard" assumed virtually complete control. Various sections of the left wing were either forced out of the Congress or threatened with expulsion if they did not keep in line. The first to go were the Communists. A list of charges was drawn up against them, centering on their opposition both to the August, 1942, resolution and the subsequent local risings, and on their qualified support of the League's Pakistan demand. In December, 1945, the Communists were barred from all elective positions in the Congress, but in anticipation of this the Communists had already resigned almost to a man from the Congress ranks. At the same time the right of parties like the Congress Socialists to function as organized groups within the Congress was sharply challenged. Open opposition was shown to the peasant league and the All-India Trade Union Congress, in both of which the Communists occupied key positions.

Nowhere was the dominance of the Old Guard shown more sharply than in the elections of 1945–1946. The imperial authorities had decided to hold elections both for the Central and the Provincial Legislatures. In formulating the Congress platform, the Old Guard sidestepped the economic and social issues which had proved so explosive in the 1930s. Instead they campaigned on a single slogan, a renewed call to the British to "Quit India!" Lest this seem too ominous, the Congress heads openly stated that they were willing to deal with the British either by noncooperation and direct action if necessary, or with negotiation where possible.

Attlee's announcement of an unprecedented Cabinet Mission was taken by the Congress heads as a clear indication that the method of negotiation would be both fruitful and desirable. Calls from the weakened and divided left wing for an immediate showdown with the British, or for "a final bid for power," were overridden or ignored. The popular response to the I.N.A. issue, far more intense and dramatic than the Congress had expected, had led the Working Committee in December, 1945, to reaffirm its basic belief in nonviolence. After the widespread disturbances connected with the Bombay naval mutiny, the Congress heads welcomed the opportunity presented by the Cabinet Mission to return to peaceful negotiations.
The proposals of the British Cabinet Mission of 1946 (led by Sir Stafford Cripps) constituted a striking reversal of the original Cripps scheme. At a period when India was menaced by Japan in the East and the Nazis in the West, the Cripps offer of 1942 had extended a broad right of secession to the component parts of India. In 1946, after hostilities had ceased, the Cabinet Mission proposed, on grounds of defense, that India remain a single united country; the center of such a union, it was provided, would be weak, while three distinct regions were made possible, virtually amounting to a “Hindustan” in the middle, flanked on the sides by an Eastern Pakistan and a Western Pakistan. Because the plan preserved a central government, the Congress leaders overcame their misgivings and accepted it. Thereby the Cabinet Mission was able to avoid a test of strength between the Congress and British power in India; by September, 1946, the Congress had taken office as an Interim Government, thus proving that the energies of India’s most powerful political party had been turned away from the demonstrations and processions of the previous winter and into quieter constitutional channels.

In the process of conciliating the Congress, both the Cabinet Mission and later the Viceroy temporarily alienated the Muslim League. The latter body at first had been willing to go along with the Cabinet Mission plan. In July, 1946, because of allegedly undue concessions to the Congress, the League violently denounced the Viceroy and totally rejected the Cabinet Mission Plan. Speaking for the League, Jinnah said “goodby to constitutional methods and constitutionalism.” The League designated August 16 as “Direct Action Day.” The League Premier of Bengal declared the day a public holiday; his action helped to precipitate the worst communal riots that had ever taken place in Calcutta. From Calcutta they spread eastward in Bengal, and, later, westward up the Ganges Valley through Bihar, parts of the United Provinces and, eventually, into the Punjab. In the Deccan the area most affected was the city of Bombay. (The basis for this communal warfare is discussed below.)

After the Congress-headed Interim Government had definitely taken office, the Viceroy bent his efforts toward conciliating the League. By-passing the Congress, the Viceroy opened direct negotiations with the League and then on his own initiative placed League members in important posts in the Interim Government. The Con-
gress was placated in part when the Viceroy announced that the League would participate in the forthcoming Constituent Assembly. This was the body which was to meet at the end of 1946 to draft India’s constitution under the Cabinet Mission Plan. The League, however, denied that it had such an understanding with the Viceroy. When the Constituent Assembly met, the League held aloof. It declared that its only interest was in obtaining an entirely separate state of Pakistan, and it declared the proceedings of the Constituent Assembly, even though called by the Viceroy, would be “invalid and illegal.” When, despite this declaration, the Viceroy retained the League members in the Interim Government, the Congress and other non-League groups exploded. Congress members prepared to resign, and threats of precipitate action were voiced.

At this critical moment Prime Minister Attlee intervened. Speaking in February, 1947—one year after his announcement of the Cabinet Mission—he proclaimed that by June, 1948, British power in India would be completely withdrawn. But on this occasion Attlee did not repeat his previous assurance that minorities would not be allowed to stand in the way of India’s march to freedom. He rather declared that if by June, 1948, a constitution had not been drafted by a Constituent Assembly in which all important parties had worked together, then Britain would have to decide to whom power should be transferred: “whether as a whole to some form of central government, or in some areas to existing provincial governments,” or in some other way.

The Attlee announcement in effect reversed the Cabinet Mission decision for a central, unified government and opened the door for the partition of India. The attention of the Congress and the League turned at once to the two provinces which had Muslim majorities but non-League governments: the Punjab and the North West Frontier Province. Whichever party retained control of those provinces down to June, 1948, would automatically retain power when the British quit India. Violent clashes quickly developed in both disputed areas. Large sections of the great Punjab cities of Lahore, Amritsar, and Rawalpindi were looted and burned to the ground. This violence and destructiveness made both the Congress and the League realize that if communal warfare of such a character continued, the country would be ruined for decades to come. By tactful
negotiation, the new Viceroy, Lord Mountbatten, persuaded the League to accept a diminished version of Pakistan, and the Congress to accept reluctantly the partition of India. The Punjab and Bengal were to be split in two, with the Muslim majority districts going to Pakistan and the rest to India. The agreement was embodied in an Act passed by Parliament in July, 1947, providing for the creation of two new Dominions, India and Pakistan. The administrative departments, armed forces, funds, staff, and properties of the Government of India were promptly apportioned. As border commissions drew boundary lines across Bengal and the Punjab, there began in the latter province one of the greatest, bloodiest, and saddest migrations in all the history of mankind. On August 15, 1947—just one day short of the anniversary of the League's "Direct Action Day" of August 16, 1946—India was formally partitioned into the new Dominions of India and Pakistan.

V. Problems and Prospects

In the most recent past, communal antagonisms and communal warfare have occupied the center of the stage in India, and today they throw a dark shadow over the future of the country. The recent strife between Muslims on the one side and Hindus and Sikhs on the other has its roots deep in the history of India, particularly in the peculiar impact of imperial rule by a Western power upon the characteristic but disintegrating organization of the older Indian society. As has already been pointed out, religion in India has not been limited to or even chiefly concerned with beliefs about the nature of the deity or practices of worship. Rather Hinduism and Islam have performed a much wider range of social functions. They provide the sanction which gives each individual his place in society, his code of social relations, and his guide to personal behavior. Each religion gives a certain sense of solidarity to those born within its ranks and a sense of distinctness and difference from those outside the fold.

There were many wars between Hindu and Muslim powers in the centuries after the first invasion of India by Central Asian followers of Islam. In the course of the hostilities temples were desecrated and other savageries committed in the name of religion by
both sides. But local Hindu-Muslim riots breaking out in city or
country in the calm of peace were almost unknown in Mogul times.
Rather, such conflicts are a modern phenomenon and appear to origi­
nate in the period of British rule in India, particularly in the
decades of profound change after the Rebellion of 1857. The sweep­
ing revolution of Indian economic, social, and political life has
affected the Muslims at the various levels of society quite differently
from the Hindus, and pitted important sections of each group against
the other more sharply than ever before. The highest level among
the Muslims consisted of descendants of landed magnates and nobles
of Mogul days. These former grandees soon found themselves out­
stripped economically by Hindu and Parsi merchants who formed
the new urban industrialist and banker class, and the well-known
opposition of landlords and capitalists set in. With the rise of
nationalism among the growing urban upper middle class, the gulf
at the top widened, particularly after the British in the last quarter
of the nineteenth century reversed their previous hostility to the
Muslims and actively cultivated the loyalty of “the better classes
of Mohammedans” as “a source of strength to us.”

Below the top level, there has also been a marked difference in
development. Among the middle classes, the Hindus, generally
speaking, have gained more advantageous positions in trade, in the
professions, and in the government services. By contrast the share
of the Muslims has been weak. Among the working population a
larger proportion of Muslims than Hindus do the rougher sorts of
common labor. Many Muslims work for Hindu factory owners
and Sikh public works contractors, whereas the reverse is much less
common.

In the countryside the great bulk of the peasantry are Hindus
who are subject to Hindu landlords. But in three important areas
a large part of the peasantry or agricultural laborers are Muslim
while the landowners and moneylenders are Hindu or Hindu and
Sikh: East Bengal, Malabar, and the Punjab. In the United Prov­
inces, on the other hand, the peasantry are predominantly Hindu
but there are a number of great Muslim landlords.

In the changed Indian scene Hindus and Muslims thus found
themselves on opposite sides in such familiar struggles as those of

peasant vs. landlord; debtor vs. moneylender; factory worker vs. factory owner; hired laborer vs. sweatshop owner or contractor; landed aristocrat vs. industrialist. By the end of the nineteenth century these economic rivalries were already causing friction between India’s two chief communities, but no other step did so much to poison their relations as the introduction of communal electorates under the Morley-Minto Reforms of 1909. For since then the various communities which were already set off from each other in “religion” and in many economic relations have been posed directly against each other as the basic entities of Indian politics.

The first important series of local riots broke out in Bombay and the United Provinces in the 1870s; and others have occurred in one or more parts of India in every succeeding decade. The immediate issues over which these riots and most subsequent ones erupted are numerous. Among the most important is the question of cow-killing. To orthodox Hindus the cow is a sacred animal whose life must not be taken, whereas to Muslims the cow is one of the animals suitable for sacrifice on high holidays. A second issue is that of the playing of music in the vicinity of mosques, an act which is considered by Muslims in India to be a sacrilege. Hindus, on the other hand, celebrate marriages and many holidays with colorful processions and joyous music. In periods of tension, gay processions passing mosques can easily set off serious clashes. These causes of provocation have existed for the whole of the nine hundred years that Muslims and Hindus have lived side by side in India. It is only in the last three-quarters of a century that they have become the focus of acute tension and dispute. The early communal riots were generally sporadic in character; and the areas most affected were regions of the severest agrarian distress. During the great wave of nationalist sentiment from 1919 to 1922, communal riots ceased almost altogether, except for the Malabar districts of southernmost India, where they were inseparable from a rising of Muslim peasants and laborers against their Hindu overlords. British Government of India officials in those years expressed their amazement at what they called the “unprecedented fraternization of Hindus and Muslims.” By this time the imperial authorities had come to feel that Hindu-Muslim riots were the natural and expected thing, whereas Hindu-Muslim amity was unexpected and “unnatural.”
INDIA AND PAKISTAN

After the staggering end of civil disobedience in 1922, the succeeding years were marked by a great many communal riots in the cities. Hindu and Muslim extremists by now had been formed into organized bodies headed by public figures who devoted full time to this work. The newspapers which they printed depended for their circulation upon the virulence of their accounts of the activities of the rival religious community. Each group retained its regular body of hooligans eager for a fight and for the looting that was certain to follow. The most serious urban riot of the 1920s occurred in Bombay in 1928. It originated after the British-owned Burma-Shell Oil Company hired Pathan (Muslim) strikebreakers against its Hindu workmen. The latter bore a double resentment against the Pathans, some of whom also functioned as petty money-lenders and usurers in the Bombay area.

During the second civil disobedience movement, and indeed during the whole of the 1930s, communal riots were fewer, with the notable exception of the very severe disturbances at Cawnpore in 1931. Here the local authorities were charged by British and Indian witnesses alike with culpable negligence both in their failure to try to prevent the outbreaks or to bring them to an early end. About this time responsible British writers openly charged the imperial authorities with occasionally resorting to the use of agents provocateurs to make trouble between Hindus and Muslims.

The revived Muslim League of the 1930s was an avowedly communal organization campaigning under the banner of anti-Hinduism. As the League grew, tension between Muslims and Hindus heightened. The political deadlock of the war years further embittered their relations. In the summer of 1946 the prospect of attaining actual political power over all or part of India dangled as a prize before India's two great parties. At this point, organized communal warfare became in effect a recognized tactic of important elements within both camps.

The leaders of the League had built up a large force of volunteers somewhat along the lines of the groups which had been organized by the Congress in the civil disobedience campaigns. The Congress, holding office in the Interim Government, continued to proclaim itself a non-communal organization; in any event, it was not prepared to measure its strength with the League because its village
and district branches had been shattered in the sequel to the August, 1942, uprisings and never really rebuilt. Some of the most powerful right-wingers in the Congress preferred to work with extremist Hindu organizations in building up an independent counterforce to the League volunteers. Funds and leadership for this Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh (National Voluntary Service Association) were obtained from Hindu industrialists, princes, and landlords. Similarly, as the division of the Punjab loomed, a Sikh striking force was rallied by the Sikh princes, landlords, and big contractors.

As these various semimilitary bodies came into open conflict with each other, the Indian police and the Indian units of the army, themselves recruited and organized on a communal basis, tended to divide on communal lines and the structure of civil administration began to break down. The imperial authorities seemed indifferent to the consequences of this process and hesitated to use British soldiers to preserve law and order. In the course of the official inquiry into the great Calcutta riots of August, 1946—the starting point of the recent phase of communal warfare in India—the British Commanding Officer in the area revealed that he had delayed the use of troops at the start of the disorders lest both side drop their quarrel and join against the military.

The creation of the two new dominions along communal lines required the drawing of a boundary line through the heart of the Punjab, where Muslims, Sikhs, and Hindus were closely intermingled. The minorities in the two parts of the divided Punjab were thus left open to the depredations of the most inflamed elements among the majorities. By train, boat, and on foot, harried millions of refugees poured across the new borders. At their inception the two new dominions were saddled with the responsibility of absorbing and resettling these hordes of ruined refugees. The tales told by the refugees gave fresh ammunition to the most virulent communalists in both countries, and deepened the atmosphere of suspicion and ill-will on both sides.

The recent past has been marked by increased activity of the princes in politics rather than by their eclipse. During the war the states' peoples' movement and the rulers clashed repeatedly, sometimes with considerable strife. At the end of the war in 1945 friendly overtures to the princes were made by both the League and the
Congress, with each organization striving to persuade as many of the princes as possible to cast their lot with it. For their part the imperial authorities continued their older policy of explicitly safeguarding the princes. The position of the princes became a sharp issue during the Cabinet Mission of the spring of 1946. In those negotiations the British unqualifiedly insisted that in any future Constituent Assembly the Indian states would be represented by their rulers rather than by popularly elected delegates.

At the time of the partition of India in 1947, the princes were given the option of becoming independent or of joining up with one or the other of the new dominions. Except for Hyderabad and Kashmir, most of them chose the latter alternative; their bargaining position was good, however, and in internal matters they retained virtual autonomy. In both India and Pakistan they have typically allied themselves with the most backward and undemocratic elements, and have figured prominently in the recent communal warfare.

While the British, the League, and the Congress were arguing out questions of transfer of power and partition, the peasantry and the impoverished classes of city dwellers were left to shift for themselves so far as their basic economic problems were concerned. But the latter were not so easily shelved. During the war there had always been the hope that peace would bring a better livelihood. The postwar frustration of these hopes has helped to fertilize the ground for the spread of communalism.

In the long run the governments of India and Pakistan cannot achieve stability until they overcome the heritage of communal antagonism. To do this they will have to deal successfully with the underlying problems of agrarian reform and healthy industrial development. It remains to be seen whether their governments as presently constituted are able or willing to grapple with problems of such formidable magnitude.

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