

## CHAPTER IX

### THE ELECTORATES

THE Montagu-Chelmsford Report laid down some broad principles, which were worked out in detail by a committee presided over by Lord Southborough, known as the Franchise and Functions Committee. This Committee toured throughout the country from November 1918 till March 1919, and made its recommendations in regard to the electorate under the reforms.

Principal among the qualifications which the Committee recommended were a property qualification and residence within the constituency. No uniform property qualification was fixed for the various provinces or, for that matter, for the various electoral areas in one and the same province, with the result that the electoral qualifications differed between one area and another in the same province, and between one province and another. There was also much disparity between the enfranchised proportions and the actual populations of the various provinces. Moreover, an unequal distribution of representation between the rural and urban populations could not be avoided.

The other recommendations of the Franchise Committee related to the enfranchisement of all retired and pensioned officers of the Indian Army, whether of commissioned or non-commissioned rank ; the denial of franchise to women, to the subjects of foreign states, and to persons under twenty-one and those of unsound mind and guilty of offences involving moral turpitude ; the grant of votes to subjects of Indian States ; and the withdrawal of the Governor's right to nullify the election of a candidate as contrary to public interest.

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The Franchise Committee further recommended that the existing system of indirect election should be replaced by direct election in the case of the Provincial Legislatures, but retained in regard to both Houses of the Central Legislature.

As regards separate representation of communities, the Committee recommended its retention so far as the Mussulmans were concerned and its extension to the Sikhs in the Punjab, the Indian Christians in Madras, the Europeans in Bombay, Bengal and Madras, the United Provinces and Bihar and Orissa, and the Anglo-Indians in Madras and Bengal, but not to the Mahrattas of Bombay and the non-Brahmins in Madras.

The Government of India dissented from some of the recommendations of the Franchise Committee. They objected to subjects of Indian States as electors or candidates for Councils, and to franchise qualifications other than those based on property.

Had the recommendations of the Government of India been accepted the franchise would have been so varied as to result in a meagre enlargement of the Punjab electorate and a vast expansion of the Madras electorate. They were for reducing by about one-third the large electorates proposed by the Franchise Committee for Bengal, the United Provinces, and Assam. They thought the proposed provision for representation of the depressed classes was insufficient, and disapproved of the proposed university constituencies.

While endorsing the Franchise Committee's recommendations regarding communal electorates the Government of India considered that the strength of Muslim representation in Bengal was inadequate. The Government did not approve of the Committee's rejection of the non-Brahmin claims to separate representation.

While accepting as a temporary measure the Committee's recommendation of indirect elections to Assembly the Government of India opined that the elections for the Council of States should at least be direct.

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The Joint Committee of the British Parliament heard the Indian representatives, who disapproved of some important recommendations of the Franchise Committee, while agreeing with the Government of India that the elections to the Council of State should be direct. The Joint Committee further agreed with the Indian leaders that the election of the non-official members to the Legislative Assembly should also be direct, and not through the Provincial Councils. The Joint Committee modified some of the recommendations of the Franchise Committee, and made more acceptable suggestions, many of which were incorporated in the Government of India Act and rules made thereunder.

The first elections to the new Legislatures took place in November 1920. The non-co-operators, under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi and the Indian National Congress, preached boycott of the elections and the reforms. Polling-booths in various provinces were picketed. Neither candidates nor voters, however, were lacking, though there is no gainsaying the fact that the non-co-operators succeeded in dissuading several of the newly enfranchized people from exercising their votes. This was not much of an achievement, as the task of taking the voters to the polls is difficult even in advanced countries. In England, where democratic institutions have reached a high degree of perfection, and where the electorate is far from indifferent, parties and politicians have invariably grumbled after every General Election at the lethargy of the electors.

The non-co-operators did not succeed in regard to their attempt to defeat the elections by persuading candidates not to stand. Out of 637 elections only six were not held owing to the absence of a candidate.

The greatest achievement of the non-co-operators was in Bombay City, where the influence and the presence of Mahatma Gandhi was no mean factor to reckon with. Only 8 per cent. of the enfranchized section recorded their

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votes in Bombay City. In the Madras Presidency, where the non-co-operators exercised less influence, as many as 70 per cent. of votes were recorded in some of the urban constituencies. In the Punjab, notwithstanding the bitterness in the minds of the people owing to unfortunate events, the voting in general constituencies was as high as 32 per cent., and in the rural constituencies 36 per cent. In the United Provinces, where Liberalism offered the stoutest resistance to the non-co-operators during the election—and stubborn support to the Government in the three subsequent years in the maintenance of law and order, even though it involved the imprisonment of hundreds of Congressmen—the voting in Lucknow and some other centres was as high as 60 per cent., while the average in other contested constituencies could be estimated at 33 per cent. According to the official estimates, the voting in the first elections for the Provincial Councils averaged for the whole country at between 20 and 30 per cent., for the Legislative Assembly at 20 per cent., and for the Council of State at 40 per cent.

Bearing in mind the unprecedented enthusiasm aroused by the non-co-operation movement, the above figures prove that even at a time when the boycott propaganda was at its fiercest the electorate attached appreciable value to their power to vote.

The boycott was called off by the Congress during the 1923 elections in deference to Das and the Swaraj Party, who wanted to enter the Councils on the distinct understanding that neither the Congress machinery nor its funds were to be used for that purpose. There was a straight fight in many places between the Swarajists and the Liberals and other co-operators. The former denounced the latter for having allied themselves with an "alien Government" to defeat and discredit the Freedom-for-India movement by imprisoning the venerable leaders of the Congress and their numerous followers. The latter



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retorted that law and order must be maintained and the King's Government carried on. The Liberals were wiped out. Even veterans like Sir Surendranath Bannerjee were defeated. The enthusiasm aroused by the elections was unprecedented. "The fight," says an official report, "was cleanly conducted." This is a glowing testimony to the fair methods of the two great veterans, now no longer with us, the late Deshabhandu C. R. Das and Sir Surendranath Bannerjee.

On entering the Councils the first inquiry of the triumphant Swarajists was, like the celebrated question at the Mormon wedding, "How many of her are there?" Actually there was only one elected non-official Liberal in the Assembly of 1923. He too was defeated in the 1926 elections. But again there came from the United Provinces one Liberal. Their future, however, is bright, owing to their diplomatic manipulation of the Swarajist leader, whom they assisted in producing a report on the lines laid down by the Liberal leaders in their presidential speeches in their annual conferences.

The elections of 1923 showed that in contested constituencies the number of votes recorded was nearly double those in the previous elections. Out of 800,000 votes in contested elections more than 350,000 were recorded for the Legislative Assembly. For the Provincial Councils, in contested constituencies, between 40 and 50 per cent. of votes were recorded.

The elections of 1925 to the Council of State disclosed that its constituencies were still Conservative. The Swaraj Party made a strenuous attempt to capture some of the seats, but they could only return nine out of a total of thirty-three members.

The General Elections of 1926 for the Legislative Assembly and the Provincial Councils witnessed the rout of the Congress in Upper India and the triumph of the Communalists, who had rallied under the banner of the

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**Hindu Maha Sabha.** This was partly due to the lack of drive in the Congress leadership, which was played out, and the lack of character of the Congress Party, which was being eaten up by internal jealousy and petty feuds. A powerful leader with infinite patience and capacity for sacrifice was able to hold together men of various temperaments and outlook. His tact and his genius for compromise, yielding on non-essentials to please the *amour propre* of his prominent followers, while sticking to his own general policy, gave C. R. Das unique power and opportunity. Mr Das was not oppressed by the vanity of a mediocre politician of Allahabad who succeeded him in the All-India leadership, and who got into endless trouble with his colleagues because he had not the ordinary ability of a leader to merge his ego in the greater ego of his own party and the still greater ego of his own country.

In South India, and especially in the Madras Presidency, the non-Brahmin party, which had become a communal caucus, was easily routed by the Congress leader, whose energy and diplomacy confounded his opponents. The driving-power of the Swarajist leader of South India, his enthusiasm for the cause, and his capacity for complete self-effacement made Mr Srinivasa Iyengar the idol of the public. But for his personality, to which the Swarajist successes in the South must be wholly attributed, the strength of the Congress Party would have considerably decreased in the Legislative Assembly. Despite all this, the Swarajists lost both in numbers and prestige in the Legislative Assembly and the Provincial Councils. To avoid the Swarajists being 'dished' at the next elections their leader surrendered the Congress programme and abandoned the old Nationalist policy which believed in healthy compromises with Muslims with a view to creating confidence in an important minority, without which all national endeavours must end in fiasco. The spirit which animated the old Congress and gave India what was known

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as "the Lucknow Pact," the strength behind which compelled the Government to incorporate it in the 1919 scheme of the reforms, was banished from the Congress owing to the lack of faith and lack of courage of its leader, who could not forget the heavy casualties of the 1916 elections. A constitutional scheme of reforms which was acceptable to the Hindu Maha Sabha was produced by the Congress leaders with the help of the Liberals, to the disgust of the Muslims and the Sikhs, who openly rebelled against it. This incident shows that organized communalism can confuse and overwhelm professing nationalism.

It was becoming clear that the power of the electorate was being felt by the leaders. Its communalism became contagious. Separate electorates cannot be the nurseries of nationalism. The Congress became tainted with communalism because it believed in Council entry and had to pander to the prejudices of the electors. The Muslims in the Congress dwindled from a few hundreds to less than a score of members. The Congress had asked the voters not to exercise their new rights. When the first period of ten years' reforms was about to expire the very Congress felt compelled to bow to the electorate, which was communal. The parties and their leaders could not therefore afford to take up a purely nationalist attitude. This is true alike of Hindus and Muslims.

The awakening of the electorate was real. Their interest in the administration of the country and in the work of the Legislatures was increasing.

In the United Provinces, which has a population of 45,375,000, the electorate in 1920 was over a million. In 1923 half a million more electors, and by 1926 another 100,000, were added to the rolls, making a percentage of 3.53 to the total population. The percentage of votes polled in 1920 was 33. It rose to 41.36 in 1923 and 49.32 in 1926. In 1920 the total number of votes recorded was 333,000. In 1923 the total number was 510,511. And in 1926 it rose to

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732,155, many more than double the number of votes polled in the first General Election under the Montagu reforms.

In the Punjab, which has a total population of a little over 20,500,000, the number of those who were enfranchized was 702,748, or 3·3 per cent. At the General Election of 1923 the percentage of votes polled varied from 84 in the case of the university constituency to 38 in the case of the ten Sikh constituencies.

In Bengal in 1923 the number of voters was 1,044,116, or 2·1 per cent. of the population. Of these 34·8 per cent. recorded their votes in 1923. The number of electors in 1926 was 1,184,804, or 2·4 per cent. of the population. Of these 33·4 per cent. voted in 1926.

In the Madras Presidency in 1920 3 per cent. of the total population were enfranchized, and 24 per cent. of the registered voters exercised the right to vote. In 1923 3·13 per cent. were registered as voters, and 36·26 per cent. of the voters went to the polls. In 1926 3·36 were enfranchized, and 48 per cent. of them exercised their franchise. In 1923 women were entitled to vote. In 1926 women were allowed to stand as candidates, though the two who stood were defeated.

In the Bombay Presidency in 1923 the percentage of voters to total population was 4·03 for the Legislative Council and 98 for the Legislative Assembly. The percentage of votes recorded to the total number of voters on the electoral roll is estimated at 69·84 for the Provincial Council and 70·97 for the Assembly.

In the Central Provinces and Berar the percentage of male electors who voted in the General Election of 1923 in contested general constituencies to the total number of registered voters was 57·4.

In Bihar and Orissa, during the 1923 election, the polling was far heavier than in 1920, averaging 52 per cent. for the Provincial Council. In 1926 the percentage of actual voters rose to 60 in the contested constituencies.

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In Assam, in contested constituencies, 25 per cent. went to the polls in 1920, 42 per cent. in 1923, and 43·5 per cent. in 1926. At the last General Election the highest proportion of polling was in the Mohammedan constituency of South Sylhet, 71 per cent. ; and the next in the Sylhet Sadr Non-Mohammedan constituency, 66·11 per cent.

It must be remembered that greater enthusiasm cannot be created for a Legislature which has no power to enforce the will of the people. With the grant of autonomy, the growth of education among people, and the realization of their powers arising from the dependence of the parties on the voters the electorates may be expected to take as real an interest in the administration as the electors in any other part of the civilized world.

Limited as the powers of the present Legislatures are, the interest evinced by the constituencies and the general public in the work of the Councils is striking. The following observations of the Madras Government are noteworthy :

The work of the Council is followed closely by the literate and particularly by the English-educated population. The Press gives much space to reports of debates, and its correspondence columns frequently contain letters demanding or suggesting or complaining of action by the Council. Members of the Council on occasions contribute to such correspondence, thus recognizing that by this means they may secure a wider hearing. The Visitors' Gallery is well patronized, and indeed is uncomfortably crowded during important debates, such as that on the University Bill, or the Religious Endowments Bill. Such measures produce a large crop of newspaper leaders. Important resolutions, *e.g.*, that in favour of the enfranchisement of women, those for adjournment of the House, the more sensational Budget motions, arouse much interest. The interest is keener in Madras than in the country districts, but even there meetings to support or condemn decisions of the legislative body are not unknown, and the resolutions of such meetings are on occasions forwarded to Government.

## CHAPTER X

### THE PUBLIC SERVICES

LORD MESTON (retired I.C.S.) quotes with approval the Abbé Reynal, who declared that had the Portuguese not rounded the Cape of Good Hope and discovered India the torch of Liberty in Europe would have been extinguished by the Turks, and Islam would have dominated the world.<sup>1</sup> The French philosopher-historian has been proved right by the testimony of the twentieth century. Muslim thinkers hold that had the flag of Indian nationalism not been seized by European hands the Turks would not have been beaten back to their Asiatic homelands. The conquest of India laid the foundations of the success of the European movement against Turkey and of the British Commonwealth.

Had the Empire of the Moghuls not sunk under the vices of bad internal administration and the excesses of Aurangzeb's fanaticism, the revulsion against it under Sivaji's leadership would not have assumed such gigantic proportions, and the central Government would not have fallen a prey to irretrievable demoralization. Under the circumstances nothing could be easier than the passing of the Empire of the Moghuls and the Mahrattas within the orbit of the British Commonwealth.

Had the English trodden the path of the Grand Moghul they would have marched down the steep incline, and their Empire in India would have long since become a thing of the past. Their first attempt was to study and avoid the mistakes of their predecessors.

The one insuperable obstacle in the way of the consolidation of their power was their ignorance of the

<sup>1</sup> *The Domains and Dependencies of the Empire.*

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vernaculars of the country, an ignorance which they overcame by the brilliant plan of educating the Hindus in English. Quite a reasonable volume can be compiled from the correspondence of the early British administrators on this subject. The prop of British rule in India has been neither the Army nor the police, but the English-educated classes who carry on the government of the country. The steel frame of the structure was not the European Services, but the English-educated classes turned out by the Indian universities. As the number of the universities and the students who passed out of them increased beyond the requirements of an earlier day the growth of middle-class unemployment became a serious problem. The educated unemployed middle classes naturally contribute to our present discontents.

Macaulay foresaw this trouble, and claimed that it would be the proudest chapter of English history. In no case could it be avoided. The choice lay between colonizing India—which was out of the question—and Europeanizing her children. True is the contention of British critics that the clamour for Indianization of the superior Services and nationalization of the administration emanates from educated classes, whose success will only mean the transfer of power from a white bureaucracy to a brown oligarchy. But the retort of the latter is equally true, that they are numerically larger than the former, have a greater stake in the country, and are not migratory birds. It is a recognition of the validity of the claim of the educated classes that resulted in the famous O'Donnell Circular.

It would be interesting to see what the official opinion is on the subject :

More powerful still has been the general uncertainty as to what the immediate future would bring to the English administrator in India—an uncertainty aggravated by the depressing atmosphere of racial hatred which had begun to surround



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even those who were devoting themselves most whole-heartedly to the interests of their adopted country. The result of all these factors was a serious shortage in suitable European candidates for the various Services. This shortage, combined with the plain desire of the Central Legislature that steps should be taken to secure an increased recruitment of Indians, induced the Government of India, with the consent of the Secretary of State, to consult local Governments on the issues involved. Accordingly a letter, which subsequently became famous as the "O'Donnell Circular," was issued at the end of May 1922. This document reviewed, and invited the opinion of the Provincial Governments upon, the various considerations involved in the question of Indianization, in order that the Government of India might consider the whole position. The letter, which had not been written for publication, was given to the world through journalistic enterprise; and at once certain sections of opinion, both in England and in India, began to accuse the Indian Government of betraying the cause of the Europeans in the Services, and of jettisoning, for political considerations, the responsibilities which Great Britain still retains for the welfare of the people of India. This agitation, together with the existing anxiety regarding the future of the Services, led Mr Lloyd George to deliver a speech early in August, in which he declared that the Civil Services of India were the steel frame of the whole structure of administration. He stated that the constitutional changes recently made in India were the result of an experiment; that he could not predict the influence which non-co-operation would exert upon the next elections; and that if there was a change in the character of the Legislature and in the purpose of those who were chosen to sit therein, the new situation would have to be taken into account. He declared that his Majesty's Government would stand to their responsibilities in India, and would take whatever steps were necessary to discharge or to enforce them. He further went on to say that he could see no period when India could dispense with the guidance and the assistance of a nucleus of the British Civil Services. The continued assistance of British Officials was, he said, necessary to bring about the discharge of Britain's great trust in India; and it

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was not in order to relinquish this trust, but to bring India into partnership in its discharge, that the reforms had been introduced.<sup>1</sup>

Say what Lloyd George may, if the goal of British rule in India is *Swaraj*, as announced by his Majesty King George on February 9, 1921, it is not right to declare, as the Welsh Prime Minister did, that he could see no period when India could dispense with the guidance of the British in the Civil Services. Another great Liberal, as Secretary of State for India, repudiated any intention of paving the way for a Parliamentary system of government in India, which, he said, "if my existence either officially or corporeally were to be prolonged twenty times longer than it is likely to be, is not at all the goal to which I could for a moment aspire."

Lord Morley was wrong. Notwithstanding his repudiation, the Indian Councils Act of 1909, which embodied what is known as the Morley-Minto reforms, was clearly paving the way for the Parliamentary system. The Montagu-Chelmsford Report shows how

British policy in India has been steadily directed to a point at which the question of a self-governing India was bound to arise; how impulses, at first faint, have been encouraged by education and opportunity; how the growth quickened nine years ago, and was immeasurably accelerated by the War.

No better explanation of this immeasurable acceleration can be given than in the words of two recent authors, both of whom hold progressive if cautious views in regard to India.

Imperial strategy before 1914 was based on the assumption that in time of hostilities India would need to be powerfully reinforced from Britain. How vastly different was our experience. The moment war was declared the Viceroy pledged the last man and the last gun in India to the service of the Crown. An immense stream of men and munitions flowed

<sup>1</sup> *India in 1922-23*

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from India to the various theatres of the War ; a million men for service overseas, a cash contribution of a hundred millions sterling from resources which are not very large. Except for the Ghadr conspiracy in the Punjab and a momentary flicker of excitement when it was known that an attempt was to be made to land arms and ammunition from Java, the Government of India were free to pursue their Great War activities unperturbed by internal anxieties. Certainly none in India thought that thereafter India was going to stand, politically, on the ground she occupied in 1914. The last part of Lord Hardinge's Viceroyalty was devoted to an examination of the changes thought wise and prudent. Lord Chelmsford took up the question where Lord Hardinge left it. The Indian National Congress and the Moslem League adumbrated their own schemes ; every one was constitution-making, and the drum-beat of self-determination raised wild hopes, unloosed soaring ambitions.<sup>1</sup>

Lord Morley could not have foreseen the World War and India's share in bringing it to a victorious conclusion for Britain and the Allies, but, war or no war, he should have seen, as a student of history and of human nature, the inevitable outcome of his reforms. Well might his critics say :

Dry theorists like Lord Morley may have repudiated the idea that they were aiming at a Parliamentary system ; they failed to determine what else they had in view. British policy in India has been steadily directed to a point where the question of a self-governing India was bound to arise ; that it has arisen is the crowning achievement and justification of the British connexion.<sup>2</sup>

The spirit behind the crowning achievement was obviously not grasped by Mr Lloyd George when he insisted on the domination of the British in the Services, which was a negation of self-government. Mr Lloyd George's statement

<sup>1</sup> *India : the New Phase*, by Sir Stanley Reed and P. R. Cadell (published in 1928).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

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only showed to the Indian mind that British politicians have put the War, and all the promises they made under its pressure, resolutely behind them. Colonial self-government, which is England's oft-repeated pledge to India, will have no meaning if it does not mean the approximation of the Indian Services, alike in the matter of recruitment and status, to those in the Colonies. \*

The criticism that the adoption of the colonial practice in regard to recruitment will reduce the efficiency of the Services is not admitted as just by the Indian politicians, but such criticism, which has always been levelled at the Colonial Services by "God's Englishmen," did not prevent the grant of self-government to the Colonies.

Keith says that the Civil Service in the Dominions is recruited from a comparatively low educational test, and then advanced by promotion, disregarding the British distinction of different educational tests according to the nature of intelligence required for the work to be accomplished.<sup>1</sup> The charge of a low educational test cannot be levelled against Indians. On the contrary, the complaint has been that Indians, especially the Brahmins, whose intellect is about the best in the world, have an unparalleled capacity for standing educational tests, however high. If there were no fixing of the British percentage in the Services, and educational tests were the only door of admission, India's Brahmins would swamp the Services.

According to the Indian Nationalist, there should be no fixing of percentage for the Civil Services, nor should there be simultaneous examinations in India and England. Henceforth they should be held in India only, and willing Britons aspiring to serve India, which many of them, owing to long family connexions, truly love, will do well to come to India and pass the examinations. This spirit, which inspired the O'Donnell Circular, awaits translation into actuality.

The immediate stoppage of recruitment in England is not

<sup>1</sup> *The Constitution, Administration, and Laws of the Empire*, by A. R. Keith.

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pressed for by the Moderates, but they maintain that it is a goal toward which a rapid move must be made. Until the goal is reached they would agree to the holding of examinations in India and England. In the meantime they demand that the position of the Services must be made analogous to their position in the Colonies or Great Britain.

"Our policy," wrote the authors of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report, "is irrevocably declared, and it ought to content all sober minds. We are no longer seeking to govern a subject race by means of the Services. We are seeking to make Indian people self-governing."<sup>1</sup> Montagu foresaw that the change would not be agreeable to many men who had grown up in the older tradition. "It is harder to convince than to direct; to prevail in consultation than to enforce an order."<sup>2</sup>

To-day the Indian Civil Service dreads the political influence, whereas the politician objects to the Civil Service playing his rôle. He says that the Civil Service should be put beyond the pale of political influence, and demands that it should not play the politician's part. "In Australia," says Keith,

the dread of political influence in the Civil Service has led to efforts to remove the Service in large measure from Ministerial control by conferring ample powers on Civil Service Commissions, both as regards appointment, promotion, and discipline, and the same attempt is made in the Union of South Africa. . . . In Canada, it was only in 1928 that fairly effective means were taken to bring the outside Services as well as those at Ottawa under the Civil Service Commission, and thus destroy the grave abuse of political patronage which caused numerous changes of incumbents of office on every change in the Government and destroyed the possibility of efficiency.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Montagu-Chelmsford Report, par. 324.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, par. 327.

<sup>3</sup> *The Constitution, Administration, and Laws of the Empire*, pp. 213, 214.

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The Indian, however extreme his views may be, agrees to the grant of necessary protection which the Colonies have granted to the Services. But the Services must serve, says he ; they must cease to dominate. That the Services will have much real share in shaping affairs goes without saying, but they can no longer be in the limelight ; they will be relegated to the background, as in England.

The Civil Service of self-governing India should be like the Civil Service in England, without the defects of the English system. A Civil servant in Britain holds office at the pleasure of the Crown, and may be dismissed without ground, but in practice he enjoys a security of tenure without parallel in business life. This is doubtless necessary, as Keith says, in order to secure the maximum efficiency. It should not be imagined that the permanent officials have no power in Britain. The Ministers are ordinarily at their mercy. Even a man of real ability, like Mr Wedgwood Benn, is helpless in their hands. It is doubtful if even men of Mr Churchill's calibre can resist what Mr Keith calls the more subtle form of the raising of objections, supported by a wealth of knowledge and argument against which it is hard to contend.

This power of the permanent Services, while no doubt making for continuity and stability, is also responsible, in Keith's words,

for the maintenance of abuses ; the system also is marked by a vast waste of energy and of money in the duplication of work, and the obliteration of the sense of responsibility. The experience of the War showed the fatal extravagance and mismanagement in finance of Civil servants, for whom the money was provided perforce by a hapless public, while none of the tests available in business life for weeding out incompetence were applied.<sup>1</sup>

Thus it will be seen that even the Public Services in Britain are not filled by the infallibles.

<sup>1</sup> *The Constitution, Administration, and Laws of the Empire*, p. 167.

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The object of the Indian Nationalist, which is to reduce the Civil Services in his country to the position of the same in England, may not be easy to attain. The magnitude of his task will be understood only by those who realize the power which the British attained after the battle of Plassey, and to which they have clung since. The British servants of the Company, who were merely traders, found themselves suddenly invested with the absolute powers of their predecessors. They could not overcome the grasping nature of the agencies of the Old Indian Government, which they continued to employ while steadily striving to Anglicize them.

The late Sir Valentine Chirol wrote :

The disappearance of the old East India Company produced no radical change in the machinery or methods of Government. But the increasing complexity of Indian administration and the specialization of work in separate departments to meet the growing needs of Indian development led by degrees to excessive centralization in the Provincial and Central Government Secretariats, and these developed the usual tendency of all powerful bureaucracies to believe in their own infallibility.<sup>1</sup>

*Pari passu* with the growth in strength of this bureaucracy also grew in number what Justice Ranade called "the children of British rule."

"No nation," says Chirol,

has been so successful as the British in ruling primitive and backward peoples who do not aspire to equality but are content as children are, but the Englishman is apt to grow impatient when those whom his tutelage has raised begin to chafe under it and demand emancipation from his leading-strings.

On the contrary, the Nationalist thinks that the British Civil servant in India has been too patient to release India from his leading-strings, and consequently has done everything in his power to create in her children healthy impatience.

<sup>1</sup> *India*, p. 831 (Modern World series).



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The hands of the Nationalist are supposed to be strengthened by the machinery of the reforms. "Its purpose," says Lord Meston,

is to habituate the old official executive, even in discharging its own responsibilities, to rely more and more upon the support of its Legislature and less and less upon the support of the British Parliament.<sup>1</sup>

Since the capture of many seats in the Legislature by the Congress Party the Councils have ceased to be docile to the Services, and the Services have fought hard against the encroachment of Ministers and the Councils.

<sup>1</sup> *The Dominions and Dependencies of the Empire*, p. 211.

## PART II

### TWO INDIAS

CONFLICT BETWEEN PRINCES AND PEOPLE—  
THE CROWN AS THE CONNECTING LINK

## CHAPTER XI

### NATIVE AUTOCRACY

THERE are over six hundred States <sup>1</sup> in India, varying in size and population from Hyderabad, which covers 82,698 square miles, with a population of 12,471,770 and a revenue of £4,600,000, to Maler Kotla, with an area of 168 square miles and a population of 80,332 and an approximate revenue of £100,000, and to Suket, which has an area of 420 square miles and a population of only 54,328 and an approximate revenue of £15,000.

All the States put together cover an area of 598,138 square miles, which is about two-fifths of the total area of the whole of India excluding Burma, which is 1,571,625 square miles. The States have a population of 68,652,974, nearly a quarter of the population of the whole country, which is 305,730,288.

The powers of the chiefs of one State differ from those of another, but the form of government may be described generally as personal and autocratic.

The *sunnuds*, or treaties, between the British Government and the States also differ, but in actual practice the differences have been of degree and not of kind. Hyderabad, which hugged the age-old superstition that it was an independent State in matters of internal administration, received a snub from Lord Reading, the Viceroy of India, which once for all disposed of the delusion of the rulers of

<sup>1</sup> The India Office List (1928) speaks of over six hundred States, whereas General Sir O'Moore Creagh, in his *Indian Studies* (p. 217), speaks of "some seven hundred feudatory States." J. D. Rees gives the actual figure in his *Real India* (p. 130) as 675, of which 175 are directly under the Government of India and 500 under the Provincial Government. The most reliable figure, however, must be that of the States Inquiry Committee, who group the States under three classes, numbering altogether 562.

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the States as to their own and unlimited rights and privileges in internal matters.<sup>1</sup>

Lord Reading's warning caused considerable trepidation in India. It evoked the sympathy of the thoughtful people in British India. It was hailed with satisfaction by the subjects of the Hyderabad State, who were dissatisfied with the personal rule of the Nizam.

The Nizam had claimed that, save and except in matters relating to foreign Powers and policies, the Nizams of Hyderabad have been independent in the internal affairs of the State, just as much as the British Government. Lord Reading felt it was incumbent on him as his Imperial Majesty's representative to remove the gross misconception of the biggest of Indian Chiefs—a misconception under which the minor Princes have also been labouring. Lord Reading plainly warned the Nizam that the sovereignty of the British Crown was supreme in India, and therefore no ruler of an Indian State could justifiably claim to negotiate with the British Government on an equal footing. The Viceroy further indicated that the right of the British Government to intervene in the internal affairs of Indian States was another instance of the consequences necessarily involved in the supremacy of the British Crown.

The Princes did not like this unambiguous enunciation on the part of the ex-Lord Chief Justice of England of the legal power and moral right of Britain to interfere even in internal matters of administration within the States. Their own notions of their importance and independence have been embodied in a publication<sup>2</sup> in which they contrast the old policy of Britain with the new policy enunciated by

<sup>1</sup> Letter from the Viceroy and Governor-General of India to his Exalted Highness the Nizam of Hyderabad, dated Delhi, March 27, 1926. This letter is reprinted as an appendix to the *States Inquiry Committee Report*, 1928-29.

<sup>2</sup> *The British Crown and Indian States*. An Outline Sketch drawn up on behalf of the Standing Committee of the Chamber of Princes, by the Directorate of the Chamber's Special Organization (P. S. Kung and Son, Ltd., 1929).

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Lord Reading. They quote from a letter of Lord Dalhousie in reply to a suggestion of General Fraser, British Resident in Hyderabad, that the Government of India should intervene to set affairs right in the Nizam's dominions.<sup>1</sup> Lord Dalhousie declined to interfere in the domestic affairs of the Nizam, though his dominions were groaning under the vices of gross misgovernment. Lord Dalhousie held that as long as the alleged evils of his Highness's Government were confined within its own limits and affected only his subjects "the Government of India must observe religiously the obligations of its own good faith."

Armed with these and other authorities, the Princes thought that they had a good case, and demanded an inquiry into their powers and status. They pressed their demand with success upon the British Government at a time when they were appointing the Parliamentary Commission to inquire into the conditions in British India in regard to the working of the constitutional reforms leading to Dominion status. The Princes claimed that if British India were to be given Dominion status there were important matters, besides their own status and prerogatives, such as their financial and economic relations with British India, which required exploration.

The Right Hon. the Earl of Birkenhead, in his capacity as Secretary of State for India, appointed on December 16, 1927, the Indian States Inquiry Committee under the Chairmanship of Sir Harcourt Butler, whom Lord Chelmsford in one of his Viceregal utterances had pleasantly described as "our political Don Juan."

The States Inquiry Committee submitted their report to the Right Hon. Viscount Peel, Lord Birkenhead's successor, who presented it to Parliament in March 1929.

As the Conservatives were defeated at the last General Election the task of taking whatever action his Majesty's Government might deem fit on the report and its findings

<sup>1</sup> *The British Crown and Indian States*, pp. 52, 53, 54.

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fell on the Right Hon. Wedgwood Benn, Secretary of State for India. It must indeed be a rather curious experience for a Socialist Government to consider what attitude they should adopt toward the Princes and Chiefs of India—curious because Socialism is the antipodes of the institution of Princes, who are despotic monarchs in their own kingdoms, though vassals of a constitutional monarch.

The Indian States Inquiry Committee met with a cordial reception alike from the people and the Princes. This was a happy if dramatic contrast to the scenes which faced the Simon Commission in British India.

The subjects of the States wanted to place their grievances before the States Inquiry Committee. A States Deputation came to England with a view to approaching the Committee. But the Committee would not, because they could not, receive them. Contrast this with the fate of the Simon Commission issuing invitations to the Indian people, a ferocious and powerful section of which would not recognize or approach it, notwithstanding its sweet ways. The subjects of Indian States did not boycott the Butler Committee as the people of British India did the Simon Commission. It was the other way about. They felt that the Butler Committee had boycotted the State subjects.

This can only be explained as due to the extreme anxiety on the part of the Government not to encourage—or rather not to be suspected of encouraging—the subjects of the States to aspire to democracy, the one thing that the Princes fear.

The British Government's policy in regard to the States appears to be to Europeanize them by introducing in them more British men and methods. A suggestion has been made by the Butler Committee that a new States Service should be inaugurated corresponding, presumably, to the Indian Civil Service. Instead of instituting this new Service, it would save all pother if the Indian Civil Service were increasingly employed in the Indian States. Perhaps that

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does not fit in with the scheme of developing the States into an independent group—independent of a liberated British India, but very much dependent on his Majesty's Government in Great Britain.

Supposing some democratic Maharaja of the future wants to introduce responsible government in his State and reduce himself to the position of a constitutional monarch, will the Paramount Power agree to it or force him to abdicate, or intern him under the Bengal Regulation III of 1818 without a trial as too dangerously democratic and politically minded?

So far the British Government have shown no enthusiasm in inducing the Maharajas to make experiments in democracy, as Mr Montagu did in British India. So far they have not discouraged the Maharajas from putting down agitation in their own territory, even if it happens to be legitimate. The British policy in the past has been generally one of tolerance for the strength with which the Maharajas put down all inconvenient agitation and keep out all troublesome agitators. The Residents of these States were apt to show some sneaking admiration for the pursuit of 'repression' in the States. How long the Maharajas will keep out their subjects from their undoubted right, not only to participate in the administration, but to make it responsible to themselves, is more than one can predict. The difficulty of the State subject is greater than that of the British subject. The latter had to deal with a class of administrators who, whatever their anxiety—which is natural and human—not to part with power, had after all instinct in them the spirit of democracy to which they were born and under which they were bred. Again, the ultimate appeal of the British Indian subject was to the British democracy and its traditions. The State subject, on the other hand, has to deal with the Maharaja, whose traditions and instincts are opposed to democracy in any form. "Benevolent autocracy" is the



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*no plus ultra* of perfection to which any State subject can aspire. The best Maharajas generally would like to play the rôle of benevolent despots, but where the Maharaja is good but weak, and the Dewan (Prime Minister) unscrupulous and strong, there is neither honesty nor justice nor fair play in the administration. British India, it is no exaggeration to say, is a thousand times better than the Native States, alike in the matter of justice and fair play.

Essentially foreign even now at the top, owing no responsibility to the people, the British Indian Government deals with the people, both individually and collectively, more justly than the States Government. The reason for this is that the British Government in India is not a wholly irresponsible body, but is responsible to Britain. Even when the British democracy was not so representative as to-day, even when the electorate was imperfect and undeveloped, Parliament watched with dismay and scrutinized with ruthless attention the doings of its rulers. A remarkable Empire-builder like Warren Hastings could not escape impeachment in the House of Commons. The Maharajas, however, have no such authority to fear. Their cruelties and excesses are ignored even when systematically exposed in the Nationalist Press in British India, which is not given an opportunity to establish its case by being proceeded against under the Princes Protection Act. The British Government are in the habit of showing tolerance to a Maharaja so long as he is not noted for his independence. So long as he is loyal to the Residents and behaves like a good boy they admonish him for some of his notorious acts, only privately and departmentally.<sup>1</sup>

Had it not been for the British there would have been such terrible riots and popular risings in the States that the unpopular Maharajas would have disappeared or been

<sup>1</sup> "Up with a good Rajah, down with a bad, most up with a very bad who brings in a British administrator."—*In India*, by G. W. Stevens, D. 220.

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deprived of their autocratic powers. But the British Government cannot avoid, if need arises, helping these Maharajas, because they have deprived them of their militias, which they could have used against their rebellious subjects. The safety of the Maharajas therefore lies in the strength of the British Army, the fear of which prevents their subjects from entertaining the merest thought of rebellion.

Fierce is the conflict which has arisen in the States between the Princes and the people. The former cling ferociously to their inheritance of despotic power, while the latter are struggling for their right to evolve and control a popular constitution. This difficult matter was not tackled by the States Inquiry Committee. Theirs was the simpler task of reconciling the differences between the Princes and the Paramount Power in regard to the actual status and mutual relations of each to the other.

It is necessary to mention here that the people of the Indian States who desired that their representatives should be given a hearing by the States Inquiry Committee were not given an opportunity to present the case on the technical ground that the Committee's terms of reference did not include the grievances of the people. It is easy to blame the Committee for not having heard the people's deputation. Their report has been criticized as one-sided, based on the version of one party. But the Committee could not, constituted as they were, go into the bigger and more complicated problem of the internal administration of the States with particular reference to the aspirations of the State subjects. The fault lay with the terms of reference of the Committee, and not with the Committee itself.

His Majesty's Government were obviously concerned to handle a delicate problem in as cautious a way as possible. By making the terms of reference comprehensive and providing the subjects of the States with facilities to present

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their grievances before the Committee, his Majesty's Government would have assumed powers which the States or, more correctly, their rulers have either repudiated or resisted. The Committee's purpose was first to investigate the extent of the authority of the Paramount Power, and, secondly, to inquire into the financial and economic relations between British India and the States. The investigation has resulted in their cryptic conclusion, "Paramountcy must remain paramount."<sup>1</sup> In other words, the British authority is ultimate and final and must prevail in the Indian States, as in British India. The Paramount Power, says the Committee,

must fulfil its obligations, defining or adapting itself according to the shifting necessities of the time and the progressive development of the States. Nor need the States take alarm at this conclusion. Through paramountcy and paramountcy alone have grown up and flourished those strong benign relations on which at times the States rely. On paramountcy and paramountcy alone can the States rely for their preservation through the generations that are to come. Through paramountcy is pushed aside the danger of destruction.<sup>2</sup>

Wise and carefully chosen words these, but pregnant with meaning. While in the above passages lurks a gentle hint about changing times and progressive development, and the duty of the States to move with the times—it is the function of the Paramount Power to see to it that they do so—there is also the imperceptible assurance that when the democratic movement becomes too strong for the States to resist they can rely on paramountcy to save them from "the danger of destruction."

The States Inquiry Committee is protecting the Princes against themselves. In their supreme folly the Princes claim independence from the British authority. They complain that the British yoke exercised through the

<sup>1</sup> *States Inquiry Committee Report*, par. 57, p. 31.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

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Governor-General and his Agent has been lying heavy on their necks, that, according to the treaty rights and engagements, they are independent in internal matters, whereas actually the British interference has been harassing and improper.<sup>1</sup> By way of propaganda, 'boosting' the rights and claims of the Chiefs, the Directorate of the Chamber of Princes have also published a book<sup>2</sup> emphasizing the disabilities under which the rulers of the States labour owing to the endless surveillance of the British Government in internal matters.

The *States Inquiry Committee Report* is a courteous reply to the pretensions of the Princes who would have vanished—owing to the corruption of their judiciary<sup>3</sup> and the extravagant luxuries in which they irresponsibly waste public money—before a ruthless public awakening.

British interference in Indian States is necessary ; but unfortunately at times it has been exercised with excessive restraint in the case of Princes who are reactionaries, and with excessive severity in the case of Princes who have democratic leanings. The old British bureaucrat liked the Oriental despot. Before the War the retired bureaucrat was never tired of singing the praises of the Princes. He has even attacked the policy of interference of the British officers in the internal affairs of the Princes, saying "Leave them alone ; give them a free hand to do what they like in their States. They are their States, after all !" The admiration of the retired civilian for the Indian Chiefs and their uncontrolled rights has found expression in his writings. One of them deplored "the craze for reform

<sup>1</sup> "If a second Akhbar were born in India, we would not let him rule in his own way, and he would in that case rather not rule at all. It is childish to blame the Rajah for being Oriental."—*In India*, p. 249

<sup>2</sup> *The British Crown and Indian State*

<sup>3</sup> "A small party of Hindus called at the Mission bungalow to make a request on behalf of a friend who lived in one of the Native States. They affirmed that it was an impossibility to get justice in a law-court in one of these States except through the intervention of the British Resident."—*India and Indians*, by Edward Elwin, p. 119

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after British patterns" of the European officers in the States.<sup>1</sup> He has even accused them of forming a "little European clique" in the capital of the Princes, who could not resist "the temptation to introduce into native States those principles of administration which they have always practised" in British India.

This reactionary view no longer finds favour with the British officers of to-day. They are developing a new angle of vision, much to the distress of the pampered rulers of the States. Either the States must progress on modern and democratic lines with British India, or its rulers must agree to the constant interference and control of the Paramount Power in internal affairs.

The age of despotism has passed away in British India. If by a fiat of the Socialist Government in Britain all the Indian States were abolished none would be more happy than the subjects of the States themselves.<sup>2</sup>

The majority of Princes, instead of chafing at the intervention of the British Government, must feel grateful that their States have not been annexed to British India on the ground of maladministration. With the exception of some of the South Indian States, where English education has progressed as rapidly as in British India, owing to a succession of enlightened Princes who saw the wisdom of opening colleges affiliated to the British universities in their respective provinces, the administration of the Indian States is appallingly crude and indisputably corrupt.

One-man rule is bad enough even when the man is able, but when it degenerates into the rule of a man who is addicted to the worst vices of Oriental despotism—women, wine, and idle amusements at the cost of the people—it becomes a nightmare. Were a referendum taken to-day among the subjects they would cheerfully vote for the

<sup>1</sup> *Real India*, p. 135

<sup>2</sup> "Many of their people would like to be annexed to British India."—*In India*, p. 249.

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annexation of the States to British India. The States exist to-day because of the mercy of the British.

Had there been in British India one-thousandth of that corruption and dishonesty and oppression and uncontrolled autocracy you find in the Indian States, long ago the British *Raj* would have perished. But the tragedy is that the British *Raj* tolerates the Princes, who are notorious for their maladministration, as if to enable the Indian people by way of contrast to choose between two evils.<sup>1</sup> Between a tolerated and tolerable foreign rule and an intolerant and impossible native autocracy the choice is easy. No wonder British rule in India is more popular than that of the Maharajas! Tell Indians that England would to-morrow parcel out India into so many little States under Maharajas, and thus make the whole of India hitherto directly under the British as self-governing as the States, and see what happens! A whole country will rise in revolt against that shocking suggestion. Take away the protecting arm of Britain from these medieval Maharajas and their subjects, who have been groaning under their unspeakable meanness and tyranny, will overthrow them in one single week.

British India is not a heaven, though the European officials there sometimes act like little divinities and infallibles. They are, in the Right Hon. J. Ramsay MacDonald's satirical words, "imperious and imperial."<sup>2</sup> But they have begun to feel that the power which made them near to gods must vanish. It is decreasing fast. If British India is not a heaven the Indian States are a veritable hell.<sup>3</sup> There is only one way to improve them.

<sup>1</sup> "We might annex them—there is never any lack of pretext—and we might leave them entirely alone to serve as awful examples and make our subjects (in British India) contented by the contrast."—*In India*, pp. 249, 250.

<sup>2</sup> *The Awakening of India*, by J. Ramsay MacDonald.

<sup>3</sup> Lord Curzon wrote: "One Prince . . . was a confirmed drunkard, shot his servant dead in a fit of ungovernable temper; another was privy to the poisoning of his uncle; a third . . . for nearly twenty years had been

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And that is to make the rulers constitutional kings—subject to the suzerainty of the British Crown in external affairs, and to the will of the people in internal administration. That is the only answer that can be given to the Princes' demand for independence from British interference. That answer has not been given by the Indian States Inquiry Committee, which was only charged with the professorial rôle of interpreting in the light of existing documents the powers of paramountcy. Will that aspect be examined by the Reforms Inquiry Commission presided over by Sir John Simon, now that the scope of its inquiry has been extended? A joint or separate consultation of the political leaders and the Princes in the neighbourhood of Whitehall may have some value if the question can be approached boldly. But the real responsibility of introducing responsible government in the Indian States rests with the Paramount Power. The States Inquiry Committee have shirked it. But it cannot be shirked for long. The Maharajas, who are generally perverse and ill-educated, are not the sort of people who will like to follow the example of the Samurai of Japan, who voluntarily relinquished their power.<sup>1</sup> They have to be forced to move with the times.

Perhaps realizing that this step is not possible, the States Inquiry Committee, after establishing with weighty proofs the sovereignty of the suzerain power, suggests that a new set of British political officers, recruited from the universities and given special training, should go forth to the

guilty of gross maladministration, of shocking barbarity in the treatment of his subjects."—*Leaves from a Viceroy's Notebook, and other Papers*, by the Marquess Curzon of Kedleston, p. 42.

<sup>1</sup> "As a fine old Sikh, the Raja of Nabha, said to me: 'We educate our sons, teach them English and Western ideas, and then marry them to girls who have had no education. The result will be a breed of mules.'"—*The India we Served*, by Sir Walter Lawrence, p. 111.

"The education of chiefs, moreover, has not been conspicuously successful, because youths have been brought up to be English rather than Indian and to hanker after visits to England rather than residence among their own people."—*Real India*, p. 137.



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**Native States.** It is also suggested that these young officers might at some early period in their career be attached to the British Embassies or Ministries.<sup>1</sup> The present political officers, the Report concedes, have been good, but the desire is to secure a better class with a better knowledge of the customs of the people and all those graceful courtesies of manner and conduct to which Indians attach supreme importance. This recommendation does not go to the root of the matter. What is wanted is opportunity for the people of the States to control the administration. Public control is the only cure against nepotism and despotism—the two things which are blasting the life and aspirations of the State subjects. And the British *Raj* will be rendering a great service if it does not side with the Princes as against the people in regard to the latter's aspirations to have the same reforms which their neighbours enjoy under the British. If the British *Raj* goes a step farther in the right direction, and compels the Princes to transfer power to their subjects, at least to the same extent as in British India, it would be laying the foundations of democracy in the most backward and mis-governed parts of the British Empire.

<sup>1</sup> *States Inquiry Committee Report*, par. 75.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE CLAMOUR OF THE PRINCES

AN important official committee appointed by the British Government discovered the existence of "two Indias"! <sup>1</sup> The Government themselves had recognized inwardly—though they wanted probably a committee to explore the fact and give vent to its opinion with the weight of strenuous investigation—that the time had arrived to tell the politicians of the advanced school in British India, who were clamouring for sovereign independence for India and a policy of 'clean cut,' of complete separation from England, that India was only a geographical expression; that the India which was ruled by the British directly, the Government of which territory was constitutionally responsible to the British electorate in Great Britain, was not the same as the India which was ruled by the Indian Chiefs, whose relations with the Paramount Power were embodied in treaties; that "British India," as the former was called, was promised in the fullness of time full responsible government. This was different from endowing the whole of India with Dominion status, because India was not a Dominion—in fact, India never existed—there were two Indias—and the only India which could be treated as a Dominion was British India, which could not be related to the rest of the country any more than Ulster could be to the Irish Free State.

Whatever the possibilities or impossibilities of the new Independence movement which has been set on foot in India by two schools of thought—the violent or frankly revolutionary and the non-violent Congress—it has made the ruling Chiefs—such of those who are members of the Princes'

<sup>1</sup> *States Inquiry Committee Report* (1928-29), par. 106.

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Chamber—meet in solemn conclave and issue a definite warning that whereas they were in full sympathy with the aspirations and activities which are legitimate and loyal of the Indian politicians they had no sympathy whatever with the disloyal movement of independence, and were bound to resist it, should necessity arise, as loyal vassals of his Majesty the King-Emperor.<sup>1</sup>

The warning of the ruling chiefs seemed to have quick effect on the Allahabad<sup>2</sup> politicians of the Congress school, who delighted to masquerade as revolutionaries, and upon whom the real revolutionaries of Bengal looked with unfeigned contempt. Hurriedly these extreme masqueraders, almost in panic, joined hands with the avowedly moderate parties in the country—whom their jackals in the Press had always ridiculed for singing *Rule Britannia* with the faith of a true Imperialist—and produced what they were pleased to describe as “the All-Parties Report,” by which they meant all those parties who, having abstained from co-operating with the British Parliamentary Commission purely on the ground that Indians were excluded from it, wanted at the same time to place their views before the British democracy.

This report was, curiously enough, praised generously by Sir John Simon, the Chairman of the British Commission, in public.<sup>3</sup> It was repudiated by the boycotting Sikhs and by a large section of the boycotting Muslims on the ground that it failed to do justice to the minorities ; by the Princes on the ground that it did not understand their position ; and by the revolutionaries on the ground that the *pundit* who led the Swaraj Party had sold the pass by recognizing the overlordship of Great Britain.

The report likewise evaded the question of Home Defence, without which Home Rule must be a far-off, adorable dream.

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings of the Chamber of Princes early in 1929*

<sup>2</sup> Headquarters of Nehru, the Swaraj Party leader.

<sup>3</sup> *The Dilemma in India*, by Sir Reginald Craddock, p. 229.

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The failure of the Indian politicians to produce an agreed report is no argument or justification for leaving the Indian problem unsettled. How far the British Commission will go to solve the Indian problem remains to be seen. The States Inquiry has not contributed to the solution of the problem beyond indicating that there are "two Indias." It does not say that the two Indias will not unite, that "never the twain shall meet." It has mentioned a fact—an outstanding one. Perhaps it was not expected to peer far into the future and suggest the welding of the two Indias into one united whole at this stage. It is difficult to predict how far Sir John Simon and his colleagues will venture to handle this baffling question which they have not studied because it was not in the original scope of their inquiry.

Most likely, beyond a general observation on the existing state of things, they would with characteristic caution and prudence concentrate on the next stage in the growth of reforms in British India, especially in the provinces.

But the goal of Indian nationalism is one united India. If this can be secured under the shadow of the British flag it will redound to the credit of Indian and British statesmanship.

Ways and means will have to be found sooner or later to bring the Indian States and British India into a common federation. As it is, all the States themselves have not joined the Narendra Mandel, or Chamber of Princes. Pride and suspicion keep some of the prominent States, such as Mysore and Hyderabad, out of the Chamber of Princes. Their presence in the Chamber cannot be enforced any more than revolutionary organizations could be induced to recognize the British-made legislatures of the land, admission to which involves the affirmation of the oath of allegiance to the King, his heirs and successors. Yet the Princes who are loyal, like Mysore and Hyderabad, should have had no difficulty in attending the Chamber and participating in its deliberations. That they have held aloof from it is explained by the fact that they are unwilling to come down to the level of the minor Princes. This boycotting aloofness

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may be likened to a major province unwilling to recognize association with a minor province and therefore abstaining from sending its representatives to India's Parliament ! Such a thing will certainly be absurd. It has only to be mentioned to be ridiculed. It has not arisen in British India, and is not likely to arise. Similarly the major States who have 'boycotted' the Chamber of Princes, not with the loud execration of political extremists, but with the quiet dignity of Oriental potentates, will have soon to fall into line, so that there can be the evolution of one Indian India, as it were, governed by the same ideas and ideals and the same system of government, more in keeping with this age, in which popular opinions must prevail, than with an age when absolutism swayed. Thus when the United States of India have been evolved with a satisfactory system of government, in which the inhabitants thereof will have the controlling voice, they can hope to take an equal place with the more advanced British India in the supreme Legislature of a United Indian Empire.

At present, as the States are divided among themselves, and British India from the States, this must remain a vision and a dream. This supreme Imperial Legislature cannot come into being so long as the Chamber of Princes is a farce, as now, which major Princes boycott, and in which the members themselves have been more concerned with the forming of a kind of Trade Union with a view to protecting the so-called sovereign rights of Princes—long extinct in practice, though not in theory—and to preventing the encroachments of the Paramount Power and its ubiquitous representative in the person of the Resident or the Agent to the Governor-General. When the Princes have learned to unite and lay down common laws to the satisfaction of their people, when in their Chamber they resolve to part with power when they, in short, follow the good example of their sovereign the King-Emperor, who is a constitutional monarch, when they cease to clamour against interference of the Paramount Power by making that interference impossible by themselves becoming constitutional,

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it can be said that Indian India may be trusted to co-operate with British India as an equal partner in the Indian Imperial Federation, and prove a rare instrument of human good. As it is, the Chiefs are despots—either petty or mighty according to the size of their territory. Lest they should abuse their arbitrary powers they have been kept under the vigilant eye of the Paramount Power. The Paramount Power itself will desire to continue its vigilance, not because authority is always pleasing and the exercise thereof is a constant reminder of the supremacy of British rule, but in the interests of the Princes and their subjects alike. The Princes have been complaining that treaty rights have been ignored and their authority impaired even in internal administration by the intervention of the Resident. They secured costly legal advice from one of the most eminent lawyers in England, who pronounced his opinion that the treaty rights were sacred and the relations of the Princes should be directly with the Crown <sup>1</sup> The Paramount Power however, which represents the Crown does not deny the sacredness of the *sunnuds* (treaties), but only maintains that paramountcy must be paramount <sup>2</sup>

In the declaration of the British supremacy over the Princes the Paramount Power carries with it the sympathy of the numerous subjects of the Princes who have been living under their grinding—at best benevolent—despotism, with no voice or choice in the administration.

The Princes do not recognize that times have changed all over the world and that the old order must change also in the States ; that it is useless to look up to treaties which were made under different conditions and on the interpretation of which they and the Paramount Power always differed.

If the Princes actually feel the interference of the Para-

<sup>1</sup> *The British Crown and Indian States*

<sup>2</sup> "The rulers of these little States exercise more moral control over the people than all our magistrates, except in so far as it is our Government which is paramount to their Rulers"—*The Prince of Wales' Tour in India, Greece, Egypt, Spain, and Portugal* (1877), by W. H. Russell, p. 425 (second edition).

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mount Power they must recognize that the only way to reduce it, and eventually altogether get rid of it, is for them courageously to agree to divest themselves of their power even as the Indian Civil Service. At present, when they desire that the British Authority should relax its control over them, they only demand the power to do as they like in the States.<sup>1</sup>

To please the democratic desires of their subjects, Legislatures have been set up in some of the States, but they are only debating societies. "I have got a Council," said the Maharaja of Bikaner to Mr Lloyd George, "but I nominate my Councillors."<sup>2</sup> The British Government do not interfere here and say, "No, you must give real power to your subjects." All that Britain does is to see to it that the Prince who has the power of a giant over his voiceless subjects does not use it as a giant. And Britain feels that it cannot relinquish its responsibility to the citizens of the Indian States, who are, after all, subjects of the King-Emperor, though not direct.

The King's Government is thus supreme in British India as well as in the Indian States. Only the form and method of government differ. In British India the Government is carried on by a different body, either responsible to the British Parliament, as in the past, or to the Indian people, as contemplated in the future. In the Indian States the Nawab, the Nizam, or the Maharaja carries on the Government, and is permitted to carry it on so long as he does not incur the displeasure of the Crown as represented by the Crown's agent, the Viceroy, and the Viceroy's agent, the Resident.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lord Mayo, in his Viceregal address to the Great Darbar in Rajputana, enunciated British policy toward the States thus: "Be just and merciful to your people. We do not ask whether you come to us with full hands, but whether you come with clean hands."—*The British Crown and Indian States*, p. 63.

<sup>2</sup> Mr Lloyd George happened to convey this interesting information to the present writer at a luncheon in the House of Commons.

<sup>3</sup> "Many of the States are governed almost independently by their own rulers, but they are all subject in a greater or less degree to supervision and guidance at the hands of the British Government"—*The India Office List*,



## CHAPTER XIII

### AN INTRIGUING FUTURE

JUDGING first from the physical features of India, two great divisions are noticeable, the first comprising the true Indian peninsula, and the second the mountain-belt which includes the Himalayan highlands and hills of Kashmir, Baluchistan, and Burma.

Judging, secondly, from the religious point of view, two Indias emerge, that of the Hindu and that of the Muslim, which communities have unfortunately nothing in common with each other, such as social relations or intermarriage. Their segregation is enforced by the isolating barrier of religion. According to the Census report,<sup>1</sup> the adherents of the Hindu religion number so many as 216,734,586, whereas the Mussulmans number 68,735,233 out of a population of 318,942,480.

Judging from the ethnographic point of view, there are in India two pronounced types, the Indo-Aryan and the Turko-Iranian, or Semitic, besides the pure Indian and the pure Iranian. The pure Indians, or aborigines, are a primitive people, numbering 9,774,611, whom the Aryan tyranny of caste had condemned as untouchable and put beyond the pale of society, whereas the pure Iranians, who are an ornament and an asset to the country, found a welcome refuge in India when they fled from the tyranny of the Muslim tyrants of Persia. The Parsees are pure Iranians, profess Zoroastrianism, and number 101,778. They generally marry only among themselves, and are an exclusive and wealthy community. The only marriage in high circles of a Parsee girl with a Muslim barrister created a

<sup>1</sup> The Census of 1921 being the latest.



## AN INTRIGUING FUTURE

storm in the Parsee community. There have been no recognized intermarriages of the Aryan settlers in India with the aborigines, though there has been considerable intermixture between the Aryans and the higher native caste, forming an Aryo-Dravidian, or Hindustani, type. There is also a Mongolo-Dravidian type, from which the Muslims of Eastern Bengal and the Hindus of Orissa and Lower Bengal are drawn.

The Indo-Aryans consist, besides Hindus, of 11,571,268 Buddhists, 3,238,803 Sikhs, and 1,178,596 Jains. The Turko-Iranians, besides Muslims, include a small population of 21,778 Jews. There are 4,754,064 followers of another Semitic religion, Christianity, but for the most part this class is drawn from the aborigines and the depressed classes of India.

From an educational point of view there are two Indias, the literate and the illiterate. But the size of illiterate India is gradually decreasing, and when it disappears it can be said that India has become one. In 1911 only 59 per 1000 could read and write. In 1921, 82 per 1000 were literate. Of these, again, in 1911 only one male in 9.5 and one female in 96 could read and write. For every 10,000 there were 160 males and 18 females who could be classed as literate in 1921, as compared with 95 males and 10 females per 10,000 in 1911.

The administrative division of two Indias is the India directly governed by the British and the States, which are governed by the Indian Chiefs. The British provinces have a population of 247,003,293 and the Indian States 71,939,187.

The British territories comprise roughly three-fifths of the area of India and over three-fourths of its population.

While two Indias are thus visible there is yet the hope of their being and becoming one under the guidance of the British Empire, if India's future is to be peacefully evolved. At present the Indian Chiefs govern the States with the assistance of the British Government, who supervise the

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administration of the States through their political officers, who are responsible to the Political Department directly under the Governor-General himself. Owing to the oft-expressed desire of the Princes to be directly associated with the Crown and liberated from the clutches of British India fast coming into its own, it is in contemplation to make the Political Department an exclusively Viceregal portfolio, the Viceroy as the representative of the Crown being apart, in theory, from the Governor-General, who is the head of the administration and whose functions might be ultimately taken up by the Prime Minister of a self-governing India.<sup>1</sup>

The Indian rulers of the States have been given ample freedom by the British Government—so long as they are loyal—to carry on the administration of the country according to their whim and fancy. They possess vast revenues, and are in the habit of treating them as their own private income and the State itself as their own private property. They exercise the power of life and death over their subjects. But they have no power, as in olden times, to make war upon each other, because their suzerain in India, which is the British Government, does not allow them to indulge in that luxury. Nor have they the power to enter into alliances with foreign countries. It was the dream of the Nizam of Hyderabad to enter into an alliance with the Amir of Afghanistan before Amanullah's fall, as his Exalted Highness had not exhausted his superstitious faith in his own independence, which he fancied was equal to that of the King of the Afghan tribes. Promptly, however, the Nizam was told, as we have seen, by the Governor-General that it was dangerous for a subordinate to dream dreams !

No longer can the hereditary Indian Chiefs say with the last of the Kaisers, as in the days before the British came to India, when they ruled their own territories and waged war against each other as the European countries :

<sup>1</sup> Which means British India.

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I am resolved to keep the peace with every one so far as in *Me* lies, but woe to him who shall dare to offend *Me*.<sup>1</sup>

This was the first Coronation Declaration of Kaiser Wilhelm II, but in India the coronation itself is impossible until the legitimacy of the Princes is recognized by the British Government. What is more, the coronation itself must be formally approved, even of a legitimate heir to the *Gadi*, by the Paramount Power.

The British Government rebukes bad Princes, however exalted they may be. It dethrones independent ones, because a spirit of independence so long as it is directed against the people of the States matters not, but when it is manifested against the authority of the suzerain or its representative, the political agent, woe to that Indian Prince!

Where then do the two Indias come? There is only one India in reality, the India of the British Crown.<sup>2</sup>

In one sense the real British India is that of the States, where powerful British officers can exercise more authority by reducing the Princes to the rôle of honorary magistrates, if they care, though they are willing to patronize these pampered dolls. Similar power cannot be exercised unquestioned by British officials and District Officers in India, for their action is immediately the subject of a volley of questions in the Legislatures.

Why should the Indian States not pass under the control of the Indian Government of the future when self-government is granted? Because the Indian rulers like their present position, which cannot last for a single day when politicians dominate Simla-Delhi, for, true to their faith, they would have to consult the people of the States as to the form of government there. The subjects of the States, loyal and conservative by nature, will not as a whole vote for the

<sup>1</sup> *Kaiser Wilhelm II, from Birth to Exile*, by Emil Ludwig

<sup>2</sup> *States Inquiry Committee Report*, par. 18.

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abolition of monarchy, but would certainly insist on the Maharajas becoming constitutional.

The Maharajas to-day have ample freedom to govern wrong and ride roughshod over their people.<sup>1</sup> They can hire a score of rooms in the most expensive hotels in England, and spend a million pounds upon any woman whom they fancy or who succeeds in fooling them. Such a thing will not be tolerated by any Legislature in the land. While willing to parade their loyalty to the King of England, their Emperor, the Maharajas are unwilling to follow his good example and become constitutional rulers. And so long as constitutional rule is not introduced in the States there will be two Indias, the India of the tyrannical Maharajas who thrive on British help and can resist the aspirations of the people, and the India of the politicians who want to copy the ways of the advanced West and themselves govern the country with the sanction of the people.

The two Indias must and will continue, so long as there is democracy in the one and despotism in the other. If, to-day, they are answerable to a common Government it is on the basis of autocracy. The British Government in India is autocratic, from the Indian standpoint, because it is not responsible to the people of India. Its responsibility is to the British Parliament, and through them to the British electorate. And so long as the responsibility is not transferred from the British to the Indian electorate it can govern the States and the people alike. But as a definite move is being made in the direction of the transference of responsibility, a corresponding move is also made on the chess-board of diplomacy. If India is to be self-governing it will only be that part of India which is directly governed by

<sup>1</sup> "The more important of these Princes exercise the power of life and death over their subjects."—*The Indian Empire*, by Sir W. W. Hunter, p. 76.

"Now the protected autocrat in a Native State has not as yet turned out such a success that the English nation can feel proud of having brought him out upon the political stage."—*Asiatic Studies*, by Sir Alfred C. Lyall, p. 225 (second edition)

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the British. Not the other part, which is ruled by the Maharajas, who wish to be ruled from Whitehall more than from Simla-Delhi.

Up till now the Dewans and other State administrators have been drawn from the educated classes in India who did not find adequate scope for their energy and competence in British India. Now that opportunities for the educated Indians are coming in a flood with the reforms the product of the English universities are to be given a greater scope in the States.<sup>1</sup>

There has been so far only one India. Henceforward there must be two Indias. Though chafing under the surveillance of political agents, the Princes are unwilling to come under the direct control of the Government of a free India of the future.<sup>2</sup> This will suit the British Government. The States will have an army in the future—manned by the British—when India has her own army. The States will have their own British Services when India has her Indian Services. The States, in fact, will be responsible to the Crown—that is to say, the Viceroy and his Political Department, for the Viceroy cannot govern without a department to help him. And this department for all time to come will be apart from the other departments of the Government of India, and above them so far as international obligations and relations are concerned, international because India consists of two nations, those who live in the States and those in British India. It is no longer a Hindu and a Muslim India. This racial division—not unknown to other self-governing lands where there are more races than one—is bound to disappear with the advance of time and the operations of democracy, as it tended to disappear in England itself, where the Protestants reconciled themselves to the Catholics. The race cleavage was finally obliterated with the removal of the Jewish disabilities by an Act of Parliament. But not so easily can the

<sup>1</sup> *States Inquiry Committee Report*, par. 75

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, par. 58.

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political division and the hold of vested interests disappear. Long, if not perpetual, will the cleavage be between British India, which will under self-government become Indian India, and the Indian States of to-morrow, which will be the real British India of yesterday. But there is nothing perpetual in life—nothing permanent in history. Human ingenuity can provide only so far as it sees. Eastern philosophers do not think of the morrow. Wise Westerners provide against a rainy day. The means which British and bureaucratic ingenuity has devised is to separate the functions of the Viceroy and Governor-General<sup>1</sup> when the day comes, transferring to the former the power which the latter holds to-day over the States, when the rest of his present power will be transferred to the Prime Minister of India. As the relations between British India and the States are intricate, and have every chance of straining, eternal vigilance over them is necessary, and the Viceroy will serve that purpose, acting for the Crown, which, unlike the coronets in Indian States, means Parliament,<sup>2</sup> as England is “a crowned Republic.”<sup>3</sup>

The future is really intriguing. The best way to make things smooth is to convert the autocrats of the States into constitutional chiefs. But Britain is not interested in forcing unwilling Princes, who already complain of excessive interference. Britain's only purpose is to follow the line of least resistance. The only remedy is for a democratic Prince of some future date to arise and voluntarily transfer his power, reducing himself to the position of a constitutional ruler, and his own State to that of a crowned republic under the British Crown. Until that happy day comes—as come it must—the best thing for the people in British India is to mind their own business. A self-governing British India—and the long road to self-government, which has yet to be travelled, is not

<sup>1</sup> *States Inquiry Committee Report*, par. 67

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* par. 18.

<sup>3</sup> H. G. Wells, in his *Outline of History*

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strewn with roses—will have much work to do within its own domain.

The best stimulus to the growth of self-government within the States themselves is successful self-government all round in its own neighbourhood. The growth of reforms and of the power of the Legislatures in British India has witnessed a new 'awakening in the States' subjects. Self-government cannot be imposed—whether in British India or the Indian States—from outside. It must come from within. And when it so comes India will be moulded into one united whole, as never before in its history, under one Federal Government, self-governing on the whole, and each State and province in its own compass self-governed.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Following the American constitution rather than the British . . . we must work genuinely to create south of the Himalayas the *United States of Hindustan*."—*The Observer*, Sunday, February 2, 1930.



## CHAPTER XIV

### INDIA'S ULSTERS

THERE are "two Indias," even as there are two Irelands. This is a fact which both the British and the Indian peoples cannot obliterate from their minds while dealing with the Indian problem.

Parliament's and the King's pledge of responsible government, *Swaraj*, or Dominion Home Rule, was given to his Majesty's Indian subjects not as distinct from the subjects of his Majesty's subordinates, or vassals, known as Indian Chiefs. This is made clear by the Viceroy's Proclamation of November 1929.

A United India under one Government has not been known to India's past. Anything resembling a United India under the British sovereignty we may vainly search for in the pages of history. India to-day is far from united. The Indian Chiefs, while professing sympathy<sup>1</sup> with the aspirations of their countrymen in British India, have done nothing to promote the same aspirations in their own subjects. Nor have they missed an opportunity to warn their countrymen in British India against following whatever course they might choose in politics or enunciating whatever ideals they might cherish as the goal of their political ambition.

In 1929, when the Congress began to dream of independence in despair, the Princes plainly told the people in British India that the dream was uncanny. It was

<sup>1</sup> The Standing Committee of the Chamber of Princes unanimously adopted a resolution at Bombay in March 1928, reaffirming "on the one hand, the loyalty of the Indian States to the Crown and their attachment to the Empire, and, on the other hand, their sympathy with the aspirations of British India, which they regard as legitimate."

## INDIA'S ULSTERS

almost a nightmare. It conflicted with their own loyalty to the Throne. They proclaimed that they would resist independence should occasion arise even at the risk of bloodshed.

The history of India under British rule shows that in the great Indian Mutiny of 1857, the day of commencement of which was observed last year by the advanced school of Indian politicians as "the Indian War of Independence Day," the Princes stood staunchly by Britain. Lord Canning was happy to confess that a few patches of Native Government proved "breakwaters to the storm which would otherwise have swept over us in one great wave."<sup>1</sup>

Gandhi made no secret of appealing to the patriotism of the Indian soldiers in 1921. Should 1857 repeat itself, should India make a bid for a revolution, the British Government naturally look to the Princes to prove "breakwaters." The Princes are quite willing to play their loyal part should necessity arise. An indication of this was given by the proceedings of the Chamber of Princes early in 1929, in which in unequivocal language they condemned the movement in British India for sovereign independence and severance of all connexion with England.

It is natural that the British Government, while relaxing their hold on British India, should draw the Indian States closer to themselves. All apprehensions of the Imperialists that Home Rule for British India would spell disaster to Great Britain and the Empire would be set at rest if only they realized that for several long years Home Rule in its completeness can mean no more than the status of the Irish Free State overshadowed by Ulster. India being

<sup>1</sup> *Last Counsels of an Unknown Counsellor*, by Major Evans Bell (John Dickinson; London, 1883).

Lord Roberts wrote on September 30, 1896: "The Mutiny was not an unmitigated evil, for to it we owe the consolidation of our power in India. . . . It was the Mutiny which brought Lord Canning into closer communication with the Princes of India and paved the way for Lord Lytton's brilliant conception of the Imperial Assemblage—a great political success which laid the foundation of that feeling of confidence which now, happily, exists between the ruling Chiefs and the Queen-Empress."—*Forty-one Years in India*, by Lord Roberts (Preface to the first edition).

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an infinitely bigger country than Ireland, the Imperialists may be content to feel that India's Ulsters will be strong, vast, and many, scattered all over the country from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin, from Baluchistan to the Burmese frontier.

British India is only British in name; it is, in fact, aspiring to be more Indian than the States, the slogan of her politicians being Indianization of the Services and the Army. It is also in British India that the most anti-British speeches are delivered. They will continue to be so delivered until British India is accorded the same status as the Dominions enjoy. This is also incidentally the highest tribute to the English education which Britain imparted to India, fully conscious that a day would come when India would aspire to the same free life and full status as England herself.

So long as the Indian States do not keep abreast with the currents and movements in British India they will submit to the present system of autocracy. But its days are numbered. If the Princes are wise and do not rely too much on British protection they will agree to copy the British example in their own kingdoms and transfer their power to their subjects, just as Britain is divesting herself of her power, which the Indian people are beginning to exercise through their elected representatives in the Legislatures, both Central and Provincial.

The British Government themselves have given the Princes broad indications from time to time that they must bury the ancient ideas of autocracy and govern on modern lines. Britain will not be able to do much to accelerate the march of political development in the States. Her policy has been one of non-intervention as far as possible. But the clamour of their subjects for Parliamentary rule is making an impression even upon men who are respected by the Indian Government and who hold high offices under the Crown.

## INDIA'S ULSTERS

There are two conflicting ideas on the public mind in regard to the States. Those who do not believe in the good intentions of the British suspect that the British plan is to unite the States into an Ulster and thus divide India. Others who believe in Britain's good intentions feel that England aspires to protect the Princes so far as she may by ensuring their independence from British Indian interference in the States in internal politics when the former has attained Dominion status.<sup>1</sup> While giving the Princes that much security from the extravagant attentions which ambitious but inconvenient politicians might be inclined to show, Britain decidedly wants to keep them under control and treat them as subordinates, lest history should repeat itself and the Princes should either make war on each other or combine to wage war on British India, reducing the country to China's plight.<sup>2</sup>

The position of the Indian States, therefore, will be one of equality with British India, but subordination to Britain. A liberated British India will also have to be likewise subordinate to Britain in matters affecting British India and Indian States, such as boundaries, customs, railways, mints and currency, salt, posts, telegraphs, wireless and telephones, excise, etc., etc.

England will thus be the *Ma-Bap* ("the father and the mother") of the two Indias until they see their way to unite into one.

Can they at all at any time unite? And if so, when? The answers to these questions naturally take the shape of prophecies. The ideal of every true Indian patriot is a United and Free India, an ideal which would have been easy to attain if the States had never come into existence,

<sup>1</sup> "Princes should not be handed over without their agreement to a new government in India responsible to an Indian Legislature."—*States Inquiry Committee Report* (1928-29), par. 58 (His Majesty's Stationery Office).

<sup>2</sup> "That Government, as suzerain in India, does not allow its feudatories to make war upon each other, or to have any relations with foreign States."—*The Indian Empire*, p. 76.

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or had the country been parcelled out into States, big or small, under ruling chiefs responsible to the people.

All that, however, is out of the question at present. England will not be inclined to hand over British India to new Chiefs, nor will British India, which has been accustomed to a different kind of rule, agree to go back to medieval autocracy. India must therefore develop in two distinct directions, the States passing from benevolent despotisms to constitutional monarchies when British India passes from a bureaucratic to a wholly democratic form of government. When they have thus emerged they might think of coming under a common federation

## CHAPTER XV

### A DILEMMA ?

"THE Princes and Chiefs of India," explains one of their sympathizers, "are in a serious quandary,"<sup>1</sup> because they welcome democracy in British India, but contend that it is not suitable in their States. This, then, is a quandary of their own creation.

Democracy is less necessary in British India than in the Indian States, because the foreign bureaucrat is an Englishman, whereas the indigenous autocrat can degenerate, to borrow Sir Reginald Craddock's own words, into "a besotted despot."<sup>2</sup> The Indian Prince—unlike the Englishman with his democratic upbringing and spirit of freedom which carries with it adequate restraint—is first and last a despot.

A disgusted English writer speaks of Oriental despotism in language which would seem an exaggeration, but is wholly true of several of the Indian Princes and their out-of-date and tyrannical administration: "Indeed, Asiatic despotism, it must be said, has ever been and ever will be the worst throughout the world."<sup>3</sup>

Small wonder that the Princes do not contemplate with equanimity the prospect of their being made responsible to the self-governing India of the future. Only a "dreamer in an armchair," says the sympathizer of the Princes, "can believe that a peaceful settlement of the Indian States could be attained by making them as a class subordinate to a Parliament of Indian politicians." The Parliament of self-governing India will be as democratic as the British Parliament. The Princes are absolute rulers—autocrats of

<sup>1</sup> *The Dilemma in India*, by Sir Reginald Craddock, p. 96.

<sup>2</sup> *Pen and Pencil Sketches*, by W. H. Floris, p. 3 (Hutchinson).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

## INDIA--PEACE OR WAR?

the medieval type. Autocracy hates democracy. The Princes will not come under the sway or jurisdiction of British India in a hurry.

To avoid responsibility to the Indian Parliament cannot ensure immunity to the Princes from many kinds of responsibility. They must be responsible to their subjects within and suzerain without. In plain words they must be prepared to introduce the same democracy in their States which they applaud in British India, and abide, so far as internal administration is concerned, by the verdict of that democracy, accepting the same position in their States which constitutional practice has assigned to their liege lord, his Majesty the King-Emperor. In matters external they owe responsibility to the Crown, which will be represented in India, as we have seen, by the Viceroy,<sup>1</sup> the King's representative, assisted by the Political Department.

The most perplexing dilemma, one would have thought, is the Indian State. But the easiest way out is the introduction of responsible government in the States by reducing the Princes from despotic rulers to constitutional chiefs.<sup>2</sup>

In case the Maharajas and Nawabs and Nizams do not agree to introduce Parliaments and responsible Cabinets the only alternative is to make them responsible to the Government of India through the Residents, whose powers of intervention in State affairs must be increased.

The Viceroy—i.e., his Political Department—through his Agent in the States must appoint the judges in the States. It is a notorious fact that there is no justice in the British

<sup>1</sup> *States Inquiry Committee Report*

<sup>2</sup> Sir Reginald Craddock, in his recent book, *The Dilemma in India* (p. 89), says that "The Indian Princes and Chiefs can hardly be expected to transfer their allegiance from the British Crown to a collection of political notables drawn from various provinces of British India . . . any more than the barons who owed allegiance to the Plantagenet kings would have agreed in those days to bow their heads to a body of burgesses and attorneys." But Sir Reginald avoids the way out of the dilemma, which is not to transfer power from the Crown to an outside body, but to share their present power of internal administration with an elected Parliament, while in external matters continue to be under the direct suzerainty of the Crown until the evolution of the "Greater India" foreshadowed in the Viceregal Proclamation of October 1929.



## A DILEMMA?

sense of the term in the States. It is also a fact that the rulers are in the habit of interfering with the course of justice, especially in cases in which they or their favourites—which species abound in the States—are concerned. The appointment of European and I.C.S. judges must be preferred generally, and in every case the Chief Justice must be a Briton.

This suggestion is not an aspersion or reflection on the capacity or character of Indian judges.<sup>1</sup> But in the interests alike of the reputation of the Indian judges, as well as of justice itself, the difficult task must be allotted in the States in the present position of affairs—if democracy is not to be introduced in the States—to the English I.C.S. man. Behind the British judge will be the British Resident or Agent. Behind the Resident or Agent will be the Political Department of the Viceroy, his Majesty's representative in India. Therefore, the native rulers will abandon their old habit of influencing the judges.

It may be asked, are there not strong enough Indians who will put up a stubborn fight in case the ruler tries to influence the administration of justice? The answer is in the affirmative. Then it may be further asked, "Why should Britons be exclusively invited for the Chief Justiceship?" The answer is, the Maharaja will be afraid of approaching a British judge. He will not be afraid of approaching an Indian judge, so long as his powers are not transferred to his subjects through a representative Cabinet. Traditions can nowhere be easily altered or destroyed. They are stubborn in the East. And it is the tradition of the Maharajas to be the fountain of justice! The fountain must cease to be polluted. The presence of a strong Briton as the head of the judiciary is therefore an absolute necessity in the transitional stage.

Among other things, the Dewans, or Prime Ministers, of the States must also be Englishmen belonging to the

<sup>1</sup> In the British High Courts and subordinate courts Indian judges have proved themselves worthy of their position.

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**Indian Civil Service.** It may be asked, "Have not Indians done great work and attained distinction in the States?" Yes, and their number is legion. Why then this change? When Indians did not have opportunities in British India, when at the top was the Englishman in every department, Indians of calibre found opportunities in the States. Now under the reforms era Indians have abundance of opportunities, they dominate every department except the Army and the police, in which, too, they have ambitions of domination which are certainly legitimate and cannot long be delayed. The Briton in the Civil Services who finds it difficult to get on with the Swarajist democracy can certainly be given a career in the congenial States.

When Indianization of the Services is progressing rapidly in British India the Europeanization of the Services must begin in the States, especially those States where the Maharajas do not want to have Parliaments to share or control their power. The States, being backward in education and social life, must have the same chance as British India. The men who made British India what she is may be given a chance in the States.

It may be said that the salaries which the European officers and officials in the States will demand will be higher than the wages paid to the Indians whom they will replace. The answer to that is that the Princes must be prohibited from treating the States as their private property, and must be given a fixed allowance. They must not henceforward abuse public money for private purposes. On a generous scale an allowance must be given to them, which they can spend or hoard according to their tastes and inclinations.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> There are various amusing stories current in the State of Hyderabad about the Nizam's ways of hoarding money. The Nizam has the wealth of Midas, being the wealthiest ruler in India. Hyderabad is the largest Indian State, "with an area of 82,700 square miles, with a population of 12,500,000 and a revenue of 6½ crores of rupees, or about £5,000,000."—*States Inquiry Committee Report*, par 11.

## **PART III**

### **EVOLUTION OR REVOLUTION?**

**EXTREMISTS, TRUE AND FALSE—THE VICEROY  
SEPARATES THE SHEEP FROM THE GOATS**

## CHAPTER XVI

### GANDHI—AND TERROR

THERE are two forces in India, Gandhi—and terror.

Gandhi is known as the *Mahatma* ("High-souled"), a term of reverence usually applied to the great *rishis*, or sages, of India of prehistoric times.

Gandhi earned this title by his plain living and high thinking. He had led a life of perpetual struggle with the white settlers in South Africa. He gave the best part of his life to the vindication of the rights of his countrymen there.

Gandhi is taken by myriads of Indians who know him not at close quarters, but have only had a *darshan* (glimpse) of him from a distance, for a mere saint and no politician. There are greater saints in India than Gandhi, but not more popular or courageous politicians.

A saint does not enter politics, the grave of saintship. Politics are a dirty game—"the last resort of rascals," as one of the Kings of England put it. They are more dirty in a country where political leaders have not acquired the restraint, or the character, or the experience, of those in an advanced country.

If Gandhi is the greatest and the fiercest political leader in India to-day it is because he brings to it the dignity of an Asquith, the noble grandeur of a Gladstone, and the utter recklessness of a Joan of Arc.

Wearing the robes and living the simple life of an Indian saint, he captures the citadel of the people's heart. In India if one aspires to be a successful political leader, one must be a saint first. Gandhi's saintship is the key to his political leadership.

## INDIA—PEACE OR WAR?

Gandhi was essentially a moderate in his leader's lifetime, though even then, in his overstrung moments, he used to lisp the language of the extremist. His political *guru* (master) was Gokhale, Morley's friend. Gandhi proved to be the *guru's* despair in the latter's last days. The *guru* forced on his *chela* (follower) a vow of silence for two years when the latter returned home from South Africa with a view to consecrating the rest of his life to the Indian cause.

Gandhi made the most dramatic use of that probationary period. He travelled third class, which the upper middle classes in India avoid. Gandhi comes from an upper middle-class family.

Third-class travelling is most uncomfortable in a hot country of long distances. The compartments are overcrowded. The passengers are packed like sardines. One of the hardy annuals of the Central Legislature is the discomforts of the third-class passengers.

Gandhi took up their cause. He spoke from experience. Newspapers proclaimed how the hero of South Africa would not travel by second or first class, for in India, as on the Continent, you have also a second class.

Gandhi at once became the man of the masses. On the biggest railway platforms crowds used to muster to shout the *jai* (victory) of that strong, silent man from South Africa.

When Gandhi broke his vow of silence Gokhale had gone to the place "where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest," only to be followed by the biggest leader that modern India and the nationalist movement had produced, Tilak, whom the late Sir Valentine Chirol truly described as "the father of Indian unrest."

Gandhi rallied to his side all the extremist forces; changed the creed of the Congress from Dominion Home Rule to *Swaraj*; drove the Moderates and several Nationalists from it—the last of whom to be so driven was Mr M. A. Jinnah, the leader of the Muslim League—and launched a campaign of civil disobedience.

## GANDHI—AND TERROR

The Gandhi movement would not have fizzled out but for the tinidity of his principal lieutenants, who betrayed him when he was imprisoned. Against his advice they went to the Councils to work the reforms. The most important of them was Patel, to-day the Speaker of India's Parliament.

Speaker Patel told me two years ago, while he was on a pilgrimage to Whitehall and Westminster to learn the ABC of Parliamentary procedure, that Gandhi was not a spent force; that he was "only biding his time"; and that he himself had said so to Lord Birkenhead, the then Secretary of State for India, and to Mr Baldwin, the then Prime Minister. Perhaps Patel was right.

The strength of Gandhi depends on the terrific mass support which he alone among the Indian politicians commands. The lack of character among his followers and their readiness to quarrel among themselves made him sick. The frequent misunderstandings between the Hindus and the Muslims made his heart sink. The refusal of India as a whole to take to the *charka* (spinning-wheel) drove him into the wilderness.

Gandhi has no new philosophy to propound. His plan of campaign is plain and simple—"non-violent non-co-operation." Though he is anxious to avoid violence, the tragedy of his life has been that his movement has always led to violence. He has himself admitted it a hundred times. His "Himalayan blunders," as he loves to call them, only put more faith and more energy in him to overcome them. That he will not overcome them goes without saying. "You can as well speak of vegetarian tigers" is the retort of the revolutionary to Gandhi's propaganda for non-violent non-co-operation.

Gandhi says—and thousands of his followers most sincerely feel likewise—that British rule in India endures not because of the "steel frame" of the European Services, but because of the Indian co-operation. Gandhi is right.