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TO

SHIRIN FOZDAR

Pax Nascitur ex Bello.

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P R E F A C E

In a writing career of over a generation, the writer cannot remember any work, of this size, which has given so much trouble, and caused so much delay in publication after announcement, as the present one.

Being primarily concerned with national planning at the time the Pakistan issue was accepted as an integral part of the Muslim League platform, the writer naturally felt that question must be decided before any satisfactory, scientific, comprehensive planning could be undertaken with any hope of achieving substantial results. The National Planning Committee had, indeed, irrespective of differences between "Indian" India and British India, or between "Muslim" India and "Hindu" India, set about preparing a national plan for the whole country. Once, however, an important organisation like the Muslim League had adopted the principle of Pakistan as part of their programme for reconstruction, or reconstitution, the writer felt it would be incorrect to ignore altogether such a development while working out a national plan.

More than three years have, however, passed since he first conceived the idea of a contribution to this most vexed problem of contemporary Indian politics. It needs to be lifted, more than any other, out of the miasma of prejudice that enshrouds the issue, and befogs the judgment of most protagonists. It was contemplated, at first, to lay out the issue, with all its ramification, in the form of public correspondence in the daily press ; and invite reaction from any one interested or competent enough to express an opinion. Those of his

friends the writer first consulted, as being most competent to co-operate in such a programme, opined, however, that they shared the views likely to be expressed by him to such an extent that it would be superfluous, not to say intellectually dishonest, for them to join in such a public correspondence.

There were other difficulties also, *e.g.* the limitation of space in the daily press, which made the idea increasingly unworkable. It had consequently to be dropped. But more than a year had already been wasted in this first tentative.

The deepening gloom of political stalemate in the country, accentuated by the incarceration of the outstanding leaders, brought on a depression,—almost a mental coma—, which accounted further for yet another delay. These were increased by unexpected difficulties with publishers. But the main cause of the long postponement lay in the writer's own inability, for a long time, to decide upon the form most suitable for laying out the principal features involved, in as dispassionate, unbiassed, scientific a manner as possible. This is not because the writer has no views of his own on the subject. It is rather because he is aware of the mischief likely to be added to an already tense situation and vitiated atmosphere attending upon this problem by a stray phrase or unconsidered expression liable to misapprehension.

A simple essay, or general dissertation, might induce the belief that the treatment emphasised unduly a given aspect of the problem only. No problem, however, of social, political, or economic importance, has ever only one side. If one claims to be scientific, one must examine all points involved. Dr. Ambedkar's work is as modestly entitled as it is a model in scientific exposition, and effective treatment. Though it may be difficult to improve upon the learned Doctor, in

point of perspicacity or incisiveness, one may yet add aspects of the case which are ignored or unstressed in his *Thoughts on Pakistan*. The economic implications of the problem need much deeper consideration than the learned Doctor has chosen to bestow. The prejudice that unconsciously colours the work of an active party leader, or partisan politician, should be avoided if the treatment is to be scientific. The learning and research shown in W. Cantwell Smith's *Islam in Modern India* are exemplary ; but perhaps unsuited to a specific contribution to help definitely to solve a living issue of day-to-day politics.

The output of individual spokesmen of particular organisations is voluminous. By the very weight of their emphasis, however, they illustrate the difficulties, but do not solve them. The best of them can be accepted neither as models, nor even as authority, except for their own side. The writer had, therefore, to think long to evolve a form suitable and sufficient for his purpose. For a while he even flirted with the notion of a dramatic presentment, on lines like those of *John Bull's Other Island*, *Saint Joan*, or *Back to Methuselah*. A sketch was, in fact, prepared ; and a full size drama may, in more congenial circumstances, see the light of day. For the moment, however, it was deemed likely to prove more misleading than helpful ; and so that form had also to be discarded.

There is a medium of expression which though fallen into disuetude in recent times, is exalted by the association of the greatest systematic thinker of antiquity. A socratic dialogue is not among the most popular forms of scientific exposition today. But the writer believes it would lend itself best to embody the contribution he has envisaged ; and so, **has at last** decided to present his thoughts on the subject in the form of a round table conference, unpacked or unbacked by authority.

The work is, therefore, presented in the form of an imaginary discussion between several persons, themselves equally creatures of imagination only, representing divergent viewpoints bearing upon the main problem of Indian politics to-day. The discussion is modelled on the dialogues of Plato. There is this difference, however, that no one outstanding personality, like Socrates, stands out as the wisest man, with all but irresistible logic and impeccable judgment. Given the nature of the problem before us, and the interests, ideas, or ambitions involved, it seems, however, impossible to give any final or abiding solution. Given the nature of the case, it seems unnecessary also. Every endeavour has been made to give a careful, unbiased examination to every aspect of the problem ; every care is taken to present all known points of view ; every effort is made to scrutinise all the material available. The writer has no ambition to present a ready-made clear-cut solution of his own. He has contented himself with presenting all angles of vision, trusting to his own imagination, sympathy, and understanding to deal with the problem as dispassionately and comprehensively as possible.

Full justice could be done, and really scientific treatment accorded to the several divergent viewpoints, only if a consortium of scholars were to sit down, under the aegis of some University, and engage as dispassionately as human beings can in a comprehensive research by discussion of the entire problem in all its aspects and all its bearings. It was, in fact, the original intention of the writer to attempt some such treatment. Unfortunately, however, politics is a science, which, though most needing it, least admits of such unbiased treatment. Notwithstanding Plato's view, propounded over two thousand years ago, that the best government would be found if and when a Philosopher-King ruled a community, the contribution that scholars or thinkers can make to the solution of poli-

tical problems has always been underrated for the moment. Politics is essentially a plaything of the amateur, who naturally resents any intrusion from the expert. It has been increasingly at a discount in the centuries that have followed. Whatever progress we may be said to have made in public education or enlightenment, basic human nature does not seem to have changed so far as to induce that degree of toleration for viewpoints other than one's own, which is the *sine qua non* for philosophical treatment of a political problem. Passions and prejudices get inter-locked in the individual conception and public treatment of such issues to such an extent that one despairs of a dispassionate solution, just as well as advantageous to all concerned.

There is no great need to stress the writer's own special aptitude or competence for this work. Nevertheless, a word on that account would not be out of place. His birth in a "Minority Community",—that differs more radically from the Hindus than the Muslims,—may predispose him, even apart from his labours in scientific research, to view sympathetically the attitude or apprehensions of all minorities as they are styled in India. Of the historic revolts against the domination of Brahminic Hinduism, the Jains are today perhaps the only considerable representatives. They hold to an atheistic creed, and insist on *ahimsa*, or non-violence towards any living being, as the first principle of their life and work. Thanks to centuries of living and working together for common objectives, the Jains are, however, no longer distinguishable from the Hindus. As a community, they are no longer conscious of their "minorityhood". But the writer's birth and growth in that environment, joined to his life-long training or habit of scientific research, disposes and equips him sufficiently, he feels, to understand his task.

The attempt by a single person, however thoughtful, well-informed, and unprejudiced,—to represent these divergent viewpoints, naturally suffers from the inherent limitations of that person's sub-conscious. No writer is a photographic negative. He cannot, therefore, merely mirror and reflect the image cast upon him. Inevitably, his own sympathy may colour unconsciously the presentment of ideas not his own. The habitude and discipline of research, to which the present writer has consecrated the best years of his life, lead him to hope that, even if the different views are not given the fullest reflection, he approaches as near a representation of those differences as is possible under the circumstances. A positive solution universally agreeable is impossible ; but the way to it may be paved and advanced in an atmosphere of dispassionateness, which, in the hands of politicians, in the press or on the platform, it sadly misses.

In such a treatment, the conclusions cannot be clearcut or definite. That, however, the writer thinks, is only a just reflection of life as it is. Life is not logic, nor enduring sameness. On problems affecting human relations in every day life, it is impossible to be positive. Every solution of such problems is, accordingly, not only a compromise ; it must needs lack in finality or permanence. The best recommendation of any solution of a social problem is its elasticity and adaptability. New circumstances may arise, new forces may be generated, very likely because of the solution itself,—whatever it may be,—which may lead even to its complete obsolescence and consequent abandonment.

The discussion, it may also be added in conclusion, is founded on certain assumptions, premises, or postulates, which are made clear in the course of the conference, for the most part. There is one point, however, in these basic assumptions that the writer would like particularly to make explicit, even

in this Preface. Though the general trend of the discussion may seem to suggest a desire, on the part of the discutants, to maintain the national integrity of India as far as possible, the writer himself makes no fetish of Nationalism. He is, in fact, too convinced a socialist to exaggerate at all the virtue of patriotism, which claims to be the foundation of modern nationalism. The necessity, if not the utility, of Nationalism for India, in her present condition, is, of course, premised. But it is only a means to an end. And that end will certainly not be achieved merely by India having attained political independence, and become a nation with her own separate sovereignty. The evils of the prevailing social organisation all over the world will not be solved by giving free scope to Nationalist ambitions, on however large a scale. As the late Lord Lothian had observed, in his Burge Lecture in 1935, the cause of war and social injustice is not dictators like Hitler or Mussolini ; or those who give in to their intimidation, like Chamberlain or Laval, but the fragmentation of the world in a number of sovereign states. The relation between these mutually independent sovereign states was described by the lecturer as just anarchy, which led to periodic wars. And, what used to be described, in the last generation, as economic discontent and social unrest within each state, stands also on the same foundation. Neither the class war nor the world war would be finally and for ever ended, unless the separate states are replaced by a sovereign world stae ; unless universal competition is replaced as motive force by co-operation ; unless constant conflict of interests is replaced by co-ordination ; and unless social stratification on economic lines is replaced by real equality as between all the citizens of the same world state. Democracy without equality is meaningless, not to say impossible.

1st June, 1944.

K. T. S.

Bibliographical Note

Bulk of the literature on this subject is polemical and partisan. Presidential speeches at the annual conferences of the various communal organisations, and the resolutions passed at these sessions, form the most important section of this literature. However valuable as supplementary material, or evidence, in a scientific study, it is not suitable as the main foundation of this work. Scientific contributions, like Dr. Ambedkar's *Thoughts on Pakistan*, Prof. W. C. Smith's *Islam in Modern India*, or Prof. Coupland's *Report on the Constitutional Problem in India*, have provided excellent pabulum, which is acknowledged in the appropriate place. Census Reports or Year Books, and other works of reference, have, likewise, been laid under contribution, which also has been mentioned in its proper place. Finally more imposing authorities on Political Science and allied subjects have been quoted or referred to wherever the context made such a course suitable.

WHY PAKISTAN?—AND WHY NOT?

THE FIRST DAY

Ramdas was convalescing at Taradevi in the Simla Hills after a touch of T.B., following a year in the Lucknow Jail. Younger son of a minor Taluqdar, he had had every advantage of birth and breeding, travel and training. Before he took to active partisan politics, he was a rising star at the Lucknow Bar. Liberal in views, he had ceased to feel communal allegiance to the faith of his fathers. Generous in his ways, he had many friends in all communities, and quite a few admirers. A nationalist to begin with, he was verging towards socialism—a mild pink, streaked with light (Cambridge) blue, which, quite unconsciously, pulled at his heart-strings by the atavism of his parentage and environment. Turning politician, through the only door into that field for a nationalist of his origin and association, he soon became a leading Congressman, an ardent partisan, a provincial minister, and, of course, a guest of his Majesty at the Central Jail,—as part of the natural gamut for his kind and creed.

The attack had been mild ; but the danger-signal was unmistakable. Release on *parole* was out of the question for one in his position ; but friends were not wanting to point out the danger to the powers that be of allowing a man of his eminence to be neglected until the bacillus became almost a basilisk. And he had a wife, who had a tongue to lash with like a scorpion ; a pen to stab with ; a brain which could pull wires, that at last brought them both for a spell of rest, and a

chance for introspection and ratiocination, badly needed by both.

"I wonder if Abdul would come in this weather. The rain has not stopped for a second since it began this morning," Ram Piari said to her husband one September afternoon.

"Abdul is not frightened by rain, or your tea," Ramdas smiled in reply. "He has even promised to bring along Rahim who would as soon sing as preach politics."

Locked away in the solitude of the hills, they were not always their own and sole company. Simla was not very far; and even Delhi or Lahore or Lucknow but a night's journey. And then Ram Piari was a famed hostess,—a *salonière* to be,—who could charm even while she hit hard and home. So friends flocked to their retreat in the hills, who often came to court, but always stayed to shout at tea or supper, if once the political hare was started. Discussion often went on late into the night until somebody's marital, or medical, conscience twitched.

Abdul was the most assiduous of such visitors,—an old friend of the family,—who was as much concerned with the health of his friends as with their politics. But if heredity had started the friendship, associations of common struggle, success and disillusionment had deepened and varied it. Without seeing eye to eye on almost anything in detail, Abdul agreed with Ramdas and Ram Piari on everything in general; and in the long, lazy summer afternoons, he even fought with those who sided with him in detail without seconding him in general.

He appeared just at the moment tea was brought on the verandah, with a companion.

“Rahim is in Simla for no earthly purpose, except his mere *wanderlust*”, said he as he entered. “I caught him browsing at the book-seller’s. As he has nothing to do but loaf, I told him he might as well loaf it out here.”

“I don’t call it loafing to be tramping miles upon miles in this weather, in Abdul’s company. • It is hard labour, without any remission for good conduct”, said the smiling stalwart, as he bowed to Ram Piari.

“Abdul may always be trusted to get the finest loafer in Simla”, said Ram Das. “Rama must look to her cakes if she does not want to starve us poor mortals.” He added as the servant brought another cup.

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Sheikh Abdul Rahim was of another brand. An indigenous physician he was of the old school,—root and branch, blossom and flower and fruit. He had not travelled outside India, though Hindusthan he had known from corner to corner by indulging in a native wanderlust his most sophisticated contemporaries would only mock at. He knew a little English ; perhaps more than Shakespeare knew Latin ; but much less of any other European language than of Persian or Turkish. The classics of Persia were on his tongue-tip as often as the classics of Hindusthan,—Hindi or Urdu, modern or medieval. He lived in the past. He felt the present to be a mere stage in a journey ; the future a nightmare, which no sane person should willingly dwell in. All that smelt of the West or modernism—except a few friends like Abdul—he abominated, from bobbed hair to high-heeled shoes. A woman without her *burquah* he looked upon as a witch without her broom-stick ; while a man quoting Western parallels to support any

argument he considered,—strictly confidentially,—as slightly out of order.

“I have heard of you, Shaikh Saheb; from Abdul, but never hoped to see you”, said Ram Piari with a smile. “If Abdul had only given me warning I would have put on my *burquah* for the occasion”, she added with no uncertainty as to her meaning.

“God is merciful to all sinners”, sententiously observed Rahim casting down his eyes. He was meeting Mrs. Ramdas for the first time, though neither was utterly unknown to the other.

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He was not a politician,—unlike his friends Krishnalal, M.A., LL.B., Advocate, who made no bones about his outlook or activities. He was just a common-or-garden-variety of intellectual adventurer, who could believe with as much facility in Marx as in the Mahatma. Without understanding a word of economics, he was a practised professor of the Law of Increasing Returns in politics, by shifting his party, his programme, or his principles as often as the vagaries of political weather demanded. A parochial amongst provincials, whom he commonly confounded with communists. A lawyer trained, he was an ardent advocate of unadulterated aristocracy and race culture. But, with all that, himself a Brahmin, he was modern enough to marry a non-Brahmin, a widow too, *en seconde noce*. Undivided India he claimed was his ideal; but the Government of India was an allure, which he was willing to resist as long as a seat in it was not offered to him. A Congressman, he could give points to Goebbels in race-pride. A democrat, he could beat Tammany to a laughing stock; and drive Hess or Himmler

to suicide through sheer envy. Communalism was to him neither plank, nor principle ; it was just business. He believed in a square deal for all, and a fair deal, a full deal, a free deal, for himself.

“ Don’t be hypocrites both of you ”, cried Ramdas. “ You know Rama, you like nothing better than to tease people like Shaikh Saheb ! ”

“ Who is less old-fashioned than he wants to be believed ”, put in Abdul. “ But your work would be all cut out when Krishna and his wife Krida come here,” he added. “ I have invited them in your name as Mr. Krishna seemed eager to meet you,” said he to Ram Piari. The couple entered as he was speaking. “ Here they are ! ” he added as he got up to introduce them.

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Krishnalal came but rarely to such re-unions,—except when his wife drove him. He held firmly to Caesar’s ambition to prefer to be first in a village to being second in Rome. And as in such soirées neither his wit nor wisdom could shine unequalled, he preferred to engage in active social welfare work to an admiring circle in the *foyer* of the Cecil Hotel by recounting the triumphs of the Gandhi cap, when worn by him, even before a Lahore High Court Chief Justice.

But his wife was more aspiring and less self-conscious ; mere sagacious, if less scrupulous ; more perspiring in the laudable endeavours to “ arrive ” than inspiring to anybody—including her husband.

“ Krishnalalji, you are, I hear, quite a connoisseur in Tea ”. The hostess in Ram Piari seemed alarmed. “ I hope you will remember we are living in a regime of rationing, and far away from the haunts of civilisation.”

“He will remember nothing but how you gazed at him, wonderstruck, during all his visit,” reassured Abdul. “And that whether you do so, or not.”

“I must apologise, Mrs. Ramdas”, “began Mrs. Krishna the moment she entered, “for thus intruding on you.”

“It is no intrusion” smiled the hostess; “and the apology would have to come more correctly from me, if.....

“Never apologise” interrupted Krishna, “Never admit, never explain, I advise you Mrs. Ramdas.”

“Please don’t take him at his word, Shrimatiji,” said Mrs. Krida Krishna. “My husband has boycotted manners,—except in court; and there they are not always a pattern.”

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Forced into her first venture against her will, the second Mrs. Krishnalal had searched long and wide for her new mate, who proved to be her fate. And by no means a bad one. Plenty of tin and brass; plenty of wim and wile: full scope, free rein; every chance to get on; every hope to arrive. But to get there, one must not always lead, or pose as the chief. She knew only one line of Tennyson, that men arose on the stepping stones of their own dead selves. Translating into politics, she wisely interpreted it to mean in full consonance with jungle law of the survival of the fittest. People rose in politics on the dead selves of leaders lost and comrades betrayed. To be beautiful one must suffer, say the French; to be prominent, one must be patient, as well as pushing,—believed the second Mrs. Krishnalal.

“We do not like formality, either”, said Ramdas, as he welcomed the pair, and helped them to a sofa.

“But one can be informal without being unmannerly”, observed Rahim.

“Right on the nail, Sheikhji,” shot Mrs. Krishna as she took her seat and her cup of tea.

She had come with her man to watch her chance, if not to talk much. Her silence, perhaps due to lack of good command over a language that all who had gathered there could understand, was in marked contrast with Begum Singh. A Jewess from Austria, she was a Christian by conviction when Judophobia loomed hard across the Blue Danube. And as that did not prove a sure shield, she mated with a Sikh medical student in Vienna, who preferred Guru Govind Singh’s hardihood to Guru Nanak’s simplicity. She had jumped at Sahib Singh’s half-earnest suggestion to be married, and had become his better-half—literally at a moment’s notice.

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The Sikh was the last word in modernity. He believed in neither God nor devil ; but Lenin he might concede to be an apostle, and Stalin a vicar on earth, of everything that was progressive in heaven if there was such a place. Exceedingly well read, above and outside the text-books needed for his medical examinations, he had a mordant tongue, dogmatic speech, and biting wit that often answered every argument without advancing any reason. He was not himself void of all ideals ; but, to hear him, you would not believe him capable of any. He swore by Freud and judged by Dreiser.

After a good medical education in Europe, he had managed to pass I.M.S. competitive Exam ; and now was a Lieut-Colonel in that service. His wife and he were hiking by when Abdul noticed them. Ramdas had heard about the eccentric Sikh and his Austrian wife ; and so was glad to invite them in.

“Have you got to hike far ? ” he asked as the pair walked in.

“I would like to ; but Ruth is fixing her tent in Simla from this afternoon ”, said Sahib Singh.

“And you must tamely follow ”, remarked Mrs. Krishnalal, who had always accutely admired the hairy arms and rabid tongue of the unconventional Sikh.

“By no means ”, interposed Begum Singh. “He stops because he must see the Surgeon-General for his next step upward, and because—there are more beauties in Simla than on the Tibet Road.”

“I can find beauty wherever I go ; and there is no hope for a nigger I.M.S. to get further promotion.” answered her spouse.

“Not even when the nigger is wedded to a white woman ? ” asked Kristo Das, a new comer, who entered just then. He was an Indian Christian, originally a journalist, who had since become a Professor in a Punjab College.

“Particularly not then,—if she is a *Ci-devant* jewess ”, answered the lady concerned.

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Her title of Begum was self-acquired—a ray of romance from the tales of Indian History she had read at school ; and so immune from partition even with her indulgent and affluent husband. She had all the aplomb of the European married to an Asiatic, seeming to confer a favour by the alliance, not only on her husband, but on his whole race and country. Wherever his name or wealth could get her an entree she would take the floor without a nod from the chair ;

and hold forth on what “you—Indians” should do to get rid of the hated British. A doctor of philosophy of the Vienna University, she was a mystic in history and hysterical in politics. Her Begumship was itself symbolical to unite—the Sikh and the Muslim, the west with the East.

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Mrs. Ramdas was busy with tea, ordering fresh cups for the new guests. Already she knew the evening would be a lively and crowded one.”

“Namas-Te, Ramdasji”, Profesor Kristo Das greeted as he entered. “I heard so many voices as I got down from my Rikshaw, I had more than half a mind to turn back.” He shook hands with the other guests, as introductions were made all round. “But I am much too bothered in my classes with the communal tangle to miss this opportunity to thrash it out with a leader like you. When are you going to solve it?” He glanced at Ramdas, and Rahim and Abdul, as he asked. “I have asked Charlie Fandrews to help; and he will come in a moment Mrs. Ramdas.”

“The question”, said Abdul, “is not when; the question is how.”

“It is the when which bothers us in the Services”, said Begum Singh, “however it is, it must be now or never.”

“That is just like a foreigner”, chipped in Krishna, “Whenever and however it is solved, I shall never consent to anything which in any degree breaks up Akhand Hindusthan.”

“Allah in his wisdom knows if Hindusthan ever was, is, or will be Akhand,” observed Rahim stroking softly his hennahed beard.

“Do you doubt if India is and was and always shall be one and indivisible”, asked Krida in amazement.

“Like God himself”, smiled Sahib Singh, “Trinity in Unity, and Unity in Trinity.”

Even Mrs. Krishna could not mistake his sardonic grin.

“Whatever it was, you must grant the British moulded it into one”, remarked the Rev. Charlie Fandrews who had heard the last few words on his entrance, “and if they can help it, she shall ever remain undivided !”

“So long as we remain quiet and submissive, it would naturally suit them to keep India one,” said Ramdas.

“But if that means any loss of their own power, they would rather see us carved out in a thousand parts than risk the decline of their own position.” It was an audible aside from Abdul.

“They certainly did not mind lopping off Burma from India”, Ram Piari put in from her tea-table as she handed his tea to Fandrews.

“That was meeting the Burmans’ urge for nationalism” said the Rev. gentleman. “India has no right to keep Burma dangling at her feet, which differs so radically in race and culture from her.”

“It is not Burma’s nationalism they have respected” observed Krishna. “It was the best way to guarantee and secure the British business in Burma. Burmese nationalism has been suffered to show itself only in anti-Indian riots and legislation.”

“Served them right, too”, said Sahib Singh. “Burma booming with Japanese guns will not be easy to reconquer.”

“I have liquidated all my investments in that wretched hole” said Krishna. “It meant a loss of two lakhs ; but what is 2 lakhs ?

He seemed to ask the assembly to pay mute homage to his wealth as well as wisdom. His wife threw him a piece of cake she had eaten from with an adoring glance. The public did not always get such an opportunity to observe their domestic felicity ; and both of them were too dramatic to miss such an opportunity.

“I have no investments to liquidate from anywhere,—not even from Bombay”, observed Rahim in quiet rebuke to the parading pair.

“But for us in India,—Hindus and Muslims of the several provinces,—it is not a question of cutting our losses” said Ramdas, “and getting away while the going is good.”

“We certainly must find a way out while it is yet time to stave off the impending Hindu Raj” complained Sheikh Rahim.

“I want to get out of the British Raj first”, said Abdul. “We can always deal with the Bania and Brahman.”

“Don’t forget it is a Bania who bosses you all now.” rejoined Begum Sing, “and makes you dance to his tune.

“Wait till the Mutton Martand from Nagpur gets going, and sets his pot-bellied lieutenant on you”, laughed Krishna.

“Bengal never, never shall be slaves”, said Kristo Das.

“While Britania rules the waves”, chipped in Sahib Sing.

“Provincialism is not less a menace for India in the future”, said Fandrews, “than communalism today. It will ruin you much more if you don’t take care.”

“Provincial autonomy should satisfy all legitimate local ambitions”, urged Ramdas, “and no one has ever suggested to put the clock back in that regard.”

“It is the Hindu nature to be divided, and exclusive”, remarked Abdul. “Caste has killed in three thousand years of exclusiveness every social instinct in the Hindus. They can only be nationalists.”

“*Muslim Hai Ham Watan Hai Sarah Jahan Hamara*”, sang Rahim, with hearty chorus from most of those present.

“The modern educated Hindu does not believe in caste”, observed Ram Piari, with a glance at Krishna and his wife.

“And, remember, caste had never an absolutely free field to flourish in”, said Ramdas. “Buddhism was and is as much a religion of equality to all living beings, and still more so is Jainism,” he added. “Neither Islam nor Christianity can come near either in absolute egalitarianism.”

“Buddhism was born in India”, pointed out Rahim, “but flourished outside India. And how much of pure Jainism survives after twenty centuries contact with Hinduism? Corroded and perverted, it is more caste-ridden than Hinduism. and more idol-worshipping than animism.”

“Hindus are nature’s aristocrats.” There was pride as well as a pleasure in Krishna’s dogmatic assertion. “Every body likes to imitate them as the Jains have done, the Christians have done; and even the Muslims are doing. Caste is as much prevailing in Islam as in Hinduism. In fact to be an aristocrat is the ambition of everybody, is instinctive in man.” He concluded with a peroration.

“Aristocrats of exclusiveness, not of God’s creation”, said Kristo Das. “But there is no denying that the spell of India

—of Hinduism,—lies heavy on us all-Christians or Muslims, Jains or Buddhists.”

“God created all equal ; and man has split them into classes, countries, and communities ” commented Rahim. “But Hinduism is unique in the world for evolving, approving and maintaining untouchability as between one human being and another.”

“Pardon me ” said Begum Singh, “but the treatment of the Jews in Germany is worse than those of the Untouchables in India.”

“And I have heard that the treatment of the Zoroastrians in Persia was even worse under the Muslims in Iran for centuries. Until Reza Shah Pehlevi made him equal, a Zoroastrian was treated by law as worse than a pariah dog. That is why so many of them have become Bahais in recent years,” observed the Professor. “For it was really the influence of Bahai teaching which started even the germ of equality in Iran.”

“Who are the Bahais ? ” asked Krida.

“Followers of Bahaullah—a Prophet—born in Iran, and persecuted also in Turkey in the last century ” explained the Professor.

“The Shiah heretics have never understood the true spirit of Islam ” maintained Sheikh Rahim. “How can you expect them to do otherwise ? ”

“Here is further proof of the spirit of caste tainting deep and fast Islam in India,” put in Mrs. Krishna.

“The Shia and the Sunni differences arose long before Islam entered India ”, pointed out Begum Singh.

“ But not the characteristic Indian differences between the Syed and the Sheikh ? ” asked the Sikh.

“ To be aristocratic, exclusive, or caste conscious is, I repeat, an instinct of human nature ” insisted Krishna.

“ Don’t father the vices of man upon the goodness of God,” said Fandrews.

“ Right, Padre. It was a special Providence and particular goodness of God to make and keep the British Empire ” sneered Sahib Sing.

“ Of course, otherwise how do you explain Russia joining the allies against Germany, two years after making a Treaty with her, and also the United States, in this dire day of the Empire ? ” asked Abdul.

“ Man is a miserable pigmy wanting to pierce through the mystery of Providence ”, said Kristo Das.

“ This will take us beyond even the Himalayas of Metaphysics. Can you not arrange a more systematic discussion of one problem at a time ? Say communalism vs. nationalism ? ” asked Mrs. Ramdas.

“ I second the motion ”, said Kristo Das. “ Do let us thrash out one problem at least ! I need some material for my lectures.”

“ Do you want to turn this happy gathering into a debating society, Mrs. Ramdas ? ” asked Fandrews.

“ It is time there was some more light. The sun is going down ”, she replied allegorically, and acted to suit the literal sense of her observation.

“If we are to debate this issue out, we must have a president”, remarked Krishna, who had no objection to take the chair in any place.

“We can do without a President, but not without some postulates”, rejoined Abdul.

“Such as ?” enquired Ramdas in genuine earnestness.

“That no solution would be worth having, if imposed by force”, replied Abdul.

“Or by an outsider”, added Rahim. —

“We cannot rule out force altogether”, said Krishna. “It depends upon what you mean by force.”

“Violence is that” smiled Fandrews “which Governments use when dealing with Congressmen or others resorting to direct action ; and non-violence is the means which Congressmen use amongst their own fellows to make them fall into line. The former is force, naked and undisguised ; the latter is discipline, salutary as well as necessary”.

“Persuasion—even persistent persuasion—cannot be called violence by any stretch of imagination”, said Ram Piari.

“Isn’t a beloved leader fasting—or threatening to fast—unto death, unless his desire is granted, a form of coercion ?” asked Krishna.

“Picketting must be permitted in any case as non-violent persuasion”, put in Krida.

“It offers too good an opportunity for personal display to be absolutely prohibited,” said Sahib Singh.

“For my part I see no objection to a strike—even a complete, universal strike,—or picketting,” added Rahim in all earnestness.

“If a real general strike could only be feasible,—as you had thought of in the Khilafat days, Abdul—this government could not continue for day.” There was deep disappointment in Ramdas’s tone.

“Or any Government”, interposed Fandrews. “But these methods are double-edged tools, you know. They might recoil on the user when least expected.”

“But we are not dealing with what is feasible, or expedient, are we?” asked the hostess. “We must consider what is right and proper,—feasible or not.”

“You are an incorrigible idealist, Rama”, smiled her husband, “but politics is essentially a practical business. We cannot all so easily soar away into the ideal and the infinite, as you do while dealing with such matters. They are of the earth, earthly. In politics we may soar, but only as kites and vultures,—to spy out carcasses.”

“Then I leave it to you to devise earthly as well as human ways—decent and civilised—to end this tangle”, retorted the lady of the house. “For my part, I vote we discard and abjure violence altogether.”

“Violence of all kinds, Mrs. Ramdas?” asked Rahim.

“You know what I mean,—violence which involves the use of brute force, violence which spells bloodshed, violence which we see during riots or in civil wars.”

“I entirely endorse your view, madam”, said Fandrews, bowing profoundly like the humble servant of the Prince of Peace he professed to be.

“Naturally, Padre,” laughed Sahib Singh. “It is the surest guarantee for the unbroken continuance of British Imperialism.

Everybody must be disarmed, everybody must agitate peacefully, lawfully, non-violently, so that the Briton alone should function as the policeman of the world."

"I think you cruelly distort my meaning", moaned the Missionary.

"I accept this first postulate", Ramdas interposed to cut short the discussion. "That the only acceptable and abiding solution of the communal problem in India can be by mutual persuasion and voluntary agreement between the parties concerned, and not by force or violence in any shape or form."

"I think you are acting like the proverbial ostrich", put in Krishna. "The Muslim is a bully, who will always mistake your mildness for your weakness. I won't rule out even civil war, if it came to that, to preserve *Akhand Hindusthan*. Forgive me, Sheikhji, if I speak too plainly."

"Shaitan smiles when a Bania becomes bold and talks war," rejoined his fellow guest.

"If we talk civil war, we will one day *have* civil war", came from Ramdas. "I would sacrifice everything, life itself, to avoid raising my hand in anger against my brother. We have plenty of enemies elsewhere."

"You have no enemy,—except in your own heart", again advised the missionary.

"The advocate of Imperialism marches with time, and learns new technique of debate, new tricks of the tongue", interjected Sahib Singh.

"This is no new idiom I have used—nor a meaning unfamiliar in this land of the Buddha", Fandrews mildly countered.

“ But why not put Mrs. Ramdas’s motion to the vote ? ” clinched Abdul.

“ We all accept it as a general proposition ”, oraculated Krida. “ But exceptional circumstances demand exceptional remedies. We must face realities, you know.” She added with aphoristic earnestness.

“ I for my part accept the proposition in the terms moved”, said Abdul. “ Leave exceptional conjunctures to be dealt with when they arise.”

“ I am a normal man,” said the Colonel “ and as a normal man, I accept it as the normal method of civilised man ! ”

“ *La Guerra* will always remain the *ultima ratio*,” advised the Begum.

“ *Ultima ratio regis* need not be the *ultima ratio populi*, madam,” said Ramdas “ especially when the latter become enlightened as well as emancipated.”

“ But that very emancipation will not come without a civil-war,” insisted the irreconcilable Sikh. “ Communalism is only a curtain raiser, at best. The real drama is to come—must come,—when Swaraj, as you call it, is achieved.”

“ We shall take note of it. But, meanwhile, don’t you agree, Colonel, that we must eschew all talk of civil war or bloody violence to settle this domestic question ? ” asked Ramdas.

“ I have no objection to your trying, at least,” he answered. “ But I know, the fight must come ; and that not between Hindus and Muhammedans, but between capitalists of all communities and workers of all communities. And that will be a bloody fight, you may take my word for it. But again I say I have no objection to your non-violence stunt being tried out. It will keep the attention of the real enemies diverted from one another, at least for the time being.”

“We seem to be generally agreed that violence of the kind described by Shrimatiji must be excluded as a method,—ultimate or immediate,—for solving this tangle,” concluded Abdul.

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“That is, then, your first postulate, or preliminary point settled,” declared Ramdas.

“I think it is also the best way to maintain the solution arrived at by mutual consent and voluntary agreement. Any other ?” asked the I.M.S. officer.

“What do you mean ?” asked Krishna. “You want to solve communalism by substituting communism ?”

“I think one could go farther and fare worse,” admitted Ramdas.

“The Colonel rather means, I fancy, what type of State organization we think of working when we have solved the communal tangle,” interposed Abdul.

“That is to say would you be working for an integral, unpartitioned India, with a democratic constitution of the British, American, or French pattern,” enquired the Viennese Doctor, “or would you experiment with something *a la Hitler-cum-Mussolini-cum-Stalin* systems of totalitarianism ?”

“The Chinese pattern of Chiang is not so bad,” suggested Ram Piari, who had met and fallen in love with Madame Chiang-kai-Shek.

“Democracy, as perfect equality, is foreign to the Hindu nature,” observed Sheikh Rahim ; “and India will always have a Hindu majority. Even their gods are graded, you know.”

“ We must postulate, I think,” said Abdul “ the right of self-determination.”

“ Even for the Kayasthas of U.P.? ” asked Krishna with a sneer “ or for native Christians and Anglo-Indians ? ”

“ Why do you say, Sheikhji, democracy as perfect equality is foreign to Hindu nature ? ” enquired Ram Piari. “ After all, within a caste at least, everybody is absolutely equal.”

“ And caste itself is breaking down,” put in Krida, “ even in such matters as marriage, let alone food, or untouchability, thanks to Mahatmaji.”

“ I am not sure, Mahatmaji has abjured caste altogether,” remarked Abdul. “ I think he has said somewhere or the other that he believes in *Varna-Ashrama Dharma*—which is the essence of the Hindu socio-religious system—unequal, as well as undemocratic.”

“ Except when his Vaishya son marries a Brahmin’s daughter,” put in Krishna. “ That is *anuloma* marriage, forbidden even by Manu, unless you want to breed a progeny of *chandalas*.”

“ *Karmaná Bráhmāno Jáyate*, natu janmana,” remarked Ramdas sententiously.

“ And his assault on untouchability is motivated,” remarked Kristodas, “ more by ethics than economics.”

“ Very likely by politics, also, of the subtlest species,” added Rahim.

“ All strength to his elbow, say I,” added Fandrews, “ no matter what the motive force. The aim is good in itself ; and the means irreproachable.”

“ I am by no means sure political sagacity was altogether absent from Gandhiji’s calculations on the occasion of the Poona fast. Where would that majority be if the untouchables all changed to maintain Hindu integrity, which also meant Hindu majority. Where would that majority be if the untouchables all changed faith ? ”

“ Gandhiji was prepared to sacrifice his life to maintain the absolute integrity of the Hindu community, even though the fifty million Harijans have been denied by the Hindus the merest human rights for centuries, let alone civic or political rights. But he could not move himself to the same white heat of *Qurbani* to maintain India’s national integrity,” remarked Abdul.

“ Years ago, he fasted for weeks and weeks in that cause also,” pleaded Ram Piari. “ Memories are so short in politics.”

“ That was not a fast unto death, declared as such,” corrected the Sheikh.

“ Nor did he await an agreed solution before breaking that fast,” added Abdul.

“ But there was no threat, in those days, to the integrity of the country from any quarter,” urged Ramdas.

“ But now that the threat is there ? ” enquired the implacable Sheikh.

“ He does not see the light, in that direction, yet, as he wrote to Jinnah the other day,” put in Krishna. Was it a defence, or a sneer ?

“ Who can answer you, Sheikhji ? ” explained the Reverend. “ God always moves in mysterious ways His wonders to perform.”

“ Meanwhile, then, the darkness must grow, the conflict deepen, the country torn apart ? ” asked Abdul.

“ I see no reason why the rest of the leaders should remain inactive while the Mahatma awaits new light from heaven ! ” answered the Sikh surgeon.

“ I agree,” said Ramdas. “ We must think out and lay down some basic principles to govern this matter also.”

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“ My query is still to be answered,” remarked Sahib Singh.

“ I think we must premise a federal, democratic, organization of the state in India,” said Ramdas.

“ How will that satisfy the Muslims now ? ” enquired Rahim.

“ Every legitimate ambition of the Muslims ought to be satisfied under a liberal system of provincial autonomy, and guaranteed fundamental rights of citizenship, without disturbing our national strength, or integrity,” answered Ramdas.

“ That does not necessarily mean Muslims will have ample, real scope for self-expression, politically speaking. With a strong central government for all India, provincial autonomy for Muslim-governed units would be only a name-plate, a sham, and a fiction,” said Abdul. “ Muslim leaders have realised this ; and so they are no longer content to accept that solution,” rejoined Rahim.

“ A strong, central national government,” said the Sikh, “ is indispensable if this country’s yet unexplored resources are to be developed, and potentialities realised. In the post-war world, India will have very little chance to be respected and prosperous, if she has not a strong central government.”

“ That will depend upon how you define and distribute political and administrative powers and functions, as between

the centre and the units," reasoned Ramdas. "I for my part would agree to the widest margin of powers and functions to be entrusted to the provinces, with only limited and clearly defined powers and functions of common concern left to the centre."

"That would weaken the centre—the national government as a whole,—without strengthening the provinces," commented Krishna. "Look at the hopeless muddle they've made in Bengal of the food situation. But for the practical suspension of the Provincial Government, and taking over their function by the military, what a mess there would have been? I agree with the Colonel for once. The Centre shall not be weakened in any case."

"If you agree, I must reconsider my view," cryptically observed Singh.

"We must not father the faults or shortcomings of individuals upon fundamental principles," advised Ramdas.

"There are no principles in politics, only personalities," said Colonel Singh.

"I cannot accept that," protested Kristo Das. "Call them fundamentals, if not principles. But we must have some basis to judge, or test, or measure our actions by."

"I repeat full provincial autonomy, with the widest scope to the units, and with well-defined powers of common concern to a federal centre, is the best possible basis under the circumstances for our reconstruction and reconstitution," declared Ramdas.

“ But your existing provinces are such anomalous creations of the British for their own convenience,” complained Abdul. “ How can we call them real entities ? What cohesive element is there in almost any of them ? ”

“ I agree with you,” chipped in Krishna. “ All provinces must be reconstituted. Tamilnad must be separated from Andhradesha, and Gujerat from Maharashtra.”

“ Why should not all provinces be abolished altogether ? ” asked the Colonel. But no one heeded him.

“ Without adding, that however much you extend the scope for provincial autonomy, it will never be a substitute for a people’s right of self-determination,” commented Rahim.

“ Do you mean, Muslims are a different people from the rest of India,” Sheikh Saheb ? ” asked Krishna in some heat.

“ Many now claim it to be so,” mildly answered Abdul in place of his friend. “ And if you think Gujerat has a sufficiently distinct individuality of its own to be separated from Maharashtra, I see no reason why Muslims of the Western Punjab or Sindh should not claim similar individuality for themselves as distinguished from the rest of Hinduism.”

“ But Gujerat, Karnatak, or Kerala, Andhra or Orissa, demand recognition of their distinct individuality as provinces,” argued Krishna. “ That is, as integral parts of an undivided whole. Nobody asks for them a separate nationhood—separate sovereign statehood.”

“ If provincial autonomy is premised in the widest sense Ramdasji has given it, the right to secede from the federation must be implied and recognised,” insisted Rahim. “ Consent of federating units is the essence of federation, however express

or implied. Consent to join also implies the right to withdraw from the union."

"Especially when you are ready to reconstitute provincial units on some basis of inherent coherence," added Abdul.

"There is no federation with a right to secede." Sahib Singh was curt and categorical.

"Then we must make one," Abdul was equally definite and emphatic. "Otherwise provincial autonomy would not satisfy Muslim ambitions now."

"If it is to be a satisfactory substitute for the demand to disintegrate India, I am afraid we must concede that," held Ramdas, "however much one may feel it is calculated to weaken and undermine the central, national government, especially in international dealings."

"You will have a much stronger counterpoise in the contented and willing co-operation of the units to set off against this dread," pointed out Abdul.

"I realise that," Ramdas admitted ; "and confess my faith in the essential virility and magnetism of the nationalist principle to feel confident that the sentiment of national loyalty would grow everyday even as against communal or provincial allegiance, if once we remove this thorn in our side ; and will soon make us forget communal or parochial loyalty in place of the national patriotism."

"I cannot agree to the ideal of national solidarity as against class solidarity of the workers in field or factory," intervened Sahib Singh. "A virile nationalism is only a fore-runner, an outrider, to aggressive Imperialism," he added.

"Without forgetting that the postulates on which these propositions are being built up, viz. a separate peoplehood,—a

potential nationhood of the Indian Muslims,—also imply that the very virility of nationalism may spell the dismemberment of the country, when their consciousness of difference or distinctness gathers sufficient strength,” criticised Krishna. “I should never encourage these fissiparous tendencies.”

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“Let us then agree to discuss them as alternative solutions,” urged Ram Piari, “to the problem before us.”

“You mean maintaining an integral, democratic, national, federal state in India, with the fullest scope to provincial autonomy, and guaranteed fundamental rights to citizens as well as communities, as an alternative to Pakistan, as it is called?” Abdul tried to definitise.

“Yes,” assented Ramdas. His wife nodded her concurrence.

“Yes,” added Andrews, “I think that is the only course since integral India must include the Indian States; and no reference has yet been made to their place and claims in an Indian Federation.”

“Oh, the States must be scrapped.”

“Oh, the Princes must be pensioned off.”

Sahib Singh and Abdul were almost simultaneous in their views.

“You cannot ignore the treaty obligations,” intervened the Begum. “When you take over from the British, you must take over assets as well as liabilities.”

“I can see no assets,—unencumbered and absolute,” remarked Rahim *sotto voce*.

“In the democratic organization we have premised, the Princes can have no place. We cannot take them to be their peoples’ hereditary spokesmen,” argued Ramdas.

“And Treaties have always lent themselves to interpretation, when one of the parties is also the final judge,” noted Krishna

“If you send the Princes packing for good, it would be such a heart-rending break with our ancient glory,” wailed Krida.

“What is the good of letting anachronisms to survive or absurdities to flourish,” asked the colonel.

“Mahatmaji does not think them anachronisms or absurdities.” Krishna rushed to the rescue of his wife, “I follow the Mahatma.”

“They certainly can provide fat fees for fighting on airy nothings,” remarked Rahim.

“Look at his sacrifice at Rajkot,” pointed out Krida.

“I have been thinking of nothing else, ever since,” said Abdul.

“What a moral and a menace !” explained Sahib Singh.

“The one justification of retaining the Princes and maintaining the States,” pointed out Rahim, “is that the former can employ the best paid advocates and physicians with fancy prices ; and the latter provide an unexplored immensity for exploiting unknown resources. Capitalists and Concession-hunters must not be disappointed, nor high-priced professionals deprived of their advertisable engagements.”

“That means we assume the States and the Princes to be a fact of our national existence and organisation in the future ?” enquired Sahib Singh. “In that case we shall be marching on one whole and one half leg.”

“We may assume their existence,” pointed out Rahim, “but not necessarily their continuance in future ; nor functions in the form they have hitherto functioned in.”

“And there is no need to confound the Princes with the States, and much less with their peoples,” urged Ramdas.

“The former are historical monuments, at least,” oraculated Krishna.

“The latter are not even a geographical expression,” rejoined the sheikh.

“Monuments ought to be in museums,” pointed out the surgeon.

“And geographical expressions ? ” enquired Krida.

“In elementary, obsolete, discarded text-books,” retorted the colonel.

“Nevertheless, in our discussion, we cannot overlook the fact of their existence today,” remarked Ram Piari.

“We cannot,” argued Abdul. “I would trust to the growing strength of the democratic sentiment to lead to the peaceful, painless end of the Princes, and quiet absorption of their States in the adjoining territories according to linguistic affinity or economic identity of interests or aspirations.”

“I never knew democracy could function as lethal chamber,” sneered the Sikh. “You will have to copy a leaf from Stalin and the Kulaks.”

“Democracy is like charity,” remarked Rahim. “It will cover a multitude of sins, of commission and omission.”

“Let us not waste time in epigramatising,” said Krishna who had had no chance to make any of his own.

“Certainly not,” agreed Sahib Singh, “except when they are yours.”

“I don’t scatter pearls . . .” rejoined Krishna.

“You are very courteous,” remarked Rahim.

“No personalities, please,” pleaded Ramdas. “We can never discuss anything scientifically, if we take this tone.”

“I vote we take, as a starting point, the fact that the States and the Princes exist, and must be accommodated in the national organization,” concluded Abdul, “without affecting the democratic federation we have already premised.”

“I move an amendment that democracy and princedom are fundamentally incompatible. In a democratic, egalitarian State, there can and must be no place for Princes,” said the Sikh. “Princes must be pensioned, if not poisoned.”

“Suppose the Princes abdicate ?” asked Abdul.

“They must be made to,” insisted Sahib Singh. “Alternative a firing squad at dawn before the walls of the capital in every State,—as many guns as the Ruler claims salute of. This must be their last salute, their requiem and farewell.”

“If they agree to retire, threats are needless,” pointed out Ramdas.

“Even the Kaiser and his confreres recognised the turning tide. Why should not the Indian Princes be credited with that much sagacity as to perceive the inevitable, and get away while the going is good,” added Abdul.

“That is not my experience of a majority of them,” remarked Rahim.

“But don’t you agree that they could be pensioned off into private life ?” said Ramdas.

“No pension must be a perpetual charge on the public purse,” urged the I.M.S.

“And their life would have to be very private, indeed, if it is to be at all tolerable in a democracy,” added the Begum.

“You need not worry, madame. The loudest democrat is usually the biggest snob,” counselled Rahim.

“Pensions will be liable to taxation, I presume ?” enquired Singh.

“Yes, at discriminating rates as on unearned income,” rejoined Rahim. “And not perpetual. They must end with the second generation.”

“We are beginning to be lost in details,” complained Mrs. Ramdas. “Do let us keep to the main track. Leave the details to be worked out later. Is your motion, with or without amendment, agreed to ?” she asked her husband.

“As a preliminary assumption I accept that the States and Princes exist ; and that the Princes must be pensioned off, and the peoples assimilated. We shall have to devise ways to fit them into the reconstituted India,” summarised Ramdas, “democratic, federal, and egalitarian.”

“Well, then that is one more assumption to start with,” concluded Ram Piari before Sahib Singh could think out any more scorches against the Princes.

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“What about religion ?” inquired Rahim.

“Religion is Public Enemy No. 1, and ought to be abolished the first thing in a free democratic state.” The Colonel sought another field for his innings.

“Enemy or not, it is in our midst today,” persisted Rahim. “It is more vital as an existing fact than all other principles, or principalities.”

“So is disease, poverty, or prostitution,” pointed out the incorrigible. “Must we not get rid of these, even though they have existed for centuries ? ” he asked.

“I do not accept the analogy,” argued Ramdas, “though I agree religion can be often a nuisance, and sometimes an obstacle.”

“And a solace too”, quietly added Ram Piari.

“As morphia,” rejoined Sahib Singh.

“That is merely blind repetition of foreign cliches,” sneered Krishna.

“Repetition does not change facts”, insisted the Singh.

“If we claim to be civilised”, said Ramdas, “we must learn to be tolerant.”

“There can be no fundamental rights of equal citizenship in a democracy”, argued Abdul, “if freedom of religious belief and worship are not included.”

“That does not mean that the State should have, or should recognise for special favour, any religion”, insisted Sahib Singh.

“I agree the State in India must be thoroughly secular, and all religions of the people should be entitled to equal respect”, said Ramdas.

“I would rather say ; equal contempt and indifference”, went on Sahib Singh. “Because the majority have a C³ intelligence, must the really intelligent deny their own convictions ? ”

“Democracy means the rule of the majority, not of the intelligent”, pointed out Abdul.

“I agree. The Hindus are in an absolute majority everywhere.” Krishna could hardly conceal his jubilation.

“That is the best argument for the demand for dismemberment”, rejoined Rahim.

“No, it is the best argument to insist on guarantees against the abuse of majority”, amended Ramdas. “The rule of the majority must be conditioned and restricted by the rights of the Minorities.”

“Such guarantees usually turn out to be scraps of paper”, replied Rahim. “Guarantees without goodwill are like tea without tea-leaves.”

“Not if they are honestly given and genuinely meant”, put in Ram Piari.

“Every demand for a guarantee implies distrust”, said Krishna, “and distrust begets distrust.”

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“Every demand for the guarantee implies a guarantor”, interrupted Fandrews to give a new turn to the discussion.

“That starts the vicious circle once again”, observed Sahib Singh.

“I thought it was the *Dhamma Chaka* of the Hindus”, added his wife.

“*Dhamma Chaka* was Buddhist, not Hindu”, Krida had remained speechless too long to miss this opportunity to air her bit of knowledge.

“Buddhist or Hindu, it is an eight-spoked Cycle”, explained Ram Piari, “not an innumerable-iced circle.”

“If distrust begets distrust, let us substitute Trust to breed Trust”, Ramdas tried to pour oil on troubled waters.

“Trust is not a matter of fiat”, said the Begum, “as light was to God. It is a child of experience.”

“It is a fostering of atmosphere, also !” answered Ramdas. “I think propaganda can do a great deal to change the atmosphere.”

“We must begin at the bottom rung of our educational system for that,” rejoined Kristodas.

“Let us, then, assume”, urged Ram Piari, “that mutual trust and good faith, systematically inculcated and scientifically propagated, will be strengthened by effective guarantees on agreed fundamental rights,—which shall include freedom of conscience, belief, and worship,—as well as of thought and speech, of association and organization, for every legitimate, reasonable end.”

“But if one citizen claims a freedom of conscience which spells to another a negation of *his* corresponding freedom?” asked Krishna.

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“All guaranteed rights must be common to all citizens”, answered Abdul, “and so every guaranteed right must be exercised with due respect to the similarly guaranteed rights of other fellow citizens.”

“The fundamental guarantees must be common to all”, observed Begum Singh, “citizens or aliens.”

“Certainly not,—at least in material benefits flowing from such guarantees”, pointed out Krishna.

“Such as ?” asked the Begum.

“Such as the guaranteed standard of living, which the State owes only to its citizens, primarily”, answered Ramdas. “If aliens choose to remain aliens, they must take the consequences”.

“You will then have to differentiate between material guarantees and spiritual guarantees”, insisted the Begum.

“I should not mind at all”, Krishna was dogmatic.

“We do not want our yet unexplored resources to be exploited by aliens to drain away from potential wealth”, remarked Rahim.

“It is a necessary distinction which need not become an invidious discrimination, if aliens learn to behave.” Ramdas’ tone was mild ; but the rebuke was unmistakable.

“And, besides, it will be only temporary”, added Sahib Singh, “while the State remains capitalist and enterprise individualist. When it is thoroughly socialised, there will be no such problem.”

“For a thorough socialisation, one state by itself cannot achieve much”, pointed out Ramdas. “The world as a whole must be socialised.

“Thorough socialisation can only come after a world revolution, when independent, sovereign states are abolished and a single World State takes their place. Nationalism will then be needless, and patriotism obsolete”, said Abdul.

“Even granting that”, insisted Sahib Singh, “I do not see how we can escape from the postulate, that the State is

India must be wholly secular ; that religion, even if tolerated, must be treated as purely private concern for each individual to choose for himself ; and that guarantees in respect of it should be framed so as not to affect the equal rights of all in regard to the freedom of conscience, belief and expression."

" There can be no question but that the State in India must be wholly and exclusively secular ", Ramdas agreed.

" And I would also agree that Religion, even if treated as a private personal matter for every individual to choose, should receive neither favour nor handicap from the State ", supplimented Abdul.

" If you mean cow sacrifice by Muslims ", ... Krishna was again up in arms.

" The British are beef-eaters by tradition for centuries ; and they glory in beef-eating ", remarked Rahim. " Why don't you protest against the Britisher slaughtering thousands of cows every year in India ? " he asked.

" And for them it is no religious sacrifice, but a perfectly secular enjoyment ", put in Abdul.

" The British are your rulers ", said Begum Singh.

" The British in future India will have to conform to the rules of conduct for Indian citizens as much as any other Indian citizens ", said Kristo Das.

" I think for the guarantees to be equal and effective, there must be some supreme authority utterly unamenable to the influence of Indian politicians ", observed Fandrews. " There must be a guarantor."

" You mean we must maintain the British Viceroy even in Independent India ? " asked Sahib Singh.

“No, he means a Supreme Court”, explained Krishna.

“A Supreme Court, even on the American pattern, will still be amenable to Indian politician’s influence”, rejoined Fandrews.

“An independent India must be a sovereign state, absolutely self-contained”, oraculated Krishna. “And that sovereignty will be only a figment of imagination, if we permit, or even tolerate, any outside authority to interfere in any way with our domestic concerns,—or international relations.”

“After the war, will there still remain absolute sovereignty in any state?” asked Ramdas.

“Sovereignty is eternal, absolute, and indivisible”, dogmatised Krishna.

“Then there can be no Federation”, rejoined Abdul. “For federation itself means division, or distribution as well as limitation of sovereignty.”

“Sovereignty is a legal fiction, made up by lawyers for their own good”, said Sahib Singh.

“Sovereignty of states must be limited and conditioned, even if it is maintained after the war”, observed Begum Singh, the Viennese Ph.D.

“No earthly sovereign must be deemed all-potent and all-sufficient”, remarked the Padre. “But every state’s independence must be fully recognised.”

“With all respect to your superior learning, may I again remind you we are getting into details”, intervened Ram Piari. “We can define later the nature and extent of sovereignty in independent India. Why not assume, for purposes of this discussion, that religious toleration will be a

fundamental feature of the Indian constitution after the war, which shall be effectively guaranteed to all, and scrupulously maintained, as all other fundamental rights of citizens."

"The how and why of guarantees and their maintenance being left to be determined later—I agree", said Abdul.

"The state to be wholly secular, and religion to be exclusively a private, personal concern,—I agree", said Sahib Singh, "guarantees being common and equal to all,—majority or minority, atheists or believers."

"The form of guarantees, and means of its enforcements being left to be settled later—I agree", added Rahim.

"Will you encourage atheists, too?" enquired Mrs. Krishna in apparent horror.

"I am afraid atheists, too, must have the same civil rights as every one else", said Sahib Singh.

"What will Mahatmaji say?" she persisted!

"If God has tolerated atheists for centuries, why can't the Mahatma?" asked Rahim. "Or is he greater than God on earth?"

"Mahatmaji is the living representative of God on earth", confessed the second Mrs. Krishna.

"Mahatmaji must put up with what God himself does not annihilate", said Begum Singh.

"But I would draw the line at atheism", insisted Krida.

"The motion is passed, Mrs. Krishna dissenting", said Abdul.

"Oh, I don't want to record a dissent, but merely express my own feeling. You know I feel so much", she added piteously.

"The motion is passed, *nemo contradicente*", corrected Abdul.

"It is getting rather late, don't you think so?" asked Krida.

"I am afraid the discussion has hardly begun", observed Abdul.

"Such discussions cannot be completed at one sitting", remarked Krishna. "The sessions must be adjourned."

"When will you like to resume it?" asked Ramdas.

"And on what specific points?" inquired Begum Singh. "The discussion will be facilitated and profitable if you lay down the matters to be discussed in advance".

"Postulating the conditions we have laid down", said Abdul "I suggest the discussion be concentrated on the specific issue of partition—or Pakistan as it is called."

"We must have some definite idea as to what is really meant by or implied in Pakistan", said the Sikh. "I have not seen a single concrete scheme embodying the Lahore Resolution of the Muslim League."

"There is no such scheme", said Krishna. "It is only an idea, not even an ideal; only a feeler, that is bound to be a failure."

"If you really would discuss the matter as a scientific problem, I undertake to give you a working notion of what is meant by Pakistan", said Abdul, "at least to facilitate

discussion. There are several such schemes,—not official or authoritative, but sufficiently indicative for our purpose.”

“Then I move the meeting be adjourned till tomorrow lunch time”, said Ram Piari. “I’ll provide the bodily, and you all the intellectual, substance.”

“That is extremely kind of you, Mrs. Ramdas”, began Mrs. Krishna, “but, why not come over all of you to our Hotel ? ”

“I am still convalescing, Mrs. Krishna, and so cannot go out. Do please come and join us at lunch tomorrow”, Ramdas seconded his wife.

The company thereupon adjourned to meet the next day.

THE SECOND DAY, LUNCH

Abdul was the first at the Rendezvous the next day at noon ; but he was not alone.

“ I have brought along with me Sir Mahomed Ismail, Ramdas, to join in our discussion today ”, he said as he entered. “ You know, he was member of the old Executive Council, and has much to say about Muslims in the Southern Provinces.”

“ Welcome, Sir Mahomed ”, greeted Ramdas. “ I hope you will join us at lunch, too.”

“ I would be delighted ”, said Ismail, “ but you know it is Ramzan ; and I am fasting today.”

“ That reminds me, Mrs. Ramdas ”, added Abdul. “ Rahim too, would be observing the Roza today.”

“ You need not pain your economic conscience ”, said Ram Piary in reply. “ Prof. Kristo Das has just phoned asking if he might bring along Dr. Garudeshan. I have asked him to do so hoping he would join us at lunch.”

“ Dr. Garudeshan is the sharpest lawyer South of the Vindhya, not a physician ”, explained Sir Mohamed. “ He would certainly add spice to your discussion, as a sound Dravidistani.”

“ Not at the cost of the national integrity of India, Sir Mahomed ”, said the learned Doctor who entered that moment in company with his friend. “ I hope you will forgive me, Mrs. Ramdas, thus butting in at the very last moment.”

"I would be delighted, Doctor, if you will not mind our simple fare", reassured the hostess.

"I trust you will not mind, Ramdasji," said Krishna who appeared with his wife, "if Sir John Bentleigh joins us. He is a perfect sample of dyed-in-the-wool Imperialist bureaucrat; and professes a wider vision than Indians can claim. He will come about two."

"I am not quite sure if . . . " Abdul began to demur."

"Oh, don't be afraid. He can't eat us up raw, you know", reassured Ramdas. "Let us hear his views, too. But the Colonel is bringing more company, it seems."

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Sahib Singh, his Begum, and Rahim were seen approaching the house in company with a young man in a long Red Shirt, carrying a *belcha* on his shoulder like a battle-axe. The moment they entered, Rahim brought him forward to introduce him to the host and hostess.

"This is Firdaus, a new breed in India, Ramdasji, our local representative of the New Order, a la Hitler-cum-Mussolini-cum-Stalin-cum-Tojo. He is a good Muslim, however; and, therefore, fasting today; but also a good citizen of the world. He has his own suggestions for the problem we are to discuss; and I think we might do worse than hear him."

"Keeping Roza does not prevent you from sitting at the same table with us, I hope", enquired Ram Piari.

"We recognise no form of untouchability", replied Firdaus. "Eating or fasting, we are all equal children of the same God."

"That might be so, if one believed in God", put in Sahib Singh.

"What ? you doubt even the existence of the Almighty ?" asked Firdaus in amazement not unmixed with fury.

"I don't doubt, I deny", sententiously rejoined the provoking Sikh.

A hot retort was averted in the nick of time by Ramdas, quietly observing : "We have agreed to tolerate all ways of thinking or belief on these eternal mysteries, Khan Sahib. You must not mind the Colonel's way of stating his views."

Peace was preserved for the moment, the attention of the party having turned to the new comer, Rev. Fandrews.

"You really forgive me, Mrs. Ramdas", said the Professor, "for thus unceremoniously bringing here my friend, Dr. Garudeshan. He is a master mind, you know, and has his own solution of our problem."

"There need be no ceremony between friends", Mrs. Ramdas smiled her welcome. "And, besides, my husband has long wanted to make the acquaintance of the learned Doctor. So it is we who are in your debt."

* * *

They all gathered round the friendly, hospitable board, where the hostess had taken every care to provide a simple but tasteful meal. Those in the fast, however, sat at one end to facilitate service. The room was big enough to prevent the sense of a crowd ; and compact enough to permit easy conversation.

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“ You have undertaken, Abdul, to give us some definite idea of Pakistan, if not a concrete scheme,—a sort of peg to hang our discussion on, you know ”, observed Ramdas, when they were all seated at lunch.

“ I have not forgotten my promise ”, replied Abdul, “ but Rahim and I had some further talk last night ; and he would like one or two further preliminaries to be cleared up, before we get on to specific consideration of the problem proper, even at the cost of some repetition, if unavoidable.”

All eyes turned to Rahim.

“ We have assumed that the future constitution of India is to be a democratic federation, with the largest possible measure of autonomy to the constituent units. Does that include the right to secede ? ” Rahim asked.

“ We have assumed also that the country should be maintained integral and indivisible ”, answered Krishna.

“ Pardon me ”, remarked Abdul, “ we assumed the possibility of an alternative.”

“ Granted ”, said Sahib Singh, “ but only in case the federal organization, with the widest measure of self-governing powers and functions to the constituent or component units, did not prove sufficient or satisfying to the local ambitions of any region, or desire for self-expression of any community.”

“ That is just the point ”, said Abdul. “ Do you recognise the right to self-determination of any region or community ? ”

“ We have premised the possibility ”, chipped in Krishna, “ and even the desirability or necessity of reconstituting provinces, by subdividing existing ones, or amalgamating new and old ones. In that process, surely, the wishes of the

people concerned will be a primary consideration. That, surely, ought to satisfy all legitimate and reasonable ambitions for local autonomy and self-expression."

"Readjustment of provincial boundaries in a Federation is no substitute for the aspiration to independent statehood and sovereignty that a people might feel," observed Rahim.

"I do not believe sovereignty of the type we were familiar with in the pre-war world would survive after this war", said Ramdas.

"And, if I am any judge of such matters", said the Sikh Colonel, "the tendency in the post-war world will be more and more towards larger aggregates of peoples co-operating and co-ordinating, not competing and conflicting, to promote the material interests of the world as an aggregate, as well as its component units as individuals."

"Secession will become as obsolete, as it is obviously unprofitable", noted Professor Kristo Das.

"All that does not answer a people's desire to be independent, to have a chance of self-expression", persisted Rahim.

"And, because a people amicably separate from their erstwhile compatriots", supported Ismail, "it does not necessarily follow that they would compete or conflict with their former fellow citizens. Co-operation will be all the more genuine if it is freely given ; co-ordination will be all the more effective if it is willingly offered."

"Remember, we have abjured force as a means of settling internal or international differences", remained Abdul. "You cannot get co-operation by compulsion."

“A legal enactment is not always a command to compel,” remarked Ramdas. “In social legislation, more often than not, it simply sets the standard, points the road, guides or enlightens the uninformed or the indifferent.”

“But even granting, Sheikh Sahib”, said Ram Piari, “that the right of a people to self-expression must be conceded and recognised overriding all other considerations, does it not presuppose that there is a people who demand such a right? I am not against the right to secede, if I am convinced there is a distinct people in this country who would be held in it against their will.”

“The Muslims claim to be a distinct people”, quietly remarked Firdaus.

“Not the Muslims, but a few Muslim leaders”, said Krishna.

“Every indication of public opinion you have had since 1940 showed the Muslim masses support the demand of the Muslim League”, said Rahim.

“In the 1937 elections to the Provincial Legislatures, Muslim League candidates showed only 4.4% of the votes”, remarked Ramdas. “Out of a total Muhammadan electorate of 7,319,445 the Muslim League candidates got only 321,772 votes.”

“Much has happened since 1937 to make the Muslim masses change their mind”, said Firdaus, “even if the election results are a fair index of public sentiment. Elections are hardly ever fought on a straight, simple issue; and they provide a most misleading index.”

“Look at what has recently happened in the Punjab”, said Sahib Singh, “Jinnah’s goading has made Khizr Hayat bolt with the bit in his mouth.”

“Khizr Hayat has bolted from Jinnah,” rejoined Rahim, “not from the League.”

“Besides, out of hundreds of Muhammadan seats, the Congress dared to contest only 58, and out of these won only 26”, said Ismail.

“Muslims are being dragooned into anti-Congress fold”, said Krishna. “I don’t believe they are intelligent enough, as a mass, to understand the difference between the Congress creed and the League demands.”

“The masses in every community in India are ignorant sheep”, put in Firdaus. “They must be led ; and there must be one leader, one platform, one purpose. I would then agree, as to an inevitable corollary, that there must be one people also in the whole country.”

“But you have still not answered Mrs. Ramdas”, reminded Fandrews. “What constitutes a people that can justly demand the right to an independent, sovereign statehood ? And are the Muslims of India such a people ? ”

“The Oxford Dictionary defines a nation to be an extensive aggregate of people, so closely associated with each other by common descent, language, or history, as to form a distinct race or people, usually recognised as a separate political state, and occupying a definite territory”, Begum Singh vindicated her Doctorate of Vienna, by reading out the standard definition from a slip of paper she had obviously prepared in advance.

“There is a difference between a people, and a nation”, remarked her husband, “even in Germany.”

“Let us not be lost in details”, Ram Piari begged ; “but table this as a working definition. As I heard it, the essential ingredients of a distinct nationhood, or peoplehood, are some community of history or descent, habitation, language or culture, and political organization.”

“Community of religion is no less important a cement”, pointed out Rahim.

“There are several cases of people with a community of religion”, rejoined Sahib Singh, “like the Jews and the Parsis, that are not considered a people entitled to separate, sovereign statehood. Even the Protestants and Catholics of Europe are not at all in one state each, nor has there ever been a suggestion of the Catholics of Germany founding a separate State.”

“What do you say to the scheme for a separate Jewish home in Palestine ? They would be a nation there”. suggested Abdul.

“It is only a refined mode of swindling the Arabs of that region of their patrimony and heritage,” countered Firdaus. “Inspired by British Imperialism, and financed by American capitalism, it is the latest form of staking a claim, and calling it mandate or protectorate. There will never be a truly independent Jewish nation, in a Jewish homeland, made up of the Jew only.”

“*Qui n’a pas du pays, a du moins une patrie,*” murmured the Viennese Doctor in an audible aside, but in a foreign tongue.

“All that will not undo the new consciousness of distinct peoplehood, or nationhood, the Muslims of India have begun to feel”, observed Rahim, “though their only bond *inter se* may be religion.”

“Consciousness of a distinct nationality is not instinctive ; it may be created, implanted, fostered and developed”, said Ismail. “As Renan has said somewhere : a nation is a spiritual family, not a group determined by the configuration of the soil. A nation is a great solidarity constituted by the sentiment of the sacrifices that have been made, and by those which the people are disposed to do. It suggests a past. It is summed up in the present by a tangible fact,—the consent, the clearly expressed desire, to combine in a common life. Now, the Muslims of India are beginning to feel they have less in common, and more in conflict, with the Hindus. They have little or no common past, or history. They do not take pride in the same events, nor share the same sacrifices, or have the same aspirations, I am afraid”, he concluded.

“There is no conscious consent to continue a common life,” said Bentleigh.

“My query still remains unanswered”, said Ram Piari. “Are you Muslims of India really a distinct people by race or heritage ?”

“Ninety-five per cent. of the present day Muslims have ninety-nine per cent of Hindu blood in their veins”, said Krishna. “Only it is mostly drawn from the lower classes,—like that of the Parsis.”

“That is not the shame of Islam in India,” said Rahim, “but rather its glory, that not only was it for six hundred years the religion of the rulers of India, but also of the most oppressed, the most exploited, the outcaste and the disinherited of the Hindus.”

“I claim fellowship with Islam in that noble work of reclaiming and rehumanising the lowest class of the Hindus”,

said Fandrews. "The Christian convert is the equal of any Brahmin in the land, even though made from a Panchama."

"In the railway train", said Krishna, "not in the intellectual vein. And I don't know if it is quite a noble task to start converting among those stricken with starvation by offering them food doles." He added as an after thought, "or at the point of the sword."

"That is no apology for the very fact of the outcaste and the untouchable", returned Ramdas. "Whether or not it is the glory of Islam or Christianity to have effected conversions from the Hindus, it is an unmitigated shame for us that we ever had untouchables."

"Mahatmaji has felt that sense of shame", put in Krida, her first remark that day; "and untouchability would soon be a thing of the past."

"But the shame of the Hindus, or the glory of the Muslims, in the matter of untouchability apart", persisted Ram Piari, "my question still remains: Are the Hindus and Muslims of India different peoples?"

"Racially, surely not", said Begum Singh "with perhaps microscopic exceptions.

"And if a thousand years of living together make for community of history", said Sir John, "historically, also not."

"And if a thousand of years of working together in the same land can bring about common sufferings and common achievements, identity of habits and of outlook, culturally also not", added Fandrews.

"You forget the difference of religion, of language, and literature", remarked Rahim.

“And if untold years of common habitation in the same land, under the same conditions, can bring about identity of economic or material position and prospects,—also not”, urged Sahib Singh.

“And you overlook the recent insistence on that difference”, said Ismail. “Even if there are no real differences, the press and platform insistence upon them would make us conscious of the same.”

“I realise the cry of Islam in danger is apt to drown all other voices”, admitted Ramdas.

“That is just what Jinnah and his crowd are banking upon,” added Krishna.

“Mr. Jinnah is a very handsome man”, observed Krida, “but I fear he is breaking all bounds of reason, or even decency, of late. He really ought to be put under some restraint.”

“Truth is often unpalatable, Mrs. Krishna”, retorted Rahim. “Jinnah’s fault is not lack of decency ; but lack of patience or politeness.”

“I am afraid it is rather wounded vanity and exuberant egoism”, said Begum Singh.

“Leave out personalities, I beg”, appealed Mrs. Ramdas, “and let us concentrate on the point before us. Granting, Sheikh Sahib”, she addressed herself to Rahim, “the difference of religion, do you not think that the guarantees of fundamental rights,—which will include, imply and safeguard religious beliefs and observances of all communities, as we have already premised,—will more than counterbalance this difference ; and save us from a shipwreck of the very idea of national integrity.”

“ When distrust and suspicion creep in at the door, mutual confidence, essential for our national integrity, flies out of the window ”, replied Rahim.

“ Is it not the duty of all the right thinking citizens to guard against such a catastrophe ? ” she was persistent. “ Can we not devise some means to counteract such propaganda ? ”

“ That is the task of leaders,” said Firdaus, “ not of camp-followers.”

“ The task of the leaders in a democracy is not to lead so much as to watch the tide, and ride the wave on its crest to success ”, remarked Krishna.

“ This is much more complicated than you imagine, Mrs. Ramdas ”, observed Sir John, “ if I may be permitted to put in a word. The Muslims of India are becoming communalist ; but communalism is only a facet of nationalism on the basis of religion, just as nationalism itself is communalism on the basis of regional unity. Both are narrow, both are parochial, illiberal, constrictive, and exclusive. Only Imperialism, of the British Commonwealth type, can be truly broad-based, genuinely liberal, and practically democratic.”

“ Imperialism by its nature is oppressive and exploitive, Sir John. How can you call it liberal and democratic ? ” asked Krida, who could not resist this opportunity to show herself off by a well-known cliché against a veteran administrator.

“ You mistake me, madam ”, replied Sir John. “ I did not say Imperialism *is* liberal ; I said it *can* be. And in the last hundred years we have been trying to make it so by unlearning the virtue of local patriotism, and cultivating the

quality of service and loyalty to the land we work in. You are still in the stage of crude nationalism, narrow and parochial, illiberal and exclusive. You will imitate all our faults when you are independent, make all our mistakes, and cause all the wars and bloodshed unenlightened nationalism of undeveloped European nations is causing before our eyes. Take heed, if you can, while the writing is still wet on the wall."

"It is the Hindu who is among us naturally exclusive" observed Rahim.

"And, therefore, truly nationalist?" asked Krishna. "The Hindu at least has no divided allegiance, no conflicting loyalty to the land of his birth, and the lands of his faith. No Muslim can be a real patriot; no Hindu can be anything else." He concluded with the air of having won his Waterloo.

"History does not confirm or corroborate that claim", quietly put in Abdul. "It is the Hindu who began by betraying Bengal to Clive, and ended by losing Delhi and Lucknow and Jhansy and the rest of the country to the Company Bahadur. We must thank the Hindus for our present servitude to the alien and the exploiter." His glance was hard, his tone bitter.

"It was the Sikh who lost us Delhi—not the Hindu", retorted Krishna. "The Hindu fought till the last man and died in the last ditch at Meerut and Lucknow, at Ashte and Jhansy."

"We are again losing ourselves", put in Ram Piari, "in vain recriminations about an irrevocable and irremediable past. What will it benefit us to decide,—even if we could—as to which of our communities was the more misled, or the more unfortunate? The fact remains we have lost our

national independence ; and the question is how best to regain it, how effectively to maintain it."

"But, Mrs. Ramdas", mildly observed Sir Muhamed, "we must remember that the very genius of Hinduism is exclusive—call it aristocratic, if it pleases you better. But while the spirit of caste survives, what else can it be?"

"Yes, we Hindus *are* aristocratic" chimed Krida, "with three thousand years of unadulterated blood and accumulating heritage." This was a favourite text of her second husband, and she saw no reason to respect his copyright on this occasion. She had heard the saying—husband and wife are one in law.

"As a Professor of history, I must say," intervened Kristo Das, "the idea of welding India from Attock to Puri, from the Karakorum to the Cape Comorin, into one nation, and working it as one unit, is of Muslim origin in India. The Indian Empire was conceived by the Pathan and the Turk, born and matured under the Mughals."

"And worked to perfection by the British", added Fandrews with a glow of racial pride he could scarcely conceal.

"That is not quite correct, Professor," said Ramdas. "The Empire of Asoka was wider and vaster and more integrated than that of the Mughals."

"The Imperial idea and national integrity was, in fact, never lost sight of from the Mauryas to the Mahrathas, through all the vicissitudes of history", added Krishna.

"Asoka flourished a couple of thousand years before Akbar", observed Sir John ; "and much can be forgotten and lost sight of during that period. Even Harsha—the last of the Hindu Imperialists—lived a thousand years before

Aurangzeb, who completed the Imperial edifice of India in its present form. Surely you can't claim that the Rajputs had any conception of what you call nationalism today,—or even the Mahrathas, for the matter of that."

"The former were just brute fighters, and the latter mere free-booters", said Rahim. "They pillaged and ravaged as well in Gujerat as in Bengal, in Madras as in Malwa. What thought had they of nation-building?"

"You do injustice to the vision of Shivaji, Sheikh Sahib", protested Ramdas.

Before Rahim could reply, Ram Piari again called the assembly to order in her own quiet way.

"Shivaji and Sanga, Akbar or Aurangzeb need no vindication from us", she remarked. "Will not any one answer my question; How are the Muslims of India a different people, by race or culture, who must be conceded the right of separate statehood, if they so desire?"

"The Muslims in India were a different people in origin", said Sir John, "but they have become Indian in blood as well as sentiment by centuries of living in this country, and recruiting their ranks from the natives of the land. In my experience of service in all Muslim countries of the Middle West, I always found the native there different in habit and outlook and every way of life from the Muslim of India, class for class."

"India has a magic spell on all those who came to live here", said Begum Singh. "I believe instead of Islam having conquered India, inspite of seven hundred years of domination, it is India who has conquered and converted Islam. India has not been Islamised; but Islam has been Indianised; for

I gather the Muslims of India have adopted caste, worship at Durgahs of Pirs, deny in effect the right of divorce to woman, live in joint family, and approve of life-long widowhood."

"Of all things not definitely forbidden, divorce is the least pleasing to God", sententiously observed the Sheikh.

"You have, Begum Sahib, neatly summarised the peculiar features of the Hindu Social system borrowed by the Muslims", admitted Abdul, "or rather carried by the converts into their new faith. But they still remain alien and abhorrent to Islam."

"They will be cast off, like the slough of the snake, the moment Muslims live in a state of their own", added Rahim.

"I take leave to question that", observed Sahib Singh. "I believe they are much too deep-rooted and assimilated to be easily discarded or abominated. Why else did the Muslims oppose the Age of Consent Legislation which was aimed at stopping infant marriages?"

"Because that legislation was enacted by a Legislature with non-Muslims majority; and not because Muslims objected to the principle of the legislation", answered Rahim.

"On that basis there can be no social reform by legislation" pointed out Ramdas, "especially in a country of many communities. If Hindu Reformers were to depend only on Hindu majority, goodbye to every hope of progressive change, and social justice."

"I read in a recent book, called *Modern Islam in India*, by Prof. Smith that more Hindus suffer from the industrial exploitation of the Hindu (capitalists)", put in Ram Piari.

“than Muslims ; and that the only way to end that exploitation, whether Hindu or Muslim, was, not to defeat Hinduism, but to supersede capitalism. But that would be impossible if we accept the principle that all social legislation must be passed only by a prescribed majority vote of the community affected.”

“The instance you have given, Mrs. Ramdas”, argued Krishna, “is an economic issue ; not a religious issue at all.”

“Then, Mr. Krishna, you don’t appreciate the cleverness of the capitalist”, said Sahib Singh. “He can easily link up his worldly possessions with the will of God, or the Charter of the Prophet, or the Doctrine of Karma ; and claim any interference with it as an infringement of the guaranteed fundamental freedoms. I should have thought you would have known the history of the American Supreme Court too well to question this point. We must really thank you, Mrs. Ramdas”, said he turning to the hostess, “For drawing the discussion into this channel.”

“My husband has more often appeared before the Supreme Court than any other lawyer in India”, Mrs. Krishna interjected the information in an ecstasy of conjugal publicity.

“I would be sorry if I have inadvertently side-tracked discussion,” apologised Ram Piari. “What I wanted to say was that if the Hindu and Muslim masses of India suffer from the same political oppression and economic exploitation ; if they have the same blood, the same heritage, the same outlook, the same injustice, the same enemies,—how can either of them feel different from the other ? How can their effective strength to struggle against and overcome these common enemies be increased by separation from one another ? ”

“Not to mention the fact, that, by conceding and admitting the right to secede for any region with a majority of a given community, the problem of an alien minority would not be solved ; it will only be duplicated. For even in the seceding provinces forming separate states, there would be, admitting this hypothesis, alien minorities of Hindus in Pakistan, and of Muslim in Hindusthan. They would always be a thorn in the side of the majority, always be liable to the suspicion of being fifth columnists ; and always open to the temptation to act like the Sudetan Germans in Czecho-Slovakia. We won't solve the problem of communalist intransigence by conceding, and conceding, and still more conceding, whatever they ask, and however suicidal it may be.” Sahib Singh was getting heated.

“It is no use your getting worked up, Colonel ” said Sir M. Ismail. “Such is the nature of Communalism. It cannot now be ignored.”

“But it need not be encouraged, Sir Muhammed ”, remonstrated Ramdas, “as the Colonel has correctly, though, perhaps a trifle too warmly, described.”

“Communalism is a vicious spiral, as some one has aptly called it ”, explained Begum Singh. “The more one group is communal and separatist, the more the other group from which it is separate becomes self-conscious and unyielding.”

“I repeat Communalism is nothing but another aspect of Nationalism ”, urged Sir John. “The only difference is that one is religious, and the other is geographical. Both are complex phenomena. Nationalism is today not mere love of the country, such as inspired St. Joan or Coriolanus. It is a combination of innumerable, intricate, economic, political, social and intellectual developments, longings and aspirations.

Even if not a creature of art or invention of printing, it owes a great deal of its growth and vitality to the Press, which is, of course, essentially vulgar, always ill-informed, and generally venal. The rise of the national vernaculars is another factor in the spread of nationalism. But the highest single ingredient in its make-up is, I think, the growth of capitalist industry and competitive commerce. All these made democracy its tool, not its end and object. Democracy is the greatest illusion, fashioned for its own protection and safeguard by the individualist capitalist ; for it leaves with him the substance of effective power ; and flatters the people with all the empty emblems of it."

"You are a good Imperialist, Sir John", complimented Sahib Singh, "but would make a better communist."

"Communist *a la* Stalin, not *a la* Trotsky", answered Fandrews.

"All branches of communism are alike Imperialist and totalitarian ; and I shall consecrate my whole life to the execration of both", said Krishna.

"Until communism comes to power", said the Sikh *Sotto Voce*.

"I am not a communist ; and I hope never to be one" rejoined Sir John. "But I can't stand all this cant that goes on in the name of democracy. You talk of Indian independence. Sentiment apart, you justify it on the ground of its giving you a greater scope of self-expression, a better chance of national development. But do you think there is the ghost of a chance of a real square deal to the masses, when you are independent ? Not on your life ! Your politicians will be in the pay of your capitalists, your press will be

subsidised by them, your schools and colleges will be endowed by them,—so that they will all sing the same song of mammon. A Gandhi or his son will be made the Managing Director of a capitalist Daily, and voice the wishes of a Birla, on inflation as well as industrialisation ; a Patel will be made the agent and canvasser of an Insurance Company, and sing the song of Mehtas or Doshis. And meanwhile a Walchand will make a monopoly of water and road and air transport ; a Sarabhai or Kasturbhai create a Trust of oil and sugar and textiles ; a Wadia or Tata or Sarcar or Singhanian corner copper, or coal, or jute or paper, or rice, and wheat and millet and pulses and oil seeds, and all their products and processed wares. A hundred capitalists will control and manipulate all the wires that will make the marionettes in your legislatures dance for their enrichment, what time they rule and sway and dominate all your land, forests, mines, factories, workshops, utilities, amenities and services,—not to mention your schools and colleges, your theatres and cinemas ; your laboratories and concert halls. And when any of them has an attack of conscience, or is surfeited after defrauding the Income Tax, he would endow a *creche* in the memory of his son, build a hospital in the name of his mother, or start an orphanage to immortalise his mistress. The Popes and Princes did it in medieval Europe ; and the millionaires do it even more marvellously in modern America. And the Indian millionnaires are no poor imitators. Government will be asked to reward such splendid public service by a Knighthood,—or whatever corresponds to it in India under Swaraj ; and the public will be asked to applaud them as *Danvir*, and mourn them when they die after tying up their loot in as compact and rigid and lasting a Trust as legal ingenuity can devise. And all the time the workers on farms or factories will be slaving for the greater and greater riches of these legally

allowed slave-drivers in the name of industrialising the country. If those poor devils ever protest, they will be put down with the lathi and the truncheon, as well as by the tank and the armoured car."

"All this would be excellent and irreproachable, if you, in your day of power, had done otherwise", said Sahib Singh. "If capitalism has come to India, it is the direct creation of British rule in the country. Even if all that you prophesy comes to pass, the wealth will be in Indian hands still, not liable to foreign drain."

"Does the mere complexion of the epinermis make such a difference, even to you, Colonel?" bantered Sir John. "Capitalist is the same everywhere, white or brown, black or yellow. He is the beast of prey, and knows only the law of the jungle."

"It makes one very great difference, which you quite overlook in your advocacy diaboli", retorted the Colonel. "Indian capitalists will have no outside protectors, insisting upon anti-discrimination clauses in the constitution, when India is an independent, sovereign State. And so, if Indian capitalists become too obnoxious and intolerable, they can be readily and rapidly liquidated on the nearest lamp-post."

"Hindu or Muslim", added Rahim.

"Not without some latter-day Mahatma to go on a life-long fast to avert such wanton bloodshed", put in Bentleigh.

"If Mahatmaji's teachings are followed, capitalists would not be such heartless exploiters; but trustees of their wealth in public interest", Mrs. Krishna had too good a cliché to omit putting it forward.

“ You know how your Mahatma’s instructions were obeyed by the capitalists who had egged him on to the suicidal resolution of August 1942, after he and his colleagues were put in safe deposit ”, reminded Bentleigh.

“ I heard the doors of the very house he stayed at in Bombay were barred and bolted against any Congress-worker the day after Mahatmaji was arrested ”, remarked Fandrews.

“ It was only Government propaganda ”, defended Krishna.

“ *Sauve Qui Peut*,” insisted Sir John, “ is the correct capitalist counsel in all countries, whether it is Schneider-Creusot allying with the Nazis, or the Doshis and Mehtas working three shifts to fill in war orders at Bombay or Ahmedabad, Calcutta or Cawnpore. And you do not know how they are making alliances with gigantic world trusts, like the Imperial Chemicals, to secure the exclusive monopolies for themselves in this country in steel and sugar and copper and chemicals ! ”

“ You are cruel and unsparing, Sir John,” said Mrs. Krishna.

“ But correct and unanswerable,” put in Rahim.

“ There are black sheep in every crowd,” remarked Ram Piari. “ But that cannot gainsay the justice of India’s national claim for independence.”

“ I have no desire to gainsay it,” said Sir John. “ In fact, if my advice is listened to the sooner we wash our hands of this miserable assortment of ignorance, incompetence, superstition, corruption, vanity and clannishness, which is called the Indian nationalist movement, the better and happier it will be for the British people, the British reputation, and even Britain’s own peace and safety. India is now much more a liability than an asset to Britain, at which any half-baked yankee can cast a stone to make political capital for himself.”

"I protest, Mr. Chairman," shouted Krishna, addressing Ramdas, "against this wholesale libel of our entire national leadership. You must call Sir John to order."

"Truth is biting," remarked Rahim *sotto voce*.

"You must remember, we have premised freedom of speech and expression as the essential, fundamental, guaranteed rights of citizenship," Bentleigh defended himself; "and I can assure you I can quote twenty examples for every adjective I have used. I have served with or under twenty Indian Councillors or Ministers; and known at close quarters hundreds of lesser fry as politicians or professors or journalists; I have met none who was free from one or the other charge I have made. Truth is no libel, Mr. Chairman," he concluded with a smile as bold as disarming.

"The greater the truth, the greater the libel, my husband has often told me," observed learnedly the lawyer's wife.

"It may be in a civil court," advised Abdul; "but not in a free and frank debating society."

"I can't call Sir John to order for his invective," smiled Ramdas, "but might suggest he is tending to be prolix. He must remember, he is not writing a secretariat minute, but contributing to an earnest discussion between a number of people."

"I apologise for the length," Sir John caught the humour of the situation, "but not for the warmth of my remarks, nor, of course, for their truth."

"May I, after all these controversies and punctilios," asked Mrs. Ramdas, "still enquire why should the Muslims of India think themselves, or be regarded as, a different people from

the rest of Indians, entitled, if they insist, to a separate statehood ? ”

“ If communalism is nationalism in the name of region, and nationalism will mean capitalist exploitation, the separating Muslims want to have the satisfaction of being sweated and exploited by their coreligionists, not Kaffirs,” said the Colonel.

“ Everybody must agree there is no difference in blood, or race, or heritage,” said Begum Singh.

“ Difference in language is artificial, I think,” said Kristo Das, “ and tends to be overemphasised by sheer spite or cussedness.”

“ Artificial or natural, it is now a fact,” observed Rahim.

“ That is another curse inflicted upon the country by modern nationalism,” remarked Sir John ; “ I mean the emphasis on the vernacular. It makes you close the only gateway you have for international intercourse, and waste your energy needlessly in forced cultivation of a hybrid, on which you cannot agree as a substitute for English. Verily, nothing can be more stupid than aggressive Nationalism.”

“ Except, of course, unrepentant Imperialism of the British brand and Churchill style,” retorted Rahim. But Sir John disdained to reply ; and the others proceeded with the main topic.

“ And because of that difference, there is growing a consciousness of difference in culture,” said Sir Muhammad Ismail.

“ Not to mention difference in religion,” added Begum Singh.

“There is hardly a country in the world which has only one religion in all its people,” said Colonel Singh, “and there are many large as well as small countries with several religions living all harmoniously together, and feeling the bond of common patriotism.”

“And there are also many countries, with a number of languages and cultures, living side by side, and feeling an identical bond of patriotism,” said Dr. Garudeshan. “I don’t know how many languages they speak in Russia and even in Britain. Welsh and Gaelic have nothing in common with English.”

“And there are many countries which have not all its people of the same ethnic stock,” added Begum Singh. “Even the tiny land of Switzerland has four distinct racial strains, as there are four distinct languages, all equally recognised and commonly understood, though three-fourths of the people have German as their mother tongue.”

“In Switzerland the four stocks you mention may ultimately be traced to one race,” said Prof. Kristo Das. “But in the United States the African Negro and the native Red Indian has made one common nation with the European settlers from almost all countries. Once they settle there, they become all Americans.”

“Do you remember the policy the European settlers pursued for centuries towards the American natives?” enquired Firdaus.

“That was in the dark ages of greed and ignorance,” said Fandrews. “And even then the missionaries of Christ, like Las Casas, consecrated their lives to preaching and enforcing the doctrine of equality.”

“In any case that is ancient history now,” said Begum, Singh ; “and does not invalidate the proposition that difference of language, religion, or even racial origin, do not make an unbreakable bar to the evolution of a sentiment of common nationality.”

“Provided you live in the same country, under the same government, with the same public institutions,” supplemented Sir John.

“And provided you are reasonably assured of an undisturbed observance of your faith, an unmolested use and cultivation of your language, and unhampered development of your culture, such as it may be,” said Kristo Das.

“These seem to me to cover all the ingredients that go to make a distinct nationhood, or a separate people,” observed Ramdas ; “and in all these the Muslims of India have either full community with the Hindus, or are, or can be, adequately secured and assured by way of guaranteed Fundamental Rights of Citizens, or Minorities. Need they nevertheless insist on the right to secede ; or separate to make sovereign statehood for themselves. Or is there any ingredient left out, Doctor ? ” He asked Begum Singh with a smile.

“Political scientists usually premise ten characteristics of a nation, or a national state. They are ; community of

- (i) Race or tribal instincts, and of habits and outlook based upon them ;
- (ii) Language and literature ;
- (iii) Religion,—faith as well as ritual ;
- (iv) Social organization, laws and institutions, like marriage, family, inheritance, etc. ;

- (v) Education and culture, manifest in arts and crafts, science and literature ;
- (vi) History and tradition of achievements, sacrifices, or sufferings ;
- (vii) Homeland, or definite territory marked off from others ;
- (viii) National consciousness, and the will to be a distinct state ;
- (ix) Political sovereignty exercised or manifest in community of material as well as cultural interests ;
- (x) Danger from without, or oppression and exploitation by an alien power ;

Begum Singh again vindicated her Doctorate, reading out the list with characteristic German thoroughness.

“Except community of language and religion, India has got all these characteristics as a single country,” said Mrs. Ramdas. “Has she not ? And what is lacking can be remedied, or the lack guarded against.”

“And even differences in language are more regional, than by religion,” put in Ramdas. “The Hindus and Muslims North of the Narbudda speak all essentially the same language in the several regions.”

“You forget, Mrs. Ramdas, the size. India is too large,—a veritable subcontinent,—to be a single unit,” pointed out Sir Muhammad.

“But I thought Soviet Russia is a much larger territory,” pleaded the hostess.

“But only with half our population,” corrected Rahim.

“China is double our area, and one-third again as large in population,” pointed out Ramdas, “if you come to that.”

“Mere size of population is, with modern means of communication and transport,” added Sir John, “no bar to a single nationhood.”

“The most important item mentioned by the Begum Sahib,” put in Firdaus, “was, to my mind, the will to be a distinct state, or the consciousness of independent nationhood. And the Muslims of India are beginning to feel that. Difference in religion is only the basis, excuse, or pretext of that consciousness ; and you must face it, since it is being fanned into a blaze like a forest-fire by a southern breeze.”

“I must confess, as a mere matter of intellectual honesty,” commented Sir Muhammad, “that Muslims in Provinces where they are a small minority do not feel any such consciousness ; though, as simply a matter of loyalty to their co-religionists, they might, on a plebiscite, support the demand for Pakistan.”

“And if I may also confess to another feat of intellectual honesty,” remarked Rahim, “I doubt if even in the Muslim majority provinces, that demand is the outcome of a genuine consciousness of separate nationhood. The fear of Islam in danger under a Hindu majority is much more genuine, and still more widespread than you might think. The consciousness of a distinct nationhood is the creation of the recent propaganda. It is a hot-house product, which, under given circumstances, will flourish, and be accepted as a genuine article. Truth compels me to add that it is more an outcome of the growing distrust of the Hindu majority,—perpetual and unchangeable,—if we had a common, central, national government, than of real conviction of a rosier future for the seceding Muslim Provinces. It is born of despair, and fed

on politicians' jealousies, personal vanities, or hope of individual aggrandisement."

"But is not that just the problem before us?" asked the hostess with a smile. "How to avoid this despair, how to counteract these personal jealousies, how to reassure the Muslim masses, and so save the country from a partition and dismemberment, which, I fear, is bound to be injurious to both."

"I am not sure, Mrs. Ramdas," observed Dr. Garudeshan, "that it will be injurious to both. I think Hindusthan will gain, not lose, by Pakistan being established; and shall prove it to you, if you'll let me."

"I come to the same conclusion," said Firdaus, "though from a totally different angle. Only if Pakistan is accepted as a positive reality can India be maintained as an undivided entity. Opposition will only add fuel to the fire already smouldering."

"I think it would not be too difficult to reassure Muslim masses on the religious count," said Kristo Das. "But I am more afraid of the economic rivalry of the new Muslim bourgeoisie, and professional jealousies. They have come late in the field; but want their full share of it; and if the Hindu vested interests, already entrenched, do not yield it gracefully and peacefully, they would force a separation to get a free hand for themselves."

"I would agree if no other way is possible or feasible," concluded Ramdas, somewhat mournfully, "and I would include it,—provide for it,—the right of a secession of any unit once a member of the federation, subject to the usual precaution of a real, substantial majority desiring it."

“I would never agree to such a suicidal step,” said Krishna, “particularly as by that means you will not solve the problem of religious minorities, but just duplicate and complicate it.”

“The problem of the religious minority would only be solved when you abolish religion altogether,” said Sahib Singh. “But meanwhile, assuming it is there, I am willing to agree that Pakistan, or the right to secede, may, as the last resource, help the matter, if not solve the problem.”

“I think it would be politically a cowardice and economically a disaster,” added Sir John, “to accept any such solution. But if you Indians agree upon it, even as a *pis aller*, I see no reason why the British Government should object to your self-immolation, an act of crippling yourselves. I can see no good arising from this *harakiri* either to the Muslim or to the Hindu masses, or to the Hindustan or Pakistan territories. The only good it can do will be to satisfy the vanity of individual politicians, and the greed of particular entrepreneurs.”

“Provided the rights of religious minorities on either side are adequately assured and safeguarded, and if Pakistan remains the only alternative to satisfy the Muslims, I would accept it, however regretfully, and in spite of the forebodings of our friends here,” said Abdul, obviously sorrowfully.

“And having accepted and agreed to it, even on this condition, I would expect mutual goodwill and cordial co-operation to make it a working proposition, yielding as much benefit as possible under the circumstances,” rejoined Rahim. “I would not have a host of Sudetan lands sprouting up all over the land.”

“I am afraid you would be asking for it,” interrupted Dr. Garudeshan, “if you concede or premise it as even a remote

—ultimate,—possibility. But since the majority of us seem willing to accept it as a possibility,—and since I consider it would be to the benefit of the rest of India if we get rid of potential fifth-columnists—I am willing to agree, reserving my right to show to you how I envisage the consequences of accepting Pakistan ; and how I think it will work in practice.”

“ I have no such dread or hope as the learned Doctor,” remarked Kristo Das, “ though I confess I am not enamoured of the idea. However, I agree to accept it as a last resource, if no other more satisfactory and civilised solution is discovered.”

“ That would depend to a great extent on what you mean by Pakistan, would it not ? ” enquired Begum Singh.

“ That was the point at which today’s discussion should have really started,” said Ramdas. “ Abdul had promised to provide us with some concrete idea of what Pakistan would be like in practice ; but a new hare ran across the path, and changed the scent. Your lunch has proved a poor investment,” he glanced at his wife with a mischievous twinkle in his eye.

“ By no means,” she retorted. “ And to prove my point, I am going to give you tea also ; and ask Abdul Saheb to begin at the beginning that should have been.” She rose as she spoke, and ordered tea in the garden.

THE SECOND DAY (*Continued*) : TEA

“ I take it, then, that the right to secede is to be recognised in the last resort,” clinched Abdul, “ at least by most of us.”

“ Against my better judgment,” observed Sahib Singh, with infinite forebodings, “ I would recognise this right to suicide, subject to the usual precautions and safeguards.”

“ It would not be suicide, Doctor,” said Rahim ; “ but rather an amputation of a limb threatening to mortify.”

“ Against all the teachings of political science and contemporary history,” added Begum Singh, “ but as a dire necessity if it is the only way out. I, too, would agree.”

“ Against all symptoms of economic development, and better possibility of a social justice to the masses,” voted Fandrews, “ but as an inevitable necessity, if it does become inescapable, I also would agree.”

“ I shall, of course, resist it to the end,” insisted Krishna, “ in the last ditch, to the last ounce of energy, the last spark of intelligence, **by** any means and in every way.”

“ That would be against our first assumption to eschew violence, bloodshed, or civil war, for solving the tangle,” reminded Mrs. Ramdas.

“ Civil war will never come if you remain inflexible,” answered Krishna. “ Don’t shilly-shally ; don’t give in to threats ; lay down the *non plus ultra* line, and you will see how these bullies or would-be Quislings come to heel in no time.”

The air was electric, and an explosion seemed inevitable. Ram Piari saved the situation by her tact and *savoir-faire*.

"Take this tea, Mr. Krishna, you need it," she smiled. "We note and shall record your dissent. Democracy without dissenters would be a shadow without a substance."

"The majority is very substantial in favour of our point of view," said Ramdas ; "and I think it reflects the general state of public opinion in the country, also."

"I am not with the majority," said Krida, "but I have an open mind."

"I hope we shall never come to the pass threatened by Mr. Krishna," said Kristo Das, "when civil war should or would be resorted to."

"Properly handled and sympathetically treated," said the Rev. Fandrews, "we need not also be forced into partition. I have more faith in India's public intelligence."

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"Motion passed with one dissent," again intervened Ram Piari. "Let us pass on to the next item on the agenda. Will Abdul please give us some concrete scheme, or definite idea, as to how the proposed partition should take place, and how it will work if and when it has been effected."

"The only official, authoritative demand for Pakistan," said Begum Singh, "is the Lahore Resolution of the Muslim League at their 1940 sessions. And here is the text of that Resolution."

1. "While approving and endorsing the action taken by the Council and the Working Committee of the All-India Muslim League, as indicated in their Resolution

dated the 27th August, 17th and 18th of September, and 22nd October, 1939, and 3rd February, 1940, on the Constitutional Issue, this session of the All-India Muslim League emphatically reiterates that the scheme of Federation embodied in the Government of India Act, 1935, is totally unsuited to, and unworkable in the peculiar conditions of this country, and is altogether unacceptable to Muslim India."

2. "It further records its emphatic view that, while the declaration dated the 18th October, 1939, made by the Viceroy on behalf of His Majesty's Government, is reassuring, in so far as it declares that the policy and plan on which the Government of India Act 1935, is based will be reconsidered in consultation with the various parties, interests, and communities in India, Muslim India will not be satisfied unless the whole constitutional plan is reconsidered *de novo*, and that no revised plan would be acceptable to the Muslims unless it is framed with their approval and consent."
3. "Resolved that it is the considered view of this Session of the All-India Muslim League that no constitutional plan would be workable in this country or acceptable to the Muslims, unless it is designed on the following basic principle, viz. that geographically contiguous units are demarcated into regions which should be so constituted, with such territorial readjustments as may be necessary, that the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority, as in the North Western and Eastern Zones of India, should be grouped to constitute "Independent States," in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign."
4. "That adequate, effective and mandatory safeguards

should be specifically provided in the constitution for minorities in these units and in the regions for the protection of their religious, cultural, economic, political, administrative and other rights and interests in consultation with them, and in other parts of India where the Mussalmans are in minority, adequate, effective and mandatory safeguards shall be specifically provided in the constitution for them and other minorities for the protection of their religious, cultural, economic, political, administrative and other rights and interests in consultation with them."

5. "This session further authorises the Working Committee to frame a scheme of constitution in accordance with these basic principles, providing for the assumption finally by the respective regions of all powers such as defence, external affairs, communications, customs and such other matters as may be necessary."

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"But," said Ramdas, "beyond laying down the principle, the League, in this Resolution, goes no further than authorising its Working Committee to frame a constitution in accordance with this principle. Surely you cannot call it a concrete scheme."

"Has the Working Committee produced an actual scheme," enquired Fandrews, "under this resolution?"

"Accept the principle, and offer your pledge to make it workable, if there is no other alternative; and then a concrete scheme on those lines can easily be worked out," assured Rahim.

“But it is not a principle,” retorted Col. Singh. “It is a pistol held at the head of the rest of India. The League objects to Federation as conceived in the Act of 1935. It demands a radical reconsideration of the entire Indian Constitutional system, *de novo* as they phrase it. And even if that demand is conceded, they suggest not a hint of a way to carry out that reconsideration to come to a fruitful end ; but only threaten that no revised plan would be acceptable to the Muslims unless it is framed with their approval.”

“Not so far as I know,” declared Krishna, “and I doubt if they ever will. This is only a threat, not a working alternative.”

“According to the author of the *Pakistan Issue* Mr. Jinnah has actually disowned the report of all those who speak of any definite scheme,” commented Garudeshan.

“I must perforce agree in this instance,” added Col. Singh. “There is nothing positive, nothing definite, nothing constructive in this official demand of the League.”

“It is the principle which matters at this stage,” argued Rahim.

“That is a clear veto of the Muslim League on any constitutional progress in India,” observed Fandrews.

“You forget, Padre Sahib,” put in Abdul, “that the Resolution does indicate the general lines of the new constitution ; or at least its one guiding principle ;—agree to make out of India a Hindustan and a Pakistan.”

“There are 2 such principles indicated,” said Sir Muhammed Ismail. “Besides creating Pakistan, there must be adequate, effective, and mandatory safeguards specifically provided in the constitution, for minorities in these regions and units, for the protection of their religion, cultural, economic, political,

administrative and other rights and interests. This will be mutual, both in Hindustan and Pakistan ; and the details or actual terms of the safeguards will be framed in consultation with the Minorities concerned in each case."

"Which, presumably, will also be to their satisfaction," added Rahim. "What more could be desired ? "

"Much more, even if one accepts the principle of partition as an unwelcome, but inescapable, necessity," replied the Colonel. "For instance, what provision is there for the enforcement, for the observance in practice and everyday life, —of these safeguards, or any of them, to be a reality, and not a mere form ? "

"And even if one of these two divisions makes some arrangement to enforce them in practice," said Kristo Das, "how will they provide that the other should do precisely the same?"

"It must be a matter of agreement between the partitioned units," replied Sir Muhammad, "a solemn treaty, which must be observed by both sides, and implemented equally."

"The Resolution speaks of these as "Sovereign States," pointed out Krishna, "and, no matter how solemn the treaty engagements between Sovereign States, each is the sole interpreter, the sole enforcer of its side of the obligations incurred. Once the treaty is signed, its administration must become an internal affair of the party concerned. And no sovereign State can tolerate any interference from another State in its internal administration."

"The only guarantee of a proper observance in practice," said Begum Singh, "of such obligations by one state would be that the other party would otherwise not observe its side of the bargain."

“Which, in effect, means,” said Krishna, “that both Hindustan and Pakistan would, under this arrangement, each have hostages in the shape of its own nationals belonging to the religion of the other, whom it can ill-treat in case there are similar complaints of ill-treatment to its fellow religionists who are citizens of the other state.”

“That is in fact the real origin and inspiration of the demand for Pakistan,” said Col. Singh. “They want to hold their Hindu Citizens in the Muslim States of Pakistan *in terrorem* as a guarantee of good behaviour towards Muslims in Hindustan. As early as the Simon Commission Report, this aspect of the Muslim League demand has been publicly, officially, noticed and recorded. The latest demand—for Pakistan—is a much more sure way of securing it than would have been possible under their earlier demand—one of Mr. Jinnah’s Fourteen Points also,—for leaving the residuary, undefined powers and functions of government to the Provinces in an Indian Federation. It is just blackmail, nothing less.”

“May I say that, in this matter, you are arguing,” said Ram Piari, “on the assumption that, in the post-war world, the nature of the sovereign state, its powers and functions, would be the same as in the pre-war world? Don’t you think it very likely, that, as the result of this War, and because of its experience, a World State may have to be set up; in which all local sovereignties are merged; and that a much more powerful World Court of Justice established to enforce such guarantees?”

“The war would have been waged in vain,” Ramdas supported his wife, “if we do not even now evolve a machinery which would maintain and enforce treaty obligations between

States, if the States concerned fail, neglect, or refuse to do so."

"At the end of the last war they talked much in the same strain," sneered Krishna ; "but what happened ? They had guaranteed some rights to the German minority in Poland, and in Czecho-Slovakia ; but, at the first shock of hard reality, it all vanished in the thunder and smoke of war."

"They had established a League of Nations," pointed out Fandrews, "and an International Court of Justice at the Hague. The Rights of National Minorities were guaranteed by the League, and enforceable by the International Court."

"There you make the greatest mistake, Padre Saheb," said Singh. "The League of Nations was only a registry office of Britain and France ; and did exactly what suited those two countries. So long as Poland and Czecho-Slovakia remained docile client states, with the form of sovereignty and the fact of indebtedness, no complaint from the racial minorities was worth much note. It was only when Czecho-Slovakia threatened to involve them in a War with the Nazis, —who had already not only inspired a wholesome fear in the Anglo-French governing classes, but also aroused their class sympathies, to the utmost—that the League of Nations showed up to be the broken reed it always was ; and all its guarantees and assurances became just waste paper."

"The International Court at the Hague was an abridged edition of the League, on the judicial side," supplemented Krishna.

"But has the world learnt nothing since the League was founded," enquired Begum Singh, "and proved to be a failure ? "

“We do not count in the world,” tersely answered her husband.

“Does the Atlantic Charter mean nothing to you ? ” asked the Rev. Fandrews.

“The Atlantic Charter is a colossal fraud, so far as India is concerned,” said Col. Singh. “And besides its terms don’t apply to India, *pace* Mr. Amery or his inspired interpreters.”

“I have yet to see a document,” said Abdul, “which would bind a victorious belligerent, when once the War is won.”

“You mean the American President and the Prime Minister did not really mean what they have said in that Charter ? ” enquired Reverend Fandrews in a tone of horror.

“The leopard doth not change his spots, Padre,” said Rahim. “and the Imperialist doth not change his soul. They may use different words to suit different combination of circumstances ; but they remain essentially the same,—especially if they definitely win the war in the field.”

“*Plus ça change, plus c’est la meme chose*,” Begum Singh repeated a well-known saying of a French Cynic.

“But, while on the last occasion it was Britain and France which had inspired, originated, and established the League, this time there are the United States and Soviet Russia,” reminded Fandrews. “Britain and France might be called Imperialist powers ; but do you not think America and Russia will count against such unabashed Imperialism after this War ? ”

“It is not America which has signed the Atlantic Charter,” pointed out Ramdas, “but only her President ; and the President may change when the time for making postwar

arrangements comes. The Senate has not concurred, and the Congress had not confirmed, the Atlantic Charter, you know."

"Nor, for the matter of that, has the British Parliament endorsed the British Prime Minister's signature to that document," added Abdul. "And the Prime Minister may change even more quickly than the President."

"And even if the Prime Minister remains unchanged in person," remarked Begum Singh, "there is nothing to prevent him changing his views when the time comes for the postwar reconstruction. We all know Mr. Winston Churchill is a veteran in the art of changing Party allegiance, if not principles. Born a conservative, he entered Parliament as a Unionist, crossed the floor to be Liberal, and was a minister in a Radical Government, with allies among Irish Home Rulers and British Trade Unionists. A friend and protege of Asquith, did he not make common cause with Lloyd George to turn out his old Chief? A Coalition with Lloyd George, did he not become true blue Tory when Baldwin made him Chancellor of the Exchequer? And is that surprising in one, who, having execrated Communism all his life, has been extolling Stalin, its worst exponent and the most successful practitioner?"

"I hold no brief for the British Prime Minister," said the Rev. Fandrews, "who can easily defend himself. But I repeat the presence of America and Russia among the United Nations gives a totally new tinge to such solemn declarations of the Allies for the postwar world."

"America is still a novice in the art of international diplomacy and Britain can easily bamboozle her, and make her toe the line, once victory is theirs," observed Dr. Garudeshan, who had remained silent for a long time. "Besides, America might also acquire a taste for Imperialism, of the Yankee

brand if not the British, after the War, you know ; and might become an ally of Britain even more closely after the war than before or during the struggle. I remember an article in the *Saturday Evening Post* in December, 1943, which made it perfectly clear the United States had not joined with Britain in the War to embarrass her ally after the War, on what might be after all regarded as an internal problem of the British Commonwealth, if you don't like the word Empire."

" Britain needs America to win the War," said Sahib-Singh, " and to rid her for ever of the main Continental danger to her own Imperial mission. She needs the guns and ships and shells and 'planes from the United States much too much to be able to afford to estrange or displease Roosevelt at this stage. But, once the present need is over, America will see without any microscope the iron claw under the velvet glove of British Imperialist, exploitive diplomacy."

" There is no need to wait till after the War is ended for that spectacle," assured Firdaus. " I find no other explanation for American silence, submission, or acquiescence, when Mr. Churchill boasted in Parliament that he had not become the First Minister of the Crown to liquidate the British Empire ! President Roosevelt has, like Dr. Faust, sold his soul to Churchill and his gang ; and there is no hope to the conquered, oppressed and exploited nations in the British Empire from American intervention ! "

" I quite agree with you," intervened the Colonel. " I, too, can find no explanation for American acquiescence or tame submission to the ban on American journalists, like Luis Fischer or Pearl Buck in India, merely because they ventured to inform the American people of the realities in India under

Churchill-cum-Amery regime, with Linlithgow as a rubber stamp. At the end of the last war, in return for all her War contributions, India got the Rowlatt Acts, and the Jallianwalla Bagh. The Devil alone knows what she will receive at the end of this War. Her contribution is three or four times heavier ; and Britain's knowledge of German methods in occupied countries to keep the natives in order is ten times greater."

"I protest, Mr. Chairman," said the Rev. Fandrews, addressing Ramdas, "against these baseless calumnies of a whole nation."

"They are not quite baseless, Padre Sahib," said Sir Muhammad.

"And, besides, we have agreed there must be the fullest freedom of thought and expression," mildly pointed out Ramdas.

"And, in mere self-defence, I must point out that the Prime Minister's boast about not being the First Minister of the British Crown to liquidate the British Empire,—he says he loves the word," said Dr. Garudeshan, "was made after, not *before*, the Atlantic Charter was signed, though not sealed with the approval of the respective peoples."

"And let it be added," put in Dr. Singh, "it was uttered by the same individual who had, a couple of years before, offered to merge the entire identity, sovereignty, and separate existence of the British State in the French, if only the French would consent to fight on a losing battle, lost seven years before it had been joined, because of the British betrayal of their French allies in terror of the new might of the Nazis."

"That offer was made because nobody believed it would be accepted," pointed out Begum Singh. "Churchill was quite

safe in making it, for the moment had passed long since when the French could even consider it with any hope of benefit. It was only an impressive gesture."

"If I may say a word," observed Sir John, after a long silence, "that very boast of the Prime Minister is the best Atlantic Charter for India. I know you won't heed me ; but, take it from me, your only guarantee for peaceful and unimpeded development of your national resources,—your only chance to effect a modicum of social justice in this land of heart-rending poverty, is to remain in and with the British Empire, as a part of the Commonwealth. You have the Cripps offer, which still stands, even if you think the Atlantic Charter does not apply to India. In the Empire you will have the protection to your shores and your commerce from the British Navy and the Air Force, without paying a pie for it. In the Empire you will have the service of the best experts, the freedom of the widest markets, the benefit of the best equipment and organization for your industries and commerce, for your public utilities and social services ; in the Empire you will have your communal wrangles adjudicated upon, when they arise, by British judges, and put down, when need be, by British troops when they take too riotous a form. And, above all, in the Empire, you will always have the opportunity to throw all the blame of your own incompetence, inexperience, or inefficiency,—not to use harder, though, perhaps, juster, terms,—upon the British Government, which will serve you as the House of Lords serves every Radical Government in the old country,—without a word of thanks, or a penny of profit, to the Peers."

"Well said, our side," applauded the Reverend.

"It is a grand tirade," said Garudeshan, "but no more. Sir John naturally does not say that, in the Empire, we shall

have the daily spectacle of ostracism and humiliation in the Dominions, and exclusion or obstruction in the Colonies ; that in the Empire, we shall be involved in every quarrel of Britain, with the sole privilege of shedding our blood and squandering our wealth, though the quarrel may have nothing to do with us, and we get no benefit from any alliance or friendship of Britain, however it may be needed by us ; that in the Empire we shall be abused by foreign experts engaged by us, looted by foreign servants employed by us, and exploited at every turn, in every material resource by all the device of modern business ; that in the Empire, we shall be always treated as an inferior race, as pariah dogs, who must be thankful for any stray bone that might be thrown to us, in charity more insulting than contempt, in toleration more humiliating than calculated cruelty. We can have no pride of this Empire, which to us means only subjugation and degradation ; we can have no opportunity, which will be reserved, of course, for the heaven-born white race ; we can have no hope or prospect in the Empire, which to us will only mean all round oppression and unmitigated exploitation."

"I think we had better rule out altogether the alternative of remaining as a part of the British Empire," observed Ramdas. "It will be acceptable to no party in this country now, however strong the case you make out for it, Sir John."

"I am not quite sure about that," rejoined Sir John ; "but I did not suggest it as something which you might be pleased to consider and accept. I meant it as a favour the British Government might do to you," he added with a mischievous smile, "in memory of long connection, if you begged for it, as the Britons begged the Romans to remain as rulers and guardians of the Island, when the legions were called away for the defence of Rome herself. For my own part, I have

already told you I regard India, not as an asset of the Empire, but a heavy liability ; and, if you don't like my suggestion, I have the greatest pleasure in withdrawing it, if the Chair permits."

"Permission is granted," smiled Ramdas in response.

* * *

"But not to remain part of the British Empire," "remarked Sir Muhammad, "is not the same thing as not to remain an equal partner in the British Commonwealth of free and independent nations ; and much less it is the same thing with not to be in friendship and alliance with the British people."

"There can never be an equal partnership between the lion and the lamb," added Firdaus.

"I do not see you in the rôle of the lamb," rejoined Fandrews. "Even if the lion is the British symbol, the lamb is not India's, but the tiger, you know."

"India will never be ferocious as the lion or tiger," put in Ram Piari. "But I fear we are again drifting from the main issue. If the only concrete suggestion of the Muslim League is the creation of independent and separate sovereign states out of the areas containing a majority of the Muslim population, subject to adequate and effective guarantees of minority rights ; and if these guarantees are not to be endorsed by a third power, because Britain's guarantee is unacceptable to us, and American guarantee unavailing or unavailable, where do we stand ?"

"Where we started from," laughed Krishna.

"This is no occasion for flippancy," rebuked Firdaus. "I suggest Mrs. Ramdas, there still remains the possibility of

the guarantee being endorsed by Soviet Russia. What does the house say to that ? ”

“ So long as Stalin rules in Russia,” said Col. Singh, “ there is no danger of Soviet Russia bothering about anybody but Soviet Russia. Whatever may be said under the exigencies of the moment, when the danger to Russia proper is removed once for all, Stalin would retire into the vast cell of the U.S.S.R., perfect the socialist regime in his own immense land, and leave the rest to boil in the cauldron of their own creation.”

“ And I should say just as well,” added Krishna. “ I don’t want Holy Mother India to be stained by communism.”

“ Communism is not a taint, else you would have long since had it,” returned the Colonel.

“ If it is any consolation to you to know it,” added Sir John, “ I think the United States would adopt the same policy. By the time they finish this war, and the peace conferences and the conventions that follow ; by the time they have fed and rehabilitated the liberated regions, and restored their independent sovereignty ; by the time they have demobilised their huge armed forces, and reconstructed their own national economy on a normal peace-time footing, they would be so sick of the whole business, or surfeited with it, that the isolationist’s cry would ring out once again as a clarion which every American will follow without a thought of demurring. Talk of making the world safe for democracy, or of assuring to every individual the four freedoms of President Roosevelt, is all very well as propaganda, when you want open allies or underground supporters in every country of the world. But the task of policing the world is a costly proposition which the shrewd Yankee will soon find unprofit-

able. And so, eventually, the Whiteman's Burden will be still left for Britain to carry."

"Sir John talks sense," commented the Professor, "though I am afraid in too many words."

"I don't agree," said Firdaus. "It is neither good sense nor good politics, nor good economics. Russia would need as much as the United States a world in peace for their own reconstruction and rehabilitation ; and so, however complex and costly, they must see to it that the task is not abandoned before it is completed. It would pay them both to see it through, each in its own mode of reckoning."

"I can see it might prove good business for America to adopt such a policy as the Allama indicates", admitted Abdul. "But I cannot see how it can benefit Russia to act the Imperialist monkeys' catpaw to pull their chest-nuts out of the fire ! I think Stalin would rather call it all a good riddance of bad rubbish when the war has been ended to his own liking, and Europe reconstructed to his own pattern. And then he would go back to his Fifth Five-Year-Plan to be completed in four years.

"I see one flaw in that argument," pointed out Firdaus. "None would be happier than Soviet Russia if revolution—preferably on the communist model—breaks out in every country in Europe,—ally as well as enemy ; and to see such a revolution end up on the Soviet style, Stalin must ever be on the alert."

"Speaking for myself," interrupted Rahim. "I see great force in this reasoning. I think it not at all unlikely that the war in the West ends, not by a shattering victory in the field ; but by internal exhaustion and war-weariness, which

would certainly breed revolution. My only doubt is whether this revolution, when it comes, would be from the Left or the Right, from the Populists or Militarists. That would mean all the difference."

"I see as much chance of a military revolt against the Nazis in Germany," put in Begum Singh, "as of the Communist revolution ; and the same in all other countries under the Nazi heel,—France included."

"But whether it is a militarist revolt or communist revolution," asked Ram Piari, "whether the war ends by sheer exhaustion of the belligerents, or a shattering victory in the field,—what has that got to do with the question before us ? It is getting very late ; and I seem to feel we have not yet reached the heart of the problem."

"I have already suggested," said the Khaksar, "that the minority rights in the separated Indian States, specifically provided for in the Constitution of each, solemnly guaranteed by an all-round Treaty, and endorsed by Russia, might go a long way to solve our communal impasse."

"I can't believe Stalin would be such a fool as to pledge himself to preserve the rights of religious minorities in whose very essence and existence he has no faith," remarked Krishna.

"That stands to reason," supplemented Sir Muhammad.

"The only effective and abiding solution, if we accept this obsolete and mischievous doctrine of religious groups being entitled to form independent sovereign states by themselves," argued the Colonel, "is to make such states or units entirely homogeneous in point of religion. Let there be no Muslim in Hindu lands, or Hindustan, and no Hindu in Muslim lands, or Pakistan. Otherwise there would be no solution."

"But the Muslim League Resolution does not want that course," observed Ramdas, "even if it were practicable to transplant millions upon millions of human beings hundreds and hundreds of miles from their homes."

"If you insist upon that as a condition precedent," added the Professor, "as a kind of *sine qua non*, I suspect the League would actually oppose it."

"But why do you think it is the only way to make a real partition," asked Rahim.

"I can answer that," said Krishna; "but it would take very long; and it is already late in the evening. I move the House do now adjourn," he concluded.

"Every adjournment motion must, to be in order, specify the day and hour to which the House is adjourned," pointed out Garudeshan.

"Tomorrow," said Ramdas, "at the same time, the same place, and the same accompaniments to our debate, lunch and tea." He smiled a question at his wife as he said this.

"I second the motion," she rejoined. "But we must get to the core of the question as soon as we can."

"You know, Mrs. Ramdas," said Krida, as she rose to take her wrap, "we have a proverb in our parts, mangoes do not ripen in haste. If you force them, you would spoil them."

"Before we disperse, however," said Ram Piari, after a smile of acknowledgement to Mrs. Krishna, "would it not be better if today's discussion is summarised, so that we need not go over the same ground?"

"We have agreed," said Rahim, "to the right of secession of the provinces, or units constituting the Indian Federation,

already agreed upon, if the people of the respective units so desire, at any time after they have joined the Federation."

"We agreed to it only as the last alternative, when no other solution seems feasible,—a sort of an inescapable necessity, a kind of a *pis aller*," said Col. Singh.

"Subject to my dissent," put in Krishna.

"And we have not agreed to what would constitute sufficient evidence for the people's desire to secede, nor the minimum size of the unit in area and population which wants to secede," said the Reverend.

"The people's desire must be evidenced by a prescribed majority," said Professor Kristo Das, "on a definite issue placed before them by their representative in the local or national Legislature, or Constituent Assembly, as the case may be, who must themselves have approved of the issue by a prescribed majority larger than that required on a people's plebiscite, or referendum."

"You mean the representatives and people of the units concerned," Sir Muhammad tried to ascertain, "and not of the whole country."

"I think the whole country has a stake in this issue," said Krishna, "and so its representatives as well as its population should be entitled to pronounce on such a referendum or plebiscite, and decide it by a given majority."

"If there is any substance or ethical value in the right of secession," said Abdul, it must be acknowledged to be of the people of the units concerned. There would be no meaning otherwise in accepting this right of self-determination. And if it is acknowledged in the people of the unit, it must also be acknowledged in the representative of those people, as a

preliminary and by way of double safeguard against the abuse of such a right."

"Do you mean the units from which other units separate have no concern in the partition, and so no voice in effecting it ? " asked Sahib Singh.

"I mean that the primary concern is that of the separating units who have to gain or lose most by the fact of the separation. They alone should vote on such a plebiscite," explained Rahim.

"But, in this case," argued Garudeshan, "the right to secede is being considered with reference to a religious group, and not a regional group. By parity of reasoning, in sheer consistency, the plebiscite must be of the entire Muslim population of the country ; and, preliminary to that, of the entire Muslim representation in the national or provincial Legislatures, or in the Constituent Assembly, as the case may be."

"I feel there is a great force in the Doctor's contention," urged the Professor. "But I am still not convinced that it would be desirable to take the vote of the whole nation, or even of the entire Muslim population of the country. Even though the initial demand for the right to secede may have been inspired by the sense of religious difference, the secession, if and when determined upon, must needs be regional. The population concerned is of the regions wanting to separate and so they alone should vote."

"But, in that case, what majority would you require as sufficient," asked Ramdas. "And would similar right to withdraw from the unit seceding, and remain with the best of the country, be accorded to the communal minority in the seceding region ? "

“The answer to your second question would depend on the actual configuration of the seceding units,—which has yet to be considered,” replied Rahim. “As a matter of principle, however, I, for my part, would agree that the communal minorities in the seceding regions must be accorded the same right, and on the same terms, if they can muster a prescribed majority in a fairly compact region, easily separable.”

“In that case there is danger of excessive fragmentation of the units,” pointed out Dr. Garudeshan. “I suggest, therefore, we agree upon some minimum of area and population that would safely be entitled to such rights.”

“I should say no unit less than 50,000 sq. miles in area, or 25 million of population, should be entitled to secede,” laid down Krishna.

“That would mean Bengal may not have that right on the score of insufficient area, even though it may have it on the score of population,” pointed out Rahim. “Punjab may get the right on the score of area, but not of population ; while Sindh or the Frontier may not get the right on any account.”

“I would be agreeable to make these minimum requirements of area and population alternative to one another,” conceded Krishna, “and not cumulative. But we must insist upon such minimum of area or population, if we would not have religious frenzy to run riot, and make havoc of the country’s progress and development.”

“Your minimum requirements may be easily met if you allow two or more contiguous units to combine for this purpose,” Abdul advised. “For in that case the N.-W. Regions with Muslim majority may fulfil all such requirements, and at the same time present some homogeneity, some intrinsic cohesiveness. Even the Hindus and Sikhs in these areas might

be able to meet such conditions if they want to withdraw from the seceding units."

"I do not know the latest figures of the population and area of these units," observed Ramdas, "and so cannot say off-hand if this would be satisfactory arrangement."

"I have got the latest census figures with me," put in the Viennese Doctor of Philosophy. "Here they are; judge for yourself now."

STATESMAN'S YEAR-BOOK

Additions and Corrections

INDIA

Census Population, 1941.—Following are the leading details of the Census of March 1, 1941.

<i>Provinces :</i>	Area in Square		Total
	Miles		
Madras	126,166	49,341,810	
Bombay	76,443	20,849,840	
Bengal	77,442	60,306,525	
United Provinces ..	106,247	55,020,617	
Punjab	99,089	28,418,819	
Bihar	69,745	36,340,151	
Central Provinces & Berar	98,575	16,813,584	
Assam	54,951	10,204,733	
North-West Frontier Province	14,263	3,038,067	
Orissa	32,198	8,728,544	
Sind	48,136	4,535,008	
Ajmer-Merwara	2,400	583,693	
Andamans & Nocabars ..	3,143	33,768	
Baluchistan	54,456	501,631	
Coorg	1,593	168,726	
Delhi	574	917,939	
Panth-Piploda	25	5,167	
Total ..	865,446	295,808,722	

			Area in Square Miles	Total
<i>States and Agencies :</i>				
Assam	..	..	12,403	725,655
Baluchistan	..	..	79,546	356,204
Baroda	..	..	8,236	2,855,010
Bengal	..	..	9,408	2,14,829
Central India	..	..	52,047	7,506,427
Chattisgarh	..	..	37,687	4,050,000
Cochin	..	..	1,493	1,422,875
Deccan & Kolhapur	..	..	10,870	2,785,428
Gujarat	..	..	7,352	1,458,702
Gwalior	..	..	26,008	4,006,159
Hyderabad	..	..	82,313	16,338,534
Kashmir & Feudatories	..	..	82,258	4,021,616
Madras	..	..	1,602	498,754
Mysore	..	..	29,458	7,329,140
North-West Frontier Pro- vince	..	..	24,986	2,377,599
Orissa	..	..	18,151	3,023,731
Punjab	..	..	38,146	5,503,554
Punjab Hill	..	..	11,375	1,090,644
Rajputana	..	..	132,559	13,670,208
Sikkim	..	..	2,745	121,520
Travancore	..	..	7,662	6,070,018
United Provinces	..	..	1,760	928,470
Western India	..	..	37,894	4,904,156
Total	..	..	715,964	93,189,233
Total India ..			1,581,410	388,997,955

"This table is not adequate for our purpose," said Ramdas, after casting a glance at it. "We may need the figures by communities, as well as by districts, too."

"I would bring them to you tomorrow," assured the learned Doctor.

* This table has been taken from the *Statesman's Year Book*, 1942.

“ But, in the meanwhile, why can we not decide the question of the majority needed for a proper decision on the subject ? ” asked Ram Piari.

“ The majority must, I submit, be greater in the case of the representatives than in that of the people themselves,” suggested the Professor. “ I take it, of course, that in the case of the people the vote will be of adult citizens, men as well as women, over 18 years of age.”

“ Without any educational or literacy qualification ? ” enquired Mrs. Krishna. “ I do not insist on any property qualification, though I think it advisable, since it assures a certain stake, and so a certain sense of responsibility, in casting the vote.”

“ With a bare literacy proportion in the country at large of about 12%, and among women about 2%,” pointed out Sahib Singh, “ I think it would be a negation of a referendum or plebiscite, if we insist on any such qualification as a condition precedent to voting.”

“ And with 90% of the property in the country monopolised by less than one-fourth of the population,” urged Firdaus, “ property qualification would make a tragic mockery of any such scheme.”

“ The referendum, or plebiscite, if and when decided upon, should be open to all adult citizens over 18 years of age,” concluded Ramdas. “ And I further suggest a majority of 60% of the people voting should be required for a valid decision on this subject.”

“ I would be content with a bare majority of 51%,” said Rahim. “ That would still mean that even if 5% of the Muslims in the Punjab or Bengal vote against secession, and

all the non-Muslims are of the same view, partition will not be permitted."

"Yes, but it would mean that 51% of the people can coerce 49% into committing political suicide and economic harakiri," urged Col. Singh.

"Not if some arrangement is made to allow the 49%, or a majority of them, to withdraw from the seceding unit," said Rahim.

"Subject to that understanding," Ramdas poured oil on troubled waters, "let us agree that 51% of the adult population of a minimum area of 25,000 square miles of contiguous territory, or 5 million of total population,—by each unit or combination with contiguous units,—voting in favour of a proposition for secession of that area or population from the National Democratic Federation,—with the largest possible margin of powers and functions of government vested in the constituent units, as also all undefined, undistributed, or residuary powers and functions,—should be entitled to withdraw from the Indian National Federation.

"I vote for it," said Abdul, "not because I am in favour of it; but somehow I feel that on a closer study of the concrete scheme for making such concession operative, and a careful examination of the consequences *after* secession to both parts, we would not reach that pass at all. I have great faith in the popular judgment when it comes to such crucial decisions."

"The people must be prepared,—they must be educated as regards all these consequences and ramifications, before they can be expected to vote rightly," advised the Begum.

"The very mention of the process of such education, or preparation, of the public, makes me tremble," augured Fir-

daus. "So many passions and prejudices will be let loose by the protagonists of either side. I fear the issue will never be fairly judged and squarely dealt with. I don't believe the people *en masse* can ever pronounce on such matters. It is the task of the leaders. Let them confer, consult, and decide ; and let them be set aside if they can't agree on a reasonable working arrangement acceptable to a large majority of them."

"I don't have the same touching faith in the wisdom of the leaders, or even their desire to come to a settlement," said the Sikh, "as you seem to have, *Allama Sahib*. I believe, with a witty friend of mine, that the very condition of being a leader is a disease, which has been christened "LEADER-ITIS" by the author of the *Wrong Angles*."

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"The leaders will not be allowed to shirk their responsibility, *Allama Sahib*," reassured Ram Piari. "Have we not agreed that, as a condition precedent of putting forward any such referendum, the chosen representatives of the people desiring to secede,—or said to so desire—must first agree on that course among themselves ; and that, too, by a prescribed majority. I suggest in this case a minimum of 75% of such representatives, in the local or central, or combined legislatures, or in the Constituent Assembly, as the case may be for a valid referendum to be made, or plebiscite asked for."

If ever a split infinitive was condonable," said Sir John Bentleigh, "it is in this sentence of yours, Mrs. Ramdas. I think it is a fair suggestion."

"I, too, think the same way," said both Fandrews and Kristo Das almost in the same breath.

“I would like to have unanimity at least among these leaders,” said Krishna, “but I accept your suggestion in order to cut short this discussion. I don’t believe it would come to anything.”

“I agree with my husband,” said Krida, “as we must not trespass on your kindness too long, Mrs. Ramdas ; and as it is getting late also.”

“We follow your admirable example of marital harmony, Mrs. Krishna,” said the Begum, having consulted and convinced the irrepressible Colonel with a glance, “and agree to Mrs. Ramdas’s proposal on the same terms and conditions.”

“I know Rahim would not object to this, Shrimatiji,” said Abdul. “You may take it we are both agreed.”

“I do not believe in being a minority of one,” said Sir Muhammad, smiling, “even if I really differed from you, which I don’t. I accept your proposition, Mrs. Ramdas ; but I would like one point to be made clear, as it has not even been touched upon. Will this apply to Indian States within or near the areas affected, as well as to the British Regions ? ”

“So far in our discussion we have thought only of the British region,” said Ramdas.

“The States’ case would raise many thorny and complicated issues, juridical as well as political,” pointed out Dr. Garudeshan.

“May we not regard this point as a matter of detail,” asked Begum Singh, “which may be considered when specific, concrete schemes are being scrutinised ? ”

“Agreed,” said Ram Piari, Rahim, Ismail and Bentleigh.

“ But we have not yet finished examining the Muslim League resolution in all its parts,” pointed out Krishna. “ I have several inconsistencies, and even absurdities, to point out in that yet.”

“ That must be taken at the adjourned meeting,” Ramdas smiled ; but he was weary.

“ We have yet to complete also the summary of today’s discussion,” reminded Firdaus, “ particularly about the guarantee of Minority Rights.”

“ I suggest that, too, must be deferred to the adjourned meeting,” said Abdul. “ Ramdas looks too tired to continue further discussion.”

They all agreed, and dispersed.

THIRD DAY—LUNCH

The next day the party assembled at 12-30 almost simultaneously with the exception of Sir John Bentleigh who had excused himself on the plea of urgent official business, but had promised to join after lunch.

Little time was lost in preliminaries, Discussion began almost immediately luncheon was served.

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“We agreed, did we not,” reminded Rahim, “that, assuming the partition of the country into Pakistan and Hindustan becomes inevitable, adequate, effective, and mandatory guarantees for the religion, language, and culture of Minorities, as well as their political and administrative rights, will be specifically provided for in the Constitution of each of the separating units ; that arrangements will be made for the full observance and enforcement of these rights ; and that adequate guarantees will be secured from some third party, like Soviet Russia, to see that they do not become either a dead letter, or a standing excuse for constant bitterness between these several units, made into independent states, of the present day India.”

“That is substantially correct,” said Ramdas, “according to my recollection.”

“But it presupposed,” said Rev. Fandrews, “that Russia would be willing to give such guarantees, and able and ready to enforce them. I see no ground for such a presupposition.”

“I think there was some mention,” reminded Ram Piari, “of the postwar, world being wholly different, in political

structure and working, from the pre-war world. Did not somebody suggest there would have to be a single sovereign World-State, with its own arrangement for policing the world, maintaining universal peace and order, and adjudicating upon all interstate disputes or observance of international treaties and guarantees of the kind we have been speaking of? If that comes to pass, and the obsolete sovereignty of each state will be modified accordingly, need we trouble about a third party guarantee or endorsement of our mutual treaty obligations? "

"I think every democracy will be mortally jealous of its local sovereignty and independence," put in Krishna, "and those who get a taste of it for the first time will be particularly so. I doubt if any of them would willingly surrender any part of their sovereignty and absolute independence."

"Then democracy will sign its own death-warrant," said Singh, "by its own pettiness, narrowness and jealousy. There is no hope of any peaceful progress and development for humanity at large, unless the peoples of the world learn the elementary lesson of the value of co-operation and co-ordination of effort as against the devil of competition and conflict."

"But, for purposes of our discussion," urged Ram Piari, "may we not take it as a working hypothesis? "

"What is a hypothesis? " asked Krida. "I mean what do you mean by taking it as a working hypothesis? "

"It is to be an academic assumption," answered Firdaus, "of a possible development like several others we have made. For my part, I see no reason to take an exception to it, Mrs. Ramdas."

"I, too, cannot see," admitted the Padre, "how the war could be said to be won, if this perennial danger to the peace

of mankind arising out of the conflict of independent nations is not effectively guarded against. A single World State is the only solution, which St. Augustine saw centuries ago in the *Civitas Dei* ; and which the Church founded by the Prince of Peace tried to establish in the Holy Roman Empire."

"In a devilishly diluted form, my Reverend," reminded Begum Singh, "not to mention the further fact that it was only confined to Christendom at its best and widest. But, for our present purposes, I, too, see no objection to accept this as a working hypothesis, or as a likely possibility."

"If a single World Sovereign State, and a World Supreme Court, with adequate authority and force are established," observed Sir Muhammed, "the Racial as well as Religious Minority problem would wear a totally different aspect. I am willing to accept that as a possible solution, though I feel rather sceptic."

"The problem just won't exist," asserted and assured Sahib Singh. "All these problems are phases of the fight for power, an outcome of the friction or rivalry between individualist politicians. It can only disappear, when nationalism is supplanted or superceded by internationalism ; when local loyalties yield place to common concern for humanity at large ; and when the personal profit motive of individualist society is replaced by cooperative effort in a communist world organization. I will agree to your suggestion, Mrs. Ramdas," he added addressing the hostess, "not only as a possible alternative, or working hypothesis, but as the only effective, abiding, and genuine solution, not only about our particular footling question of communal harmony, but also of all the social and economic evils of our existing organization outside Soviet Russia, all over the world."

“I agree,” said Abdul after a glance at his comrade, “and so does Rahim, to your suggestion as a possible alternative ; though we feel doubtful about its immediate and universal acceptance all over the world, even after this war.”

“I do not believe in it at all,” said Krishna, “and won’t consider it even as a possibility until India is first free, and recognised by all the nations of the world as an equal and sovereign state. Unless and until India, acting independently, and primarily in her own interests, has an equal and effective voice in shaping the constitution, powers and functions of the World State, as you call it ; until and unless we have an equal share in determining the jurisdiction, authority, procedure and personnel of the World Court ; unless and until we have our own quota in the World Police Force, under our own officers, and with equipment provided by our own factories and workshops,—I would be no party to any such proposal, even as a remote possibility, a remote alternative, or a working hypothesis. I do not want to run the slightest risk of being attached to the apron-strings of Britain, America, or Russia, any more than of China or Japan. We should bear the burden of our own past, and eat the fruit of our own sowing. I would rather—much rather—Hindus and Muslims fought out their difference among themselves, than were helped to a working solution by the intervention of an outsider, until we are able to take our due share in the making of that outside authority.”

“Is this part of your next speech from an Akhand Hindustan platform ? ” enquired Firdaus with ominous suavity, “or a serious contribution to the present discussion on the plane Ram Piari has raised it ? ”

“I refuse to answer your sneers,” rejoined Krishna ; “but I am too honest and convinced a nationalist to be afraid to

tell that we,—we Hindus,—shall win the independence and complete sovereignty of India by our own efforts, with your aid if you will, without your help if you won't, and in spite of you, if you oppose. And if I say this to my own countrymen, the Muslims, why should I not say the same thing to any officious interlopers who would patronisingly promise to help us solve our communal tangle by breaking up our national unity, our geographic integrity, our political sovereignty? India is one from the Indus to the Sea, from Kashmir to Cape Comorin, and shall remain one, undivided, indivisible, integral, unified, absolute, whole. None shall question, none shall disrupt it, while a single Hindu lives to offer resistance, even though unarmed, unaided, and even opposed from inside."

"You know, Ramdas, such orations are bound to have a tragic reaction in the public," mourned Abdul.

"I am afraid we cannot stop these," replied the host, "having premised freedom of thought and speech as the fundamental rights of citizenship in the free India of the future. I am at one with the American Statesman who assured his opponent that he totally disagreed with him on the main issue; but that he would lay down his life and all he had in the world to maintain his opponent's right to say freely what he had to say. That would be my only rejoinder to this speech of Mr. Krishna."

"I don't suggest, we should restrain any one's freedom of speech in the least," said Ram Piari, "but should we not do our utmost to counteract anything which we believe is pernicious, and against the best interests of not only our own country, but also of human civilisation as a whole?"

"These are mere mouth filling catchwords, Mrs. Ramdas," Krishna assured his hostess. "They are invented in Whitehall,

re-edited in Washington, and repeated in Allahabad. No one but a baby or a nitwit' can be influenced by them."

"I am not a baby," replied Ram Piari with a gracious smile, "and so I must fall in your second category. But even at that risk I confess I had believed in the possibility of a real human brotherhood, in some sort of a common world citizenship, without ceasing to believe in the unity, integrity or independence of India. I can never match you in brilliant invective on the platform ; but I promise you I shall do my level best to counteract and undo your reactionary outlook."

"I shall be too chivalrous to oppose such a gracious lady," bowed Krishna in acknowledgment.

"I do not expect any chivalry from you," replied the hostess, "or any one else, which may be at the expense of your convictions. I want you to do your best for your views if you honestly hold them, without thought of who opposes, and how."

"Don't you be anxious about any chivalry from him," said the Sikh Colonel. "It will last only upto the time he is made Home Member of the Government of India."

"Who started that story ?" asked the Padre. "I enquired of H.E.'s Private Secretary ; and he knows nothing about it."

"You are really an utter innocent, Padre Sahib," smiled in return Rahim. "Rumours are seldom based on truth, and often started by interested parties themselves. It makes excellent advertisement, even if it be not true."

"I protest against such insinuations, Mr. Chairman," Krishna, shouted in white heat.

“*Qui s’ excuse, s’accuse*” murmured Sahib Singh *Sotto Voce*.

“Order, order, please,” urged Ramdas. “We cannot carry on such a discussion to any good purpose, if we indulge in personalities. I suggest all personal references be barred hereafter.”

“I bow to your ruling, Ramdasji,” gravely bowed Rahim, “and apologise to our friend, though mine was only a general observation.”

“With obviously personal application,” rejoined Krishna, whose heat was fast subsiding, as he did not want to leave the party, “but I accept the apology, and shall say no more about it.”

“Harmony being once again established,” said Ramdas, “the House will proceed to the Orders of the day.”

“My suggestion seems to be generally accepted,” said Ram Piari.

“With one dissent,” said Sahib Singh. “Or is it two—with Mrs. Krishna concurring with her husband?” he blandly enquired.

“I reserve judgment,” replied Krida herself, with an air of great gravity. “I have always an open mind on such matters.”

The Col. was heard to murmur something about open mind being often a vacant mind ; but no one paid him any attention, as Ramdas looked rather stern. Besides, the lunch had just ended and the party was adjourned to the sunny garden. Sr John Bentleigh joined them almost immediately.

THE THIRD DAY (*Contd.*) TEA

“The Lahore Resolution of the Muslim League,” Dr. Garudeshan resumed discussion, “leaves many debatable points. For one thing I don’t understand whether the authors of that Resolution want the seceding Provinces to be each an independent sovereign state by itself, or join up to form a distinct federation, or two, of their own ? ”

“The concluding words of the Resolution are quite clear on the subject,” pointed out Sahib Singh. “*The constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign.*” “Nothing can be clearer than this that each of the separating units would become an independent, autonomous state by itself.”

“That would be worse than Balkanisation of India, with all the evils of petty nationalist grudges or ambitions, playing havoc with any programme of common good,” pointed out the Rev. Fandrews.

“That is the motive and intention of the present League leadership,” said Krishna ; “and that is why I am uncompromisingly resolved and determined to oppose it.”

“I am by no means convinced that Mr. Jinnah intends such a consummation,” put in Sir M. Ismail.

“The last paragraph of the Resolution,” Abdul intervened, “reads to me as though they also contemplated, eventually, if not immediately, one or two federations of Muslim States. What else do you make of the words : “providing for the assumption *finally* by the respective regions of all powers such as defence, external affairs, communications, customs, and such other matters as may be necessary.”

“That may apply to each separating unit made into an autonomous and sovereign state,” replied Dr. Garudeshan, “and not necessarily to any combination, or federation, of them. After all the very idea of federation is condemned in the very first paragraph of the Resolution so emphatically, that, without obvious inconsistency, the authors of this Resolution cannot themselves set about putting up new federations of Muslim States.”

“Consistency is not very conspicuous in politics,” pointed out Prof. Kristo Das.

“The term “*Region*” as used in para 3 of that Resolution can only apply to the grouped units, and not to each separating unit,” argued Abdul. “And then there is the word “*Finally*” in the last para, which I read to mean that *eventually* these separating units will form their own federations, though, to start with, each separating unit may be an independent and sovereign state by itself.”

“Granted that the term region is suggestive,” countered Dr. Garudeshan, “of a possible, ultimate, eventual federation of these seceding units, there are several points in the actual wording of the Resolution which make such an eventuality, even if originally intended, ultimately impossible.”

“What are those points, Doctor ?” enquired Ram Piari.

“For one thing, I do not see that there is, in the units or areas, or provinces sought to be divorced from India, as we know it today, sufficient intrinsic cohesiveness *interse* as to make their federating among themselves more easy than their remaining united, as they actually are, with the whole of India in a federation on the lines assumed to be necessary, reasonable and inevitable in the present discussion,” said Dr. Garudeshan.

"I have heard it said," said Sahib Singh, "that there is no love lost between the Sindhi and the Punjabi. In fact they detest each other so cordially that a current popular proverb in the Punjabi says : "if on your path you meet a snake and a Sindhi at the same time, kill the Sindhi, and let the snake go if necessary." And I understand the compliment is as cordially returned by the Sindhi to the Punjabi, utterly irrespective of whether he is Hindu or Muslim."

"Such proverbs are common all over the country," remarked Abdul. "They often apply to the different castes as well as communities in the same province. The last chapter of Risley's *Peoples of India* is an illuminative collection of such sayings."

"Even in the days of Shivaji," pointed out Rahim, "there seemed to have been plenty of such material as between Marathas and Prabhus and Brahmins in Maharashtra itself. They really mean nothing."

"Was it not a Communist leader in France," chirped Begum Singh, "who declared that they were communists in France, but Frenchmen all outside France? I suppose the same attitude may be characteristic of the situation in India."

"You are mistaken," said Krishna, "except for Bengal and the Bengalis, perhaps, the Provincial loyalty in India is nowhere marked and pronounced."

"Not even in Maharashtra as against Gujerat?" asked Abdul "and vice versa."

"The Mahratha is very provincial," remarked Mrs. Krishna. "But the Gujerati is not and cannot be. His commercial enterprise makes him essentially cosmopolitan."

"That may be an explanation," said Firdaus. "But in Bombay I have often heard that the Gujerati is no less Pro-

vincial, or at least he is fast becoming one,—except at the top where there is no Maharashtrian competition, particularly in the field of private enterprise.”

“The Maharashtrian has a good case, to my thinking,” said Sir Muhammad, “and it is not altogether political, or even racial. I think it is at bottom economic, and will tend to be intensified while the unnatural marriage between the commercial Gujarat and the agricultural Maharashtra is maintained. The only solution is dissolution of that marriage by an amicable separation. And the same applies to the Muslims of Northern India at least. The memories of political ascendancy in the recent past, and all the benefits derivable from it, are common to the Muslims and the Mahrathas. And they are equally embittered by the tacit exclusion under modern conditions from the new avenues of enriching themselves that the British rule has opened up for Indians, in industry and commerce. That is why I have heard it said Maharashtrian intellectuals regard even long-settled Gujaratis in Maharashtra as fit for no other treatment but that given to the Jews in Germany.”

“The kick administered to Jinnah in the Punjab by young Tiwana was, I believe, the result of nothing but this Provincial sentiment, working against the domination of a dictator from Bombay,” remarked Col. Singh. “The Punjab Muslim is as good a Leaguer,—or as bad,—as Muslims in any other part of India. But to them,—as to the Hindus and the Sikhs of that Province,—the Land of the Five Rivers comes before everything else.”

“I do not think your analysis is altogether faultless, Colonel,” returned Abdul. “Jinnah has had a remarkable reverse in the Punjab ; but that is no triumph for the Nationalist Muslim, or Hindu. It is, rather, a triumph of British

Imperialism, which stands for so much gain through Military employment and P.W.D. or Army contracts for that Province. They can't afford to risk their title of being the sword arm of the British in India ; for it means a subsidy of Rs. 30 crores per annum to the Punjab at the cost of the rest of India. If the British are obliged to leave, as the Romans did Britain 1500 years ago, who will bear that burden ? ”

“ I think there is a lot in what you say, Abdul,” said Ramdas. But, for our present purposes, this is somewhat irrelevant. Let us keep the discussion to the main point of provincialism Vs. Nationalism.”

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“ The Congress has accepted the principle of reconstituting provinces on more natural lines,” said Ramdas. “ Language is taken as the natural line of division.”

“ The twenty provinces set up by the Congress on linguistic lines,” commented Kristo Das, “ are neither mutually exclusive, nor consolidated blocks of the same linguistic units. Besides, I do not think language is quite a natural line of demarcation.”

“ Speaking broadly,” said Sir John, “ I consider the Congress scheme of linguistic provinces is likely to give more homogeneity even on economic lines than any other reconstruction of provinces I have ever seen suggested. The only criticism I would offer is that the capital and cosmopolitan cities of Calcutta and Madras are not made into provinces by themselves, as Bombay and Delhi are. Even Nagpur—a much smaller and less important town—is clad in the dignity of a distinct unit which is denied to the two old Presidency towns for no reason that I can see.”

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“There are other objections also to the Congress scheme,” said Firdaus. “I see no room provided for the assimilation of the adjoining Indian States. What will happen to States like Kashmir or Hyderabad, if and when they come to be part of the Federation of India.”

“We have agreed to keep the problem of the States apart, for the time being at least,” said Ram Piari. “But I take it, when a proper reconstruction takes place, the State areas and peoples will be absorbed and assimilated with the neighbouring areas.”

“I am quite willing to keep aside, for the time being, the problem of the States,” said Col. Singh, “provided it is agreed they are all eventually abolished as separate units and absorbed and assimilated with their contiguous territories and peoples.”

“I should not like to abolish completely these remnants of our glorious past,” wailed Krida. “Even Mahatmaji would not agree.”

“Mahatmaji is neither eternal, immortal, nor infallible,” retorted Singh. “Besides, I do not believe he would not agree if he realises these States and their rulers are not remnants of our glorious past, but symbols of our recent shame and emblems of unmitigated decadence.”

“Let us not wander from the point of our present discussion,” again reminded Ramdas. “Let us talk only of what is known today as British territory. In the Congress scheme of Provincial reconstruction, I think, language, though the most prominent, is not the only dividing line. Economic unity has also a place in that scheme.”

“Absolute homogeneity is, of course, impossible in such essays at reconstitution,” Abdul conceded. “But I cannot

understand why the Congress demurred to proposals for reconstruction on its own accepted lines, when it was in power, as for instance in Madras."

"The moment was not quite ripe," answered Krishna, "for separating Andhra, Tamilnad and Kerala. Besides such realignment would be carried out most satisfactorily, if done wholesale, and not piecemeal."

"That is true," admitted Firdaus. "Let us however remember that there is no finality in history or politics. It is a continuous process of change and growth and even decay. It would be best, therefore, to provide not only amicable methods and machinery for reconstituting provinces, or component federal units ; but also for the reunion of those units which may now be asking for separation from their present partners."

"That is sound horse sense," beamed Col. Singh, "and applies as much to Provincial alignment as to Pakistan regroupment."

"I have no objection to an amicable separation," said Krishna, "as between Gujarat and Maharashtra, any more than as between Tamilnad and Andhradesha, Kerala and Karnataka. I would even desire this amicable arrangement, provided it is approved and ratified by the seal of the Central Legislature. But I do not want a divorce *a mensa et thoro* in any case."

"Divorce for man at least seems unnecessary in this land of polygamy," put in the Begum. "But I am not sure that woman, when she is conscious of her rights, will not demand it. The right must be conceded, even if it is never to be exercised. The mere sense of having the right will make it unnecessary to insist upon using it in season or out."

“The Act of 1935 recognises that right,” observed Ram Piari, “as applied to the instances mentioned.”

“And the Cripps declaration in principle applies it to the case of the Muslim majority Provinces, as well,” added Sir John.

“Even the All-India Congress Committee seems not altogether averse to its concession, in principle,” observed the Professor. “At least several prominent leaders are openly inclined to recognise it, if there is no other and better alternative.”

“All such cases of inter-provincial rivalries may be easily settled,” said Ram Piari, “by an agreed readjustment of Provincial boundaries, without sacrificing in any way the national integrity. Given the amplest measure of Provincial Autonomy, every section of the people of India, conscious of its separate individuality, or peculiar opportunity, may and will have the fullest scope for self-development, self-fulfilment, and self-government. But that does not need complete divorce and final separation, does it ?” she asked.

“No,” answered Garudeshan. “Nor should we overlook, at the same time, the need for a strong Central Government. The greater the diversity of local conditions in India, the greater, I, think, will be the need for a strong, cohesive, consolidating, Central National Government. In the post-war world, the need for a uniform policy and co-ordinated effort to achieve a planned programme of an all-round national development, being unquestioned, a strong National Government would be too clearly wanted to be questioned. Not merely the several component parts of a single country like India, but all the countries of the world will have to pool their resources and share their surplus with their neighbours or

fellows to meet the latter's deficit in any particular need, and that can only be done by an efficient central Government."

"I agree, but for different reasons," said Krishna. "If the post-war world is not reconstructed and remotived as my learned friend seems to envisage, and nationalism still remains rampant, as it is even in Russia, the need to hold our own can be fulfilled by a strong, effective central national government. We must not weaken the centre at any cost, whatever autonomy we grant to the units."

"A strong central government will, I fear," said Rahim, "be incompatible with democracy, let alone Muslim apprehension."

"Real democracy,—working self-government, can and will only be in the units and local bodies," answered Garudeshan. "At the top, co-ordinating all, supervising all, controlling all, there can only be indirect democracy through responsible ministers to representatives in the legislature."

"I suggest we reserve the form and function of the centre to a later stage," intervened Ramdas. "Let us continue the present discussion, where we branched off."

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"You were getting long-winded, Rama," he smiled to his wife, while continuing comment on her last observations, "but you have put the case of the learned Doctor from a different angle. There may be sufficient differences of language, culture, and opportunity,—not to mention history or race,—which may justify inter-unit readjustments, without disturbing the Federal integrity of the country ; but there is not sufficient or adequate internal cohesiveness, intrinsic identity of material or cultural elements to justify a complete

separation, and reconstitution of the separating units into independent, sovereign states. Is it not your point, Doctor ?” he asked Garudeshan.

“Precisely,” replied the Doctor. “It is not merely the traditional hostility of the Sindhi and the Punjabi I had referred to ; but also their inherent economic differences, which would make them utterly incompatible associates in a new, but smaller federation of their own. In a larger federation, on the other hand, these differences tend to be softened and minimised.”

“Religion, in such a programme of separation, will be the only bond,” said Sahib Singh, “and that, too, as regards the majority of the people of these units. The Minority’s difference in religion would, by this process, be thrown into sharp relief ; and a standing invitation to them to become obstructive, if not antagonistic.”

“Ordinarily, however, religion, under modern conditions,” added his wife, “is a weakening bond to hold together peoples who are, on the material plane, dissimilar in many respects.”

“The Punjab is a land-locked region,” declared Sahib Singh, “with little mineral wealth, except salt. It is, and must remain, mainly a primary producer of foodstuffs and industrial raw materials, some of which it may well work up into finished goods in her local industry. But that is not all for the needs of a Province with 100,000 square miles of area, and 25 million of population. She must depend on commerce to balance her own internal economy.”

“What applies to the Punjab applies even more correctly to the Frontier Province,” supplemented Kristo Das.

“Sind, too, is mainly agricultural,” observed Rahim.

“With this difference,” said Krishna, “that Sind has a direct outlet to the open sea ; and has a very much more commercial spirit and enterprising population.”

“The commerce and enterprise are mostly monopolised by the Hindus,” said Rahim. “Such Muslims as are in commerce and industry in Sind are not Sindhi born, but immigrants.”

“No one has prevented the Sindhi Mussalman from taking to commerce and industry,” pointed out Sahib Singh.

“It does not seem to be in Muslim genius to be traders or manufacturers,” said Kristo Das.

“That is not true historically or actually,” said Abdul. “After all the Arabs were the most enterprising traders and travellers of their time, both before and after the Prophet ; and that, too, for centuries.”

“The Arabs were,” conceded Kristo Das, “but not the Turks and the Mongols ! And they have dominated Muslim history and tradition in recent centuries. Indian Muslims seem to take after them ; and so very few, proportionately speaking, become merchants, shop-keepers or industrialists.”

“They had no opportunity, no encouragement, no inducement,” insisted Rahim. “The field was entirely covered when they were forced to turn their attention in this direction, and jealously guarded by the monopolists.”

“The real monopolists were the British,” said Krishna, “and not the Hindus. Your complaints must, therefore, be against our common exploiter, not against your fellow-sufferers.”

“Exactly,” said Sir Muhammad, “and that is why the Muslims joined you in the earlier Congress movement for

Swaraj. As late as 1937, at the Lucknow Sessions of the All-India Muslim League, the Presidential address asserted categorically ; “ The Muslim League stands for full national democratic government for India ! ” And further, consider this passage from the same authority :—

“ What India requires is a complete united front and honesty of purpose, and then by whatever name you may call your government is a matter of no consequence, so long as it is a government of the people by the people for the people.”

“ The establishment in India (of) full independence in the form of a federation of free democratic states, in which the rights and interests of the Mussalmans and other minorities are adequately and effectively safeguarded.”

“ This has since been amended by the Lahore Resolution ; and the amendment re-affirmed at Madras ;* but it shows

* The Resolution, passed at the Madras sessions of the All-India Muslim League reads :

“ Resolved that the following amendment be made in the aims and objects of the All-India Muslim League, and for Section 2 (a) of the Constitution and Rules of the All-India Muslim League, the following be substituted :

- (1) the establishment of completely independent states formed by demarcating geographically contiguous units into regions which shall be so constituted, with such territorial readjustments as may be necessary, that the areas in which the Muslims are in a majority,—as in the North-West and Eastern zones of India,—shall be grouped together to constitute independent states as Muslim free national homelands, in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign.
- (2) relates to adequate, effective, and mandatory safeguards for minorities everywhere.

what they started with, when political consciousness had first entered the Muslim mind. It is only after repeated and bitter experience of the Hindu mentality that they have begun to reconsider their position."

"Admitting this analysis, for the sake of argument, of the evolution of the Muslim political consciousness," said Begum Singh, "I still think the present demand is more for economic reasons, diluted by personal equation in some cases, than by religion. It is nowadays not such a dividing factor as it was in the Middle Ages. As a learned thinker on the subject has observed ; the most that can fairly be said for religion as an element of nationality is that the lack of religious unity within the nationality may weaken the national solidarity. The American nation has been formed as the most united one, notwithstanding a wide variety of religious beliefs in its people. It proves that nowadays religion is no longer a factor of much consequence." She concluded putting down before her the book she was reading from—*Nationality* by Bernard Josheph.

"There is no single cause of the phenomenon ; but a mixture, in which a variety of influences act and react upon each other," rejoined the Professor. "Communalism, however it arose, is now an ideology which emphasises the distinction, even the antagonism, between such groups. I use the terms "adherent" and "religion" in a purely nominal sense."*

"Hence the drive towards separation," said Rahim.

"But if those desiring to separate have no other bond, *inter se*, than religion ; and if that bond itself is progressively

*cp. *Modern Islam in India* p. 185-6.

weakening," Dr. Garudeshan pressed his point, "would you still insist upon it? The remedy might be worse than the disease."

"That is the risk," said Abdul; "but in view of the growing antagonism, just mentioned by the Professor, I think it might be wiser to face it, if we cannot find any other and more satisfactory way out."

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"Are there any other flaws, Doctor," asked Ram Piari, "in the scheme implied in the Lahore Resolution?"

"Another very important flaw," replied the Doctor, "as I see the problem, is, that the units or regions, mentioned in the Resolution are not in themselves homogeneous, even on the basis of religion. In Bengal and the Punjab there are large blocks of fairly contiguous territories with preponderatingly non-Muslim population, which cannot be forced to remain with the predominantly Muslim block of territory, if partition of the country is agreed upon and carried out on the lines of religion."

"Can any one give the figures?" asked Ram Piari, "by districts."

"I have taken these on the lines of Dr. Ambedkar's *Thoughts on Pakistan*, and brought them upto date according to the latest census reports available," rejoined the Ph.D., "as I could not get them so completely anywhere else. They are taken from the census of 1941."

*Distribution of Muslim Population in British India.**(Census, 1941)**(Figures in thousands.)*

			Total Population	Total Muslims	Percentage of Muslims
Br. India	..	..	295,808	79,398	26.84
Madras	..	..	49,342	3,896	7.90
Bombay	..	..	20,850	1,920	9.21
Bengal	..	..	60,306	33,005	54.73
U. P.	..	..	55,021	8,416	15.30
Punjab	..	..	28,419	16,217	57.07
Bihar	..	..	36,340	4,716	12.98
C. P. and Berar	..	..	16,814	784	4.66
Assam	..	..	10,205	3,442	33.73
N.-W. F. P.	..	..	3,038	2,789	91.79
Orissa	..	..	8,729	146	1.68
Sind	..	..	4,535	3,208	70.75
Ajmer-Merwara	..	..	584	90	15.40
Andaman & Nicobars	..	..	34	8	23.70
Baluchistan	..	..	502	439	87.50
Coorg	..	..	169	14	8.73
Delhi	..	..	918	305	33.22
Panth Piploda	..	..	5	..	..

*As Sind and Orissa were separated from Bombay and Bihar respectively, to form independent Provinces, their figures for 1931 are not comparable with those in the previous censuses. It is also interesting to note that, since the beginning of the century, the Hindu population percentage has been steadily declining, and the corresponding Muslim figure has been as steadily rising. The following table gives the comparison for British Indian Provinces:

Year	Proportion per 100 of	
	Hindus	Muslims
1901	68.35	23.24
1911	66.88	23.24
1921	65.89	24.07
1931	65.48	24.69
1941	64.50	26.84

BENGAL

Proportion of Muslim Population by Districts				
Districts where lims are above 50 per cent.	Mus-Actual of Muslims.	Proportion Districts where lims are below 50 per cent.	Mus-Actual of Muslims.	Proportion of Muslims.
	1931	1941	1931	1941
1. Nadia	..	61.67	1. Burdwan	18.9
2. Murshidabad	..	55.56	2. Birbhum	26.6
3. Jessore	..	61.16	3. Bankura	4.7
4. Rajshahi	..	75.79	4. Midnapore	7.5
5. Rangpur	..	70.79	5. Hooghly	17.0
6. Bogra	..	83.36	6. Howrah	21.1
7. Pabna	..	76.90	7. Howrah City	21.3
8. Malda	..	54.28	8. 24 Parganas	34.6
9. Dacca	..	66.81	9. Dacca City	41.3
10. Mymensingh	..	76.56	10. Calcutta	25.9
11. Faridpur	..	63.80	11. Calcutta Suburbs	19.0
12. Bakur Gunj	..	71.63	12. Khulna	49.3
13. Tippera	..	75.78	13. Jalpaiguri	23.9
14. Naokhali	..	78.46	14. Darjeeling	2.5
15. Chittagong	..	73.80	15. Dinajpur	50.5

that in Bengal 15 districts on the East have a Muslim majority ; while 15 on the West have a non-Muslim majority.

Punjab

Proportion of Muslim Population by Districts.

Districts where Muslims are above 50 per cent.	Actual Proportion of Muslims. 1931	Actual Proportion of Muslims. 1941	Districts where Muslims are below 50 per cent.	Actual Proportion of Muslims 1931	Actual Proportion of Muslims 1941
1. Lahore	59.9	60.69	1. Hissar	27.6	28.33
2. Sialkot	62.1	62.10	2. Rohtak	17.1	17.22
3. Gujranwala	70.7	70.39	3. Gurgaon	32.1	33.49
4. Shikupurra	84.8	85.60	4. Karnal	30.5	30.58
5. Gujerat	63.7	63.62	5. Ambala	30.6	31.64
6. Shahpur	82.8	83.67	6. Simla	15.8	18.20
7. Jhelum	89.00	89.51	7. Kangra	5.0	5.09
8. Rawalpindi	82.8	80.00	8. Hoshiarpur	32.8	32.48
9. Attock	91.0	90.52	9. Jullunder	44.3	45.17
10. Mianwali	87.0	86.17	10. Ludhiana	35.1	36.92
11. Montgomery	69.1	69.07	11. Ferozpur	44.8	45.08
12. Lyallpur	62.5	62.82	12. Amritsar	46.9	46.50
13. Jhang	83.1	82.58	13. Gurudaspur	50.0	50.23
14. Muzaffarpur	86.5	86.52			
15. Dera Gazikhan	86.1	88.90			
16. Biloch Trans-Frontier Track	99.9	99.7			
17. Multan	80.2	77.96			

Assam

Proportion of Muslim Population by Districts.

Districts where Muslims are above 50 per cent.	Actual proportion of Muslims.		Districts where Muslims are below 50 per cent.	Actual proportion of Muslims.	
	1931	1941		1931	1941
1. Sylhet ..	59.2	60.71	1. Cachar ..	33.1	38.51
			2. Khasi & Jaintia Hills ..	.8	1.31
			3. Naga Hills ..	.3	0.28
			4. Lushi Hills ..	.06	0.07
			5. Goalpara ..	42.8	46.23
			6. Kamrup ..	24.9	29.07
			7. Daurang ..	11.3	16.42
			8. Nowrangh ..	31.1	35.19
			9. Sibsagar ..	4.6	4.82
			10. Lakhimpur ..	5.4	4.98
			11. Garo Hills ..	5.2	4.65
			12. Ladiya ..		
			Frontier Tracks ..	15.2	1.44
			13. Balipara Frontier	1.4	0.94

North West Frontier

Proportion of Muslim population by Districts.

District	Total Population	Percentage of Muslims to Population Total		Percentage of non-Muslims to Total
		1931	1941	
1. Hazara	670,106	95.0	94.94	5.0
2. Peshawar	974,249	92.2	90.34	7.8
3. Kohat	236,273	92.4	92.00	7.6
4. Bannu	270,301	87.9	87.06	12.1
5. Dera Ismael Khan	274,064	86.0	85.78	14.0
Total	2,124,993	90.7	91.79	9.3

"From this you will see that of the British Provinces, Bengal, Baluchistan, Punjab, Sind, and the Frontier Province have in the aggregate Muslim majority. Details show that in Bengal 15 districts on the east have a Muslim majority ; while 15 on the west have a non-Muslim majority.

Yet another table shows that in the Punjab in 17 districts on the north and west Muslim are in a majority ; while in 13 districts the non-Muslims are in a majority concentrated in the east and the south. In Assam only one district has a Muslim majority, while the other show a non-Muslim majority." The Begum leaned back as she concluded her demonstration.

"What is the significance of this distribution of population ?" asked Mrs. Krishna. "Need we waste our time on such details ?" she turned to the hostess, and repeated the latter's own argument of the previous day, hoping to get the full sympathy of Ram Piari.

"This is not a mere detail," replied Dr. Garudeshan. "Important issues will turn upon these figures, as you will see in a moment."

"That is why my first question was what was the significance of these masses of statistics," repeated Krida.

"The meaning is quite plain," declared Sahib Singh, "if the Muslims insist upon a partition of India . . ."

"Vivisection is a better word," said Krishna, "and is sanctioned by Mahatmaji's own use."

"And want to set up homogeneous Muslim States of their own," the Colonel went on ignoring the interruption, "they must, in mere consistency, permit the districts within each unit which have a non-Muslim majority to withdraw or secede from their new homogeneous Muslim States. Bengal must be cut almost exactly into half,—Eastern and Western, the former

made up of 15 districts with a majority being allowed to separate. The Punjab, similarly, must allow 12 to 13 districts to its south and the east to go out because there is in those districts a non-Muslim majority who may not want to remain in a Muslim State."

"In that way of reckoning," put in Fandrews, "only Sind, Baluchistan and the Frontier are really Muslim Provinces with an overwhelming Muslim majority. They are fairly contiguous ; and, combined with the Punjab Districts with a predominantly Muslim population, might form a fairly respectable, separate, sovereign state of their own."

"But even then the Minority problem is not solved," commented Krishna. "For Muslims will still remain in the districts and provinces which still continue to be India, or Hindustan, and Hindus in those seceding to form a Pakistan ?"

"It can be avoided," remarked the Begum, "by transplanting all non-Muslims from the Muslim States to be settled and absorbed in the several parts of Hindustan ; and Muslims from the latter to be absorbed in Pakistan."

"That is impossible," urged Krishna, "in view of the immensity of the numbers and distances involved,—not to mention the complications due to property and other forms of localised wealth, associations, or sentiment."

"Nothing is impossible, though I admit it may be exceedingly difficult," said Abdul.

"But is it necessary ?" asked Rahim.

"If partition is resorted to because of religious differences," put in Krishna, "no Hindu will certainly want to live in the Muslim State."

"Why should they not want to, if all their rights are guaranteed and interests safeguarded ?" asked Firdaus.

"I don't think the Muslims of Bombay or Madras would like to leave the lands they have settled upon for centuries," remarked Sir Muhammad, "merely because of the formation of a Muslim State a thousand miles away."

"I think it much more likely that they would want to become Hindus again," observed Garudeshan. "If the Arya Samaj programme prevails, most of these Muslims will soon become Hindus."

"If religion continues to have any significance for sharing the loaves and fishes," quietly rejoined Ramdas.

"Once you lay the very foundation of your new state," argued Krishna, "on the religious differences, you put a premium on the desire to separate. Logic is heartless, and it leaves you no escape from either absolutely homogeneous Hindu and Muslim States, or a single Indian National Federation."

"I do not believe that is absolutely logical," said Abdul, "though I grant the difficulties and complications of transporting and resettling millions of human beings, are enormous ; as also the weight in favour of a homogeneous state if possible."

"I think the number of non-Muslims in Pakistan States," intervened Ram Piari, "remaining after the territorial readjustment suggested above has been made, will not be so large as to make it an impossibility to transplant them, if they insist. But I do not believe they really would want to. If the right to free movement and settlement in any part of India is recognised and guaranteed, I would not consider this aspect to mean a grave danger or difficulty."

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"But the significance of these statistics," again intervened Garudeshan, "does not lie in this only. If you have a fair-

sized map of India in the house, Ramdasji, I could show you better what I mean."

Without a word Ram Piari got up, and brought out a wall map of India, which she spread on the centre table. Dr. Garudeshan drew near the table, and all the convives joined him there.

"If you look at this map, and bear in mind the terms of Lahore Resolution of the All-India Muslim League," he began to lecture in a perfect professorial style, "you will see, in the first place, that the so-called Muslim majority areas are not all in one block, but in two ; one in the North-West ; and the other in the East. The two are separated from one another by over a thousand miles. Now one of the essential requirements of a separate nationhood of any people being recognised by all authors is that they must have a compact, contiguous territory of their own. This is not the case here, on the terms set out by the Muslim League itself."

"Pardon me, Doctor," interrupted Firdaus. "But your reasoning seems to be faulty. The A.-I. Muslim League Resolution does not ask for a single, separate, sovereign state to be made out of the Muslim majority areas ; but as many such states as may be necessary, to start with. Your argument and objection might apply if they had asked for a single state of these units ; not on the actual terms they have used."

"Did not some one here point out," asked Krishna, "that the Resolution contemplates an eventual federation of these separating units ? If so the Allama's objection has, if at all, but a temporary validity."

"You cannot have a federation of regions so far apart as Bengal, and the North-West districts, can you ?" asked his wife with a specially charming smile to reinforce and conclude her husband's point.

"The British Commonwealth of Nations is a sort of a federation of immense areas separated by still more immense distances," quietly countered Rahim.

"But there are no intervening land areas between the several Dominions, Colonies, Dependencies and the British Isles," put in Sahib Singh, "even if we accept Sheikh Saheb's analogy as correct and applicable to the case before us."

"Arguments from analogy are always misleading," oraculated Mrs. Krishna.

"It would be in this case if the League had insisted on making a single state," argued Abdul, "even of a Federal type, out of these disjointed units. They ask for as many states as may be necessary or desirable while giving effect to the principle of an agreed, amicable partition."

"But why should they insist upon Partition at all?" asked Mrs. Krishna.

"To answer you will involve covering much of the ground already covered," replied Firdaus, "but, briefly, it is a concession to the growing Muslim consciousness of separate nationalism, even if on grounds of race, tradition, territory, or economic conditions, you do not concede them to be a separate nationality."

"What is the difference between nationality and nationalism?" asked the Rev. Fandrews.

"*The Thoughts on Pakistan* gives an ingenious distinction," observed the Viennese Doctor of Philosophy, "Nationality, the author holds, is a consciousness of kind, an awareness of kinship between people bound together by some common lien; while Nationalism, in his view, is a desire for separate existence for those bound by that tie. He adds nationalism cannot exist without nationality; but the converse is not always true. There are separate nationalities,—like the French

in Canada, or the Boers in South Africa,—who are, however, content to remain together in a common political state as a single nation.”

“In the instances given by the learned Doctor,” said Firdaus, “the force of attraction is greater than the force of repulsion ; and ~~no~~ they live together in harmony in a single state. But in India, as the learned author of the *Thoughts on Pakistan* points out, the things that divide are far more vital than the things that unite. Even granting that there are many common features, ties, bonds,—call them what you like,—between the Hindus and the Muslims, they are due to the accident of history, or of geography, superficial and unavailing, emphasis on which by the Hindus makes the Muslim more than ever suspicious of the motives and intentions of the former.”

“Ambedkar is much too bitter a critic of Hindus,” said Krishna, “to be a fair judge, or a reliable authority on this matter. Nothing that castewalas do could ever in his eyes be above suspicion, criticism, or reproach.”

“Even if he is an embittered critic of the Caste Hindu,” pointed out Abdul, “the learned Doctor does not seem at all a friend of the Muslims. He is quite clear, for instance, that the Muslim claim to be a separate nation is an afterthought of their leaders, not quite a genuine demand of the masses. But, at the same time, he is honest enough to add that to make this charge is not to refute it.”

“And his chapter on the Problem of Defence reads to me like a *Tocsin* to the Hindus,” supplemented Rahim. “He is not exactly an echo of Savarkar or Moonje ; but I seem to hear the note of Maratha Imperialism, if not of Hindu Raj, in the warnings implicit in the tabular statements and interlarding remarks.”

“I read the entire work,” said Sir Muhammad, “as an advice to the Hindus to get rid of the Muslims on their own demand. They would be the happier if Pakistan is agreed to ; and much more embarrassed and handicapped if the Muslims, with their present mentality, are bought off to consent to live in a common federation.”

“My point, however,” resumed Dr. Garudeshan, “was not merely a geographical one. Assuming it is met by constituting more than one independent and sovereign Muslim state,—whether federal or unitary in themselves—they must consent to readjustment of territories in accordance with the distribution of communal population in the existing units. That leads to serious economic consequences to both seceding units, as well as those they secede from.”

“This is a powerful factor itself,” said Ramdas, “and needs to be considered in all its bearings. Joined to the lack of any cohesive principle of material or even cultural nature among the seceders *inter se*, it should make a formidable argument against secession.”

“You are right, Doctor,” said the Colonel, after a close study of the map stretched before the party. “I see for instance that the present Punjab would lose a good bit of the Sutlej headwaters, and also of one or two other important rivers of the Province, if the territorial readjustments are made on the lines suggested in the League Resolution, and inevitable if Partition takes place on lines of religion.”

“These hills and headwaters affect,” said Kristo Das, “I see, the irrigation system as well as the power schemes of the Punjab, as it is constituted today. If the seceding districts of the Punjab are made into a separate state,—at all antagonistic to its neighbouring state or province, even its agricultural prosperity may suffer enormously.”

“But we are assuming, Professor,” pointed out Rahim “that the separation or partition will be effected peacefully, amicably with mutual consent ; and so there is no need to fear antagonism of any kind between the seceding and the remaining states.”

“We are assuming nothing of the kind,” urged Sahib Singh, with obvious heat. “We are simply assuming partition as the last resort of bankruptcy in Indian statesmanship, and sagacity, and capacity to accommodate one another. Partition made for such reasons, as a *pis aller*, cannot leave many happy feelings behind ; and the seceders and the remainders cannot be disposed to willing and friendly co-operation.”

“Partition will never be effected, I have told you already,” insisted Krishna, “except on the dead body of the last Hindu in the last ditch. But even for you peace-at-any-price politicians, it can be no willing concession, a surrender to a highway man levying blackmail. And after such a surrender what goodwill could you expect in the robbed people towards the robbers or the blackmailers ? ”

“These are harsh terms,” moaned Fandrews, “but I am afraid true in substance.”

“You are unconsciously fanning the fires,” rebuked Begum Singh, “and playing the eternal Imperial game to Divide and Rule, Padre Saheb. I would suggest those of us who are non-Indians of British origin would do well to refrain from expressing opinions on the force or relevancy of any argument at this stage of discussion.”

“I hope, Begum Sahib,” said Sir John with mock mildness, “you do not suggest that we should remain silent even while facts are distorted or misstated.”

“I only spoke of opinions characterising any argument advanced,” the Doctor defended herself with spirit, “but had

no intention to exclude statement of facts by any of us."

"As a matter of fact, then," said her spouse, "it is also to be noted that the Punjab, which is poor already in basic mineral sources,—like coal, or iron, or copper or aluminium, would be made poorer still in respect of industrial power by the withdrawal from her of the hilly districts of Kangra and Simla. Her chances of industrialisation would be very much curtailed, poor as they are already,—for lack of suitable power fuel."

"India as a whole is very poor in petroleum, particularly after the loss of Burma. But Punjab produces oil," observed Sir John, more as an aside than a contribution to the debate. "And so does Assam. But the total output of crude oil is less than 1% of the world output; and 4/5ths of it came from Burma."

"Too little to speak of, as a substitute for coal or hydro-electric energy," pointed out Kristo Das, "notwithstanding all the possibilities of expanded production."

"The poverty of the country as a whole in petroleum," added the Begum, "can, I think, be made good easily by converting coal into fuel."*

*From an article on India's Mineral Wealth and Political Future by Charles H. Behr, Jr., in *Foreign Affairs*, October, 1943, pp. 78 et seq.

The writer gives the following distribution of minerals :—

I. <i>Coal</i> :	Jharia Field
Assam Field	Bokarao Field
Central Provinces	Bikaner Field
Wardha Gondwana	Jammu Field
North Bihar Field	Mianwali Field
Raniganj Field	Quetta Field
Johilla Field	Dando Field
Karampura Field.	

“Can the Punjab not produce her own industrial power alcohol by extending cane cultivation,” enquired Ram Piari, “and expanding and developing her own sugar industry ? ”

“With her water-supply curtailed,” pointed out Sahib Singh, “as is but too likely on this readjustment of boundaries, that possibility, also, would be very substantially reduced. As it is, Punjab is certainly not among the leading sugar producers of India.”

“The Province is arid,” said the Professor, “poor in rainfall ; and that poverty increases as you go farther and farther to the west. If the main irrigation water-supply is affected, it is open to question whether her industrial raw materials

II. <i>Petroleum Regions :</i>	VI. <i>Gold Regions :</i>
Digboi (Assam).	Kolar (Mysore)
Badarpur	
Khaur	VII. <i>Bauxite Regions :</i>
Dhulian-Chharar (Punjab)	Jammu
	Katni
III. <i>Ferrous Metals :</i>	Balaghat
<i>Iron Ore Regions</i>	Mamuni
Mysore	Lahardaga
Chanda	Kolhapur
Singbhum-Konjhar	Belgaum
IV. <i>Manganese Ore Regions :</i>	VII. <i>Copper Regions :</i>
Nagpur	Singbhum
Garha	
Vizagapatam	VIII. <i>Magnesite Regions :</i>
Goa	Salem
Bihar	Mysore
V. <i>Chromium Ore Regions :</i>	IX. <i>Mica Regions :</i>
Mysore	Champaran
Nanjungad (Mysore)	Nellore

The substance of the article is materially the same as what is included in the discussion. It may be added, however, that the writer

also may not be adversely affected by his readjustment of territory. The best Punjab cotton, cattle and the like may be considerably reduced, or lost altogether, if her eastern and southern districts, with non-Muslim majority in population, withdraw to join the neighbouring state."

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"Will not the seceding Punjab areas be able to compensate themselves," asked the Begum, "from the adjoining Muslim majority areas of Sind, the Frontier, or Baluchistan?"

"That might have been likely," answered Krishna, "if you could justly assume that either Sind, or Baluchistan, or even the Frontier had natural sympathies for the Punjab or the Punjabi Muslims. But you have just heard what the Punjabi thinks of the Sindhi, and vice-versa. And I know the sentiment in the Frontier is much too definitely against separation to co-operate with the Punjab willingly, and supply the deficit from her own surplus resources, if any."

accepts the boundaries of the future States of Pakistan and Hindustan, if they come to be, as the Provincial boundaries are today. If, however,—as is inevitable,—the boundaries have to be redrawn, following the argument in the text, according to the credal complexion of the majority of the population, much of the Bengal coal and Assam petroleum, taken by the writer to go to Pakistan lands, would also have to remain in Hindustan lands.

India as a whole is lamentably short in phosphate resources. In any ambitious scheme of national planning, including agriculture, these will have to be imported in large quantities, Bihar and Orissa have some minor phosphate resources, and so to a still more insignificant extent has the Punjab in its coal-bearing shale. But the chief source of this material, natural or artificial is in Hindustan,—not Pakistan; or, if imported, will have to come through Hindustan ports. Another fertiliser, potassium, is to be found equally in both divisions.

“Baluchistan is, of course, too far away to be of any real help,” the Begum recognised, “even if it was a surplus unit in point of agricultural, industrial or mineral production,—which it is not.”

“Even Sind is not rich in regard to minerals or industrial output,” observed Sir John. “Economically speaking, the north-west block of Muslim majority regions does not appear to be well endowed ; and in the programme of industrial development it would be a heavy handicap as compared to the rest of the country from which this portion is said to desire secession.”

“Not to reckon with the further possibility,” urged Sahib Singh, “that Sind and the Punjab might have much worse relations in regard to the use of the Indus waters, than as between the seceding Punjab districts and the country to their south and east. If the Punjab is baulked of her desires in respect of trade via Karachi,—the only outlet to the high seas for the North-West Pakistan areas,—it is not inconceivable that she should retaliate by diverting the Indus in its upper reaches to make for the loss of irrigation waters from the Sutlej and her tributaries.”

“But all that assumes that what you call the seceding units will, after secession, remain apart from one another, mutually independent, and even antagonistic,” pointed out Firdaus. “I rather think, by the sheer necessity of the case, they will have to be united into a federation of their own ; and if they federate by themselves all these difficulties you have paraded need not arise.”

“We are following the lines of separation—partition—indicated in the official Muslim League Resolution,” answered Ramdas. “And there they speak of these constituent units

to be independent, autonomous and sovereign. Even if you consider the phrase "Constituent Units" to imply an eventual federation, there is no possibility of that consummation immediately, if we are right in apprehending that there is no strong, intrinsic element of cohesion in these regions supposed to be anxious to secede."

"Federation of units and sovereignty of units are mutually incompatible," pointed out the Begum. "Dr. Ambedkar has stated it and I repeat it."

"But even as between independent and sovereign states," said Rahim, "there may be agreements for the common utilisation of international rivers, roads, posts, and even customs. The Danube has been long since internationalised in Europe; and so is, I believe, the Rhine, at least for some part of its lower course. Why cannot the Indus and the Sutlej be similarly internationalised, and the use of their waters for irrigation, navigation, or hydro-electric-power purposes be regulated by Treaties?"

"What is possible and feasible as between states which were independent to begin with," said Ramdas, "may not be quite so easy to achieve in states set up by a sort of divorce,—or which are forced apart."

"Yes," laughed Krishna, "ask Russia to internationalise the Volga after Georgia has seceded from the U.S.S.R., because it is more Christian than the Communists in general, and you will see what the answer is. Or ask the United States to internationalise the Mississippi after Utah or Kansas are forced away from them because of religious differences between the Mormons and the Methodists, and you'll get the reply."

"I am not quite sure the reply would be so very definitely negative, as you imagine," said Firdaus. "I think the greater

economy or community of interests between these units—Sind and the Punjab districts—would be evident, soon after separation too clearly to delay much longer some sort of agreement for the use and regulation of common rivers and railways on mutually beneficial lines. And then there are the Indian States.”

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“That is another matter, Allama Sahib,” said Dr. Garudeshan, “to which I was coming after this issue of the economic consequences to the seceding and remaining units on the north-west block is disposed of. The position of the States in the new alignment of the country is an issue by itself—complex as it is delicate, which need not cumber and vitiate our present argument.”

“But the question of the States cannot be left unconsidered and unsolved,” put in Krida.

“It is not to be omitted from discussion altogether, Mrs. Krishna,” said Ramdas, “but only reserved for later consideration.”

“We have been dealing with the matter,” said Ram Piari, “on the vague, indefinite, and even inconsistent lines chalked out in the Muslim League Resolution, which, I do think, adds to the difficulties of the discussion and the complications of the problem. I still think it would be much better if we had some definite, concrete scheme, or schemes, whose bearings could be considered in the light of principles or assumptions agreed upon.”

“I am ready to give you several specific schemes,—federative or unitary—and mutually alternative,” said Abdul. “But, now that Dr. Garudeshan has started this phase of the discussion, don’t you think it is as well to dispose of it?”

Ram Piari nodded her acquiescence.

“Quite apart from the States adding to the industrial power and resources of the seceding north-west block, if and when it secedes,” continued Firdaus, “I think much of the apprehension of internal dissension and disagreement between the seceding units can be avoided by specific treaties and agreements to regulate trade and other such matters of common concern, even if a closer federation is not formed for themselves by those units. You remember, Doctor,” he turned to the Begum with a smile seeking confirmation, “the Zollverein, or Customs Union, was made between independent and sovereign German States to obviate the main difficulty of the parcelling out of Germany into a host of separate states, long before the Federal Reich was born.”

“Yes, that is true,” replied Dr. Begum Singh, “but I doubt if the analogy is strictly applicable.”

“I am quoting it rather as a precedent,” corrected Firdaus, “than as an analogy.”

“The precedent proves a possibility,” said Garudeshan, “but does not make it a probability. If the inherent conflict of interest and tradition between the units, supposed to find their salvation in a Zollverein, is greater than the estimate of benefits likely to be derived from that course, then I doubt if either side would so far restrict its sovereign rights as to agree to a uniform or agreed tariff.”

“Both Sindh and the Punjab,” added the Colonel, “are mainly agricultural provinces, and neither seems to have much possibility for industrialisation. But the Punjab has a larger population, and therefore a greater market. It has also a better hinterland in Afghanistan, Kashmir and Central Asia. Sindh, on the other hand, has direct access to the sea ; and

it is likely to provide a better centre for international air transport. Even if it has not much industrial possibility, it has definitely greater scope in international commerce, especially that passing through it, to feed the markets of the Punjab and its hinterland with manufactured goods and industrial raw materials from outside. And it is quite on the cards that its government may be tempted irresistibly to levy a toll of some sort on this traffic passing through its jurisdiction."

"Sindh will be hard put to it to balance her own national economy," said Kristo Das, "if she becomes an independent State. She is already a deficit province, financially speaking; and can hardly make her own both ends meet, even after a heavy subsidy by the Central Government in the present constitution of India. This subsidy she can't expect, when once she becomes an independent state, from the present Government of India or its successor in the remaining Provinces of Hindustan. But, at the same time, she must make some arrangement to meet her debt charges. Proportionately speaking, she is one of the heaviest of the indebted provinces of present day India."

"The war has brought extraordinary prosperity to Sindh," pointed out Abdul ; "and she is reported to have compounded for her barrage debt, and liquidated the same."

"The war-time prosperity cannot, and will not, last for all time," rejoined Col. Singh. "I doubt if, in spite of her present surpluses, Sindh can be called even a self-sufficient province in normal times. She has an immense leeway to make up in all kinds of social services, you know."

"The debt in Sindh or the Punjab is not unproductive," said Sir Muhammad Ismail, "all capital borrowed is invested productively ; and, given time, the return from the investment

will be more than ample to cover the interest and Sinking Fund Charges, and also leave an over increasing surplus behind."

"I am not quite sure of that," reposted Sahib Singh. "I know enough of the soil characteristics of Sind in the Sukkur Barrage Canals area to feel sure the erosion, the salinity, the *Kullur* being deposited by the very action of the irrigation works, would make the investment, if not an absolute burden, at least far from as highly productive as might be imagined, or as, for their own inscrutable reasons, the British Government of India have given us to believe."

"I have another aspect of this financial case," added Prof. Kristo Das, "to urge in the same direction. Additional irrigation facilities have so long been a panacea for India's agricultural wealth, that every province has vast programmes of such constructions awaiting better times on the P.W.D. Secretariat shelves. I know for certain under the present Punjab Minister of Revenue, Sir Chhotu Ram, more than one ambitious project of extending the irrigation facilities of the Punjab is awaiting the first touch of financial spring to be launched out. Now if both these major units of the separating North-West Block concentrate on the same form of material development. they are more likely to prejudice, if not ruin, their own prospects than to promote them to anything like the degree now anticipated."

"You mean they will disproportionately increase the supply of the same commodity, in the same market, without at the same time increasing the demand?" enquired Ram Piari.

"I should say so, whether it is cotton or wheat, rice or bajri," answered the Colonel in place of the Professor. "And neither has sufficient market of its own to utilise or consume all

its own produce in any of these articles. In a large economic unit like India of today, with proportionate industrial potentiality, such an increase may mean no great disequilibrium, as the increase in supply may well be planned to keep place with simultaneously increased and increasing demand under the same Plan, if not in the same parts of the country then in others. But in a very sharply shrunken area and population, which the North West Muslim Majority Block would have left after secession, there would be no such scope left for absorbing in their own market their own increasing supply of agricultural produce, whether food-stuffs or industrial raw materials."

"They can resort to exports to other countries," urged Abdul.

"There is a limit beyond which other countries cannot also absorb a steadily increasing output of such food or raw materials." The Professor was quite in his element. "In the great World Depression of the early thirties, as you may all remember, one peculiar characteristic of that cycle which affected agricultural countries more adversely than industrial countries, could not be mistaken. The prices of agricultural produce of all kinds had fallen much more than those of industrial wares ; and the fall lasted longer,—and the recovery was ever so much slower,—in the former than in the latter countries. Is not that so, Doctor ? " he asked the Viennese Philosopher.

"The price level of agricultural commodities fell in 1932-33 to 40% of the 1925-30 level," answered the Begum, "while the price level of industrial or manufactured goods fell to not much below 60%. I am speaking from memory ; but I think I am substantially correct. And the countries predominantly agricultural, like India, had not recovered till 1937 ;

while industrialised lands, like the U.S.A., were almost back to normal by 1934-35."

"That, I should say, was rather due," observed Ram Piari, "to the fact, that while the U.S.A. had a national, responsible and sympathetic Government, India had an exploitive, unrepresentative, and unsympathetic foreign Government in charge of the country's policy and relief measures. While the U.S. Government had their sole inspiration in the need of their country, the Indian Government had their inspiration and main spring of action from outside India—from Whitehall. Britain herself had a heavy dose of depression ; and her needs and interests were of prime, if not sole, consideration to her henchmen in India, who had neither scruple nor hesitation in promoting the interests of Britain at the cost of India."

"This is unkind as well as unfair, Mrs. Ramdas," cried the Reverend Fandrews. "Britain has ever acted for India's good."

"Don't be a sanctimonious, self-righteous humbug, Padre," rebuked the Colonel. "Every word Mrs. Ramdas has said is true and nothing but true."

"It may be true, but grossly exaggerated," said Sir John, "I would venture to say."

"What is truth ?" asked Krida Krishna, who had some vague recollection that her query was connected somehow with Jesus Christ.

"I don't know if there is any such thing as absolute truth," rejoined Firdaus. "It depends a great deal upon one's angle of vision. What we Indians may put forward as truth may appear from the British standpoint hopelessly distorted, if not a positive lie ; and vice versa."

“I could quote several instances during 1931-37 when the actual Government of India,” said Sahib Singh, “acted in manifest opposition not only to Indian opinion, but also to India’s interest, and against the precedent of corresponding action in Britain or the U.S.A. It is inconceivable a popular responsible, national Government of India would have so completely, consistently, heartlessly disregarded the voice of India or her interests.”

“I apologise if I helped to side-track discussion,” pleaded the hostess, “or inadvertently let into details. The instances you would quote, Colonel,” she smiled to her supporters, “are well-known to all of us, including even our British friends here. But let us not go into their details. They are unnecessary,—if not irrelevant to our present discussion ; and I am prepared to accept the Allama’s view that it is all a matter of the angle of vision.”

“Don’t you believe in Truth, Shrimatiji ?” asked Mrs. Krishna in tones of holy horror. “What will Mahatmaji say ?”

“Mahatmaji has, I hope, more sense than to deny the theory of relativity, even in ethics, and especially in politics,” observed Sir John *Sotto Voce*.

The hostess merely smiled enigmatically, but made no further reply to Mrs. Krishna.

“But, leaving aside details,” urged Ramdas, “it seems to me that the economic prospect before the North West Block is, on this showing, not very promising, unless they consent to live together, at least among themselves ; and not indulge in internecine competition.”

“A really effective and balanced planned economy is not possible for smaller units,” remarked Sahib Singh. “The

more intensely they concentrate their own inherent local advantage of initial endowment, the more such smaller units as Sindh or dismembered Punjab will have their acts recoil on themselves."

"Planning, under modern conditions, no doubt implies and postulates large scale operations," said Sir John. "The larger the field of operations, the more comprehensive the plan, the more simultaneously its being put into execution, the more plentiful and balanced would be the result."

"I am afraid this would again side-track, if not prejudice, the issue now before us," said Rahim. "Let us confine ourselves to the financial aspect of the case put before us by Dr. Garudeshan. It is an aspect not very bright for Sind, even when it was separated from Bombay, though remaining under or within the same central Government."

"Without a subsidy—a substantial, long-term subsidy,—from the Central Government," observed the Professor, "Sindh cannot carry on her provincial autonomy on her own resources. I doubt if such a subsidy would or could be given her if Sindh separates from the present country and Government of India."

"The Government of India,"—said Sahib Singh, "or what remains of India after these units separate will rather have to receive substantial amounts from Sindh, both on account of the interest and principal of the debt incurred in constructing her irrigation works, roads, railways, and other such utilities or services, as also on account of the subsidies made so far."

"Not after this War, and the prosperity it has brought to that Province," said Rahim.

"It is even more doubtful if the Punjab and the other units, separating from present day India," continued Kristo

Das, "would come to the assistance of Sindh even if they decide to form a federation of their own."

"That is self-evident, I should say," observed Sir John ; "for, apart from the Punjab, all other units of the North West block, likely to secede, are deficit units ; and must continue to remain so for long years to come. Both Sindh and the N.W. Frontier Province need annual subsidies running into eight figures even now to conduct their provincial autonomy. If they were independent, sovereign states by themselves, as contemplated in the Muslim League Resolution, their resources will by no means increase substantially ; but their liabilities most certainly will. And even if they federate with the Punjab, can that unit spare enough to make up the very much enhanced deficit in the sister Provinces ? Would she like to, even if she were able to ? "

"We'll take the Punjab case separately," advised Dr. Garudeshan. "Let us confine ourselves to Sind for the time being."

"It is sunset, now," said Ram Piari, "and I think our fasting friends are entitled to break their fast. I have kept something for you," she turned to all Rauza-keepers, "if you'd like to break your fast."

"Willingly," said Firdaus and Rahim almost in the same breath.

"Let us then adjourn this discussion for the day," said Mrs. Krishna.

"I would rather we continued a little longer," said the Begum, "if Mrs. Ramdas does not mind, and adjourn at a more convenient stage. We have also to summarise today's discussion yet."

"I heartily support your suggestion, Begum Sahiba," smiled back Ram Piari, "if for no other reason, at least to summarise the discussion we had today."

"We have spent the day discussing only the implications of the general principle, laid down by the Lahore Resolution of the Muslim League, when attempted to be translated into practice," declared Krishna, "and we have seen it is unworkable as well as unprofitable to those who would secede, as well as to those who would remain. Besides, no more definite scheme of effecting the partition is available, even if we accept this wretched principle."

"There *are* such schemes," said Ram Piari, "and Abdul Saheb has promised to place them before us. But the analysis we have so far had of the principle underlying the League Resolution is so fascinating and so instructive, I had not the heart to obstruct the elucidation. But I do hope we shall have these definite schemes before we go further into the jungle."

"This sounds very much like question—begging, Rama," mildly and smilingly remonstrated the husband; "and it is unlike you to indulge in such a cheap device of debate."

"I apologise," the wife smiled back, "but insist upon my pound of flesh. The schemes, please, the schemes."

"Not today," said Abdul, "and in any case not before summarising today's discussion."

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"The substance of the points made this afternoon seems to me to be;" Ramdas began to summarise;

(a) That, so far as the North-West block of regions, with Muslim majority in the population, is concerned, there

will have to be very considerable readjustments in the boundaries, at least of the existing Province of the Punjab, with very considerable loss of area and population in the shape of the Punjab Districts with non-Muslim majority ; and the same applies to Bengal ; and Assam ;

- (b) That even with this readjustment of boundaries, the problem of a minority of another religion will not have been finally solved, as some non-Muslims would still remain in the Muslim areas ;
- (c) That this would not be a loss of area and population alone ; but also of material resources in the shape of water for irrigation in a land with scanty rainfall, with its principal wealth consisting in agriculture ; and of Hydro-Electric power potentiality through the withdrawal of the hilly regions in the North and the East of the Province.
- (d) That except for salt and some petroleum, not sufficient to make up for the absence of coal, the Punjab has very limited scope for industrial development.
- (e) That the Punjab, Sind, the Frontier Province, and Baluchistan are all poor in Mineral Wealth indispensable for basic industries, and, therefore, for large scale industrialisation.
- (f) That these regions being all predominantly agricultural, their establishment as separate sovereign states, mutually independent, is very likely to intensify their internal jealousies and give rise to water-wars, tariff troubles, etc.
- (g) That their federating by themselves seems improbable as there is no common bond, cohesive element, *inter se*, except the religion of the majority of the population ;

while the forces making for their mutual distrust or conflict of interest are much more substantial and constant.

- (h) That a majority of these units,—Sind and the Frontier and Baluchiſtan,—are, financially speaking, heavy deficit areas, where provincial autonomy is maintained only at the cost of substantial subsidies from the present Central Government of India ; that these subsidies are unlikely to be available if and when the units separate from the main country to form their own separate sovereign states ; and that, on the contrary, the amount hitherto paid on this account, will in fairness be claimed as so much advances or loans allowed to these parts of a common country, which, on dismemberment of that common state, the remaining units would be entitled to demand repayment of from the seceding units ;
 - (i) That the financial position of units like Sind, the Frontier, or even the Punjab, will be very considerably worsened by their having to bear the full burden of debt incurred by Government of India on the collective credit of the benefit of these units, like irrigation, railways, road, etc. ;
 - (j) That while the financial liabilities of Sind, for instance, would, for the above and other analogous reasons, be very considerably increased, the material resources of that unit would be seriously affected adversely because of the separation from the mainland ; or because of the conflict with the immediate neighbours on the North and the West ;
 - (k) “ You have summed up well,” said Abdul, “ but not with quite your usual fairness, I am afraid.”
- “ I think it ought to have been added that ;
- (i) As regards the possible conflict of interest in regard to the use of river waters for irrigation and allied

purposes, it is possible to avoid conflict by specific treaties on the model of internationalisation of rivers etc. common to two or more independent states ;

- (ii) That the apprehension of the possibility of tariff wars as between the independent states of Sindh and the Punjab, ~~for~~ instance, can be avoided by the formation of a Zollverein between these seceding states, even if they do not form their own new federation ;
- (iii) That the weakness in mineral, industrial, and power resources in these units can be remedied by utilising the corresponding resources of the neighbouring Indian States ; and
- (iv) That the financial position needs but to be more carefully examined before a final verdict is passed on that aspect of the case."

"The possibility of utilising the mineral, power or industrial resources of the neighbouring Indian States cannot be taken for granted," said Krishna, "for the benefit of the seceders. As I see the map shown to us by Dr. Garudeshan, all important Indian States, e.g. Patiala, Bhawalpur, etc., in this territory will fall outside the partition line. Only Kashmir and Khairpur among the major states could, by any stretch of imagination, be said to fall within the Partition line."

"But we have yet to consider the position of the Indian States in the event of a partition," said Sahib Singh, "and so we cannot assume, as the Sheikh Saheb appears to do, that their resources would be available for utilisation by the seceding units."

"I agree the financial position requires to be further and more carefully examined," said Dr. Garudeshan, "but I don't think that further scrutiny would result in the position of the

seceders becoming more favourable. However we shall postpone that aspect of discussion to a later stage."

"And the possibility of internationalising common rivers may apply as between the Punjab and Sind re. the Indus ; but it is doubtful if it will apply in the same manner and to the same extent in the case of the Punjab and the U.P. for example," added Begum Singh."

"And the setting up of a Zollverein, even if it is achieved," said Fandrews, "may prove much less of a benefit for those units than remaining in an Indian Federation, with the utmost scope for Provincial Autonomy."

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"That may be", said Rahim, "but you must remember that our discussion has not yet been thorough, in all aspects of the problem, and has been confined, for the major part, to the case of Sind, rather than to that of the North West Block as a whole."

"Then this is a convenient stage to adjourn," concluded Sahib Singh, "our discussion till tomorrow, beginning at the same place and time, by a further scrutiny of the financial and economic position of the North West block of Muslim majority territories as a whole, and the Indian States adjoining."

"I think it would be much better if the position of the Indian States, under the proposed new dispensation," said Krishna, "is examined in one block, so to say, for the whole country."

"I am inclined to agree," said Dr. Garudeshan, "but that would require better knowledge of specific schemes of partition, much more concrete than that implied in the League Resolution."

"We must begin tomorrow, then, definitely with an outline of the concrete schemes already put forward by the advocates of partition, or Pakistan," observed Krida, as she prepared to depart.

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"Before we disperse," said Rahim, "I should also like it to be noted that we have so far considered the position, as it would be on the North Western Block of Muslim majority territory, if Pakitsan happens. The principle enunciated in the Lahore Resolution also applies to the Eastern Block of Bengal and parts of Assam. Our discussion would be incomplete, and even misleading, if we overlooked that."

"The Eastern Block cannot include the whole of Bengal," said Garudeshan. "On the basis of the figures of population we have had, a large number of districts in the West and North cannot logically form part of the Muslim block. The Province will have to be partitioned."

"Then its troubles will be infinitely increased," rejoined Sahib Singh, "The worst record of ministerial administration, under Provincial Autonomy and responsible Ministry, is in that Province. Graft, corruption, incompetence have vied with one another to exploit the people, and dissipate the resources of the Province. It is a chronically deficit unit, whose stark nakedness is in a measure concealed from the public by a united nation of India. Through her Central Government, and by willing or forced co-operation of the Provinces thereunder, the bankruptcy of Bengal in honest statesmanship or efficient administration is concealed and made invisible. On secession, partition or internal disintegration, its record will be still worse."

"You are a prophet of pessimism," commented the Professor, "but I agree it is a mystery how Bengal, with some of the

very richest land in India, should yet have such famines as we have witnessed recently."

"The troubles of Bengal are inherent in the characteristics of the people of Bengal," said the Sikh Colonel, "and these are brought about by the Permanent Settlement. It has created a race of parasites, who have infected the entire population with their narrowness, provincialism, reactionary sentimentality. Notwithstanding Hindu-Muslim tension, I think the cry of Bengal for the Bengalis only, will be very much repeated by both Hindus and Muslims in equal zest.

"I endorse fully your characterisation, Colonel," said Krishna ; "The cry, however, is not merely Bengal for Bengalis only ; but also India for Bengalis preferably. That is why they make such muddles as the recent famine, and expect the rest of India to help them out."

"Oh, the famine is no mystery," returned Firdaus. "It was not an act of God ; but rather of the folly, corruption, or greed of man."

"I am not sure that it was only due to the sins of men," said the Rev. Fandrews, "whether inside or outside the Government. But I, too, agree that it may have been intensified by the inexperience, if not incompetence, of the powers that be."

"You will, I know, not agree with me," observed Krishna, "except, of course, deep down in your hearts, that the Musalman has, as a rule, no genius for honesty or integrity, efficiency or administration."

"And yet he administered the country for 500 years," quietly rejoined Rahim, "as creditably as any state among his neighbours."

“That was not administration,—honest, efficient, and scientific, as modern conditions demand,” rejoined Sahib Singh. “That was just letting things to take their own course. The village local self-government remained intact throughout the period ; and carried on all the real administration of the land and its peoples. From the top, they imposed but a thin layer of supervision,—not even direction, and much less control. I admit it was the same with the Hindu as well as the Muslim rulers, generally speaking ; but such as it was, it cannot be made the foundation of any claim for a genius for administration, especially as needed now.”

“I repeat the Muslim has no genius for honest, patient, thoughtful administration,” insisted Krishna, “which nowadays requires initiative, imagination, and co-ordination. And if Bengal is left, intact or dismembered, to the tender mercies of its Muslim majority, its resources will be lost or untried ; its population, particularly the Hindus, terrorised and tyrannised, and its revenues or wealth monopolised by a few self-seeking demagogues. Just look at its Budget record since 1920, inspite of heavy deficit and indirect subsidies, or tax-releases, by the Central Government ; and judge for yourself the validity of my presentiment.”

“The Finance Ministers of Bengal have been, under Provincial Autonomy, Hindus, I believe,” pointed out Abdul.

“If you put one rosebud in a heap of onions,” suggested Krishna “do you expect the rose to perfume the onions ? ”

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“I am afraid we are getting lost in futile recriminations,” urged Ram Piari, “and needless personalities. Tell me, please, what would happen to Calcutta if Bengal itself has

to be dismembered to set apart the Muslim Majority Block from the Hindu Majority areas ? ”

“ Calcutta has a heavy Hindu majority,” said Garudeshan, “ as you will see at a glance from the figures already placed before us. And, following the line we have agreed upon, it ought to form part of the Hindu or Western Bengal.”

“ At a stroke, then, Bengal will lose its direct access to the sea ? ” asked Abdul. “ Will there be any other seaport in the Muslim or Eastern Bengal ? ”

“ Chittagong may serve the purpose of a sea-port,” answered Sir Muhammad, “ but not compensate for the loss of Calcutta. But I do not see why Calcutta should not be joined to the Eastern Bengal.”

“ The reason is obvious,” said Krishna, “ and agreed to already. Calcutta, which, in point of population, is larger than many a district, has an overwhelmingly Hindu majority in population.

“ The remaining districts of Bengal, which have a substantial Muslim majority,” said the Professor, “ will not have sufficient trade to need a port like Calcutta. The coal and iron and rice of Bengal is all found in the Western, or Hindu majority districts. Even the tea from the Northern hill-slopes will be in those areas.”

“ There still remains the greatest single product of modern Bengal,” said Abdul. “ Jute, which will come largely from the Eastern districts with the Muslim majority ; while the bulk of the Tea-gardens will be in Assam, which will also find it more advantageous to combine with the Muslim areas for its export trade.”

“ Raw jute, perhaps,” said the Professor, “ though of that, too, I am not quite sure. But jute manufactures will be in

the Hindu majority areas for the most part. The exportable jute—raw, or manufactured,—will be only a vulgar fraction of this present day source of the wealth of Bengal.”

“Deprived of coal and iron,” said Col. Singh, “the prospects of Bengal’s intensive and extensive industrialisation would be very slender. And thanks to her Permanent Settlement, breeding a lazy, improvident, incompetent landlord class, it will have no enterprise to make up for the deficit. I think the only remedy for the woes of Bengal is to abolish the Permanent Settlement, execute the landlords, and expropriate all their subinfeudations,—or susidiary parasites.”

“That would be a revolution, more easily spoken of than achieved,” observed Sir Muhammad. “If you follow the Colonel’s prescription, so much and so wide a distress will be created, you will find the remedy much worse than the disease,—even if your abolition of the Permanent Settlement, and the expropriation of the Subinfeudations, is compensated by some sort of an equivalent.”

“When I mention these drastic remedies,” rejoined the Colonel, “I do not conceive them as isolated, unco-ordinated, *ad hoc*, or arbitrary measures. Such measures can have their effect only as part,—an integral part—of a comprehensive National Plan. Side by side with these measures there will have to be an equally intensive development of industries, commerce, their accessory or supplementary services, public utilities and social amenities, which would provide additional employment for all those who can work, and would do so in accordance with their physical and mental capacity, aptitude or training. The widespread distress that you fear cannot occur if the measures are not disjointed eruptions, but systematised, harmonised, integrated, planned programme. And that programme can be at its best and fullest if the entire country

remains an unbroken whole, and not dismembered and disjointed."

"For my part, I accept the underlying principle of the Colonel's rationale," said Sir John, breaking his silence for the day for the first time; "though I cannot echo his words. The only chance of an all round economic development in India,—which alone could remedy the terrible destitution of the Indian people,—is for the country to remain an integral whole. If any part of this country breaks off, and sets itself up as an independent sovereign unit, it will put a grave obstacle in the way of India's national self-sufficiency,—the ideal of planned economy,—being achieved. Not one of the present provinces, not even Bengal, which is naturally the richest single unit capable in a measure of local autarchy,—nor even any combination of any two or more units, such as contemplated in the Pakistan idea—will be able to solve its own problem of poverty. The salvation of each unit lies in the whole country, so distinctly marked off by nature and British policy or foresight into a single self-contained block. For then only could the surplus of one unit be most advantageously utilised to square up the deficit of another; and so the aggregate may provide that degree of local, or national, self-sufficiency, which even the richest unit is by itself unable to provide."

"Self-sufficiency may be all right," remarked Firdaus, "when spoken of in terms of the aggregate. But the aggregate and the average are two totally different conceptions. when we consider the actual advantage received by the citizens."

"That is a matter of the Distribution of our national wealth," said the Colonel, "and I entirely agree that the fallacy of the Average is and will be used to conceal the

horrible deficiency of the actual. The mere abolition of the Permanent Settlement of Bengal will, I am ready to agree, not suffice to undo the intense poverty of the masses in that unit. But even in rectifying the basic errors of the prevailing system of distributing the wealth of the country, the success of the Plan will be very much greater, if the country remains united, than if it is dismembered. For the capitalist class in one unit may be much more influential, and so be able to prevent such radical reforms in the social system, than it would be in the country as a whole. As things stand, the Capitalist, or capitalist-minded, class appears to me to be much more powerful and influential in the Muslim majority areas than in the Hindu majority territories. But if they both remain united and integrated, the influence of the mass will be much greater and more immediately felt."

"According to that," Ram Piari tried to definitise, "it seems the ordinary people of Bengal do not stand much chance of their conditions of life improving by partition into a separate Muslim majority State."

"The Muslim majority is backward, unenterprising, uneducated," insisted Krishna ; "and so it is bound to be exploited by a clique of politicians, much more easily and thoroughly than the Hindu masses."

"I am not quite convinced of that," remarked Ramdas ; "The Hindu industrialist has no more sympathy with the working class than the Muslim. The religious label is only a convenient excuse for the Muslim capitalist class to wrench their due share from the Hindu capitalist class ; but once it succeeds in having a free field, it will act exactly as its sister class in the other units."

"But we are considering the reaction of Partition," again Ram Piari intervened to make the conclusion clear, "on the

masses in the partitioned areas, with special reference to Bengal. And it seemed to me that there was very little hope of any betterment if the idea of Pakistan, as applied to Bengal, takes shape."

"The masses will not know where their interests lie," quietly observed Garudeshan ; "and the classes in control of the unit will take good care not to tell them. But consider my point further : Bengal has a record of financial mismanagement, or deficit, which, I fear, will be intensified when she sets up a house of her own, so to say ; and adopts measures like the abolition of Permanent Settlement. Such a measure is likely to commend itself to the new rulers when they come to power ; for amongst the zamindars, the majority of wealth is with the Hindus ; while amongst the agricultural workers, the majority will be Muslims."

"Even if the Permanent Settlement is scrapped," remarked Krishna, "it cannot be allowed without reasonable compensation being given to the dispossessed, or expropriated, landlord class. If an independent Bengal refuses to do such a simple act of justice, the rest of India will have to intervene, and obtain justice for the dispossessed Zamindar. Savarkar has declared from the presidential chair of the Mahasabha that private property shall remain inviolate. The only modification of that essential requirement of justice and equity the Hindus might put up with would be consenting to nationalisation of land and expropriation of zamindars, only if adequate compensation is allowed.

"But where will the money to compensate come from ? " asked the Professor.

"The only source is the land obtained through such measures by the State," answered Firdaus. "One evil must not

be replaced by another ; and if they abolish the Zamindar of the Permanent Settlement, they must not re-establish another class of proprietors seeking their own private profit in the cultivation of land or exploitation of the resources embedded therein."

"You mean the State in Bengal should cultivate the land thus forced out of the hands of the proprietors ? " asked Krishna in holy horror. "And that, too, with the record of efficiency the Bengal Ministers have shown ? "

"Otherwise they would have no means to meet the charges of the compensation, however it is calculated and paid," the Colonel answered him in place of the Allama. "But I do not necessarily admit that the land restored to the State should all be cultivated collectively ; and the produce divided equitably to all. There might be some form of compulsory and universal co-operation which ought to meet the demands of efficiency ; and at the same time produce enough to meet the requirements of social justice and economic necessity."

"This would lead us too much into a discussion of details," remarked Ramdas. "Let us agree that the problems of finance and economics before a partitioned Bengal would be too serious to be lightly disposed of, if the principle of Pakistan is agreed to as the only solution of our internal difficulties."

"Let us adjourn at this point," said Krida. They all agreed and adjourned

THE FOURTH DAY—LUNCH

No sooner was the party assembled round the luncheon table the next day, the hostess opened the ball herself.

“Before we take up any further point in the discussion today,” she said, “I suggest Abdul Sahib should place before us all the concrete schemes of effecting partition, on the lines of the League Resolution, that may have been evolved or propounded.”

“There is no evolution of such matter, Mrs. Ramdas,” said Krishna. “It is a forced growth—a hot-house fruit. You eat it at your peril. Besides, except for this ambiguous, inconsistent, Muslim League Resolution, I doubt if any other organized body of Muslim opinion has put forward any definite scheme for carrying out such partition. All the schemes I have so far heard of are of individual creation, and can be given no more weight than the status and bearing or character of the authors.”

“Such things are, in their origin, always of individual creation,” said Abdul. “The basic idea is always a new conception, which organisations of public opinion may whet, or nurse, or formulate in more authoritative manner. But individual effort must precede, pioneer, and put forth specific proposals to begin with.”

“Besides” joined in Sir Muhammad, “these individuals are also representative of the community. They reflect its trend of sentiment, which they mould into shape and put into words. And, by themselves, each of these persons is of learning and standing in the world of ideas as well as of Islam sufficient to deserve careful consideration of their views.”

"I am not against a consideration of these schemes," said Prof. Kristo Das, "because they are of individual creation. My objection, if you take it so, would be somewhat different. Consideration of individual schemes would involve us into so many matters of detail, that I fear we are neither competent nor have the time to deal with. Before we are well embarked, I am afraid Mrs. Ramdas would call us to order."

"Calling to order is not my duty," smiled the hostess ; "but I see some force in your contention, Doctor. At the same time, I feel that unless we know at least the outlines of concrete form being given to this idea, we would very likely be at cross purposes, without our knowing it, in this discussion."

"Don't you think we might solve this difficulty," suggested the Begum, "by the outlines of the principal schemes of partition proposed so far ; ascertain their common elements, as well as their obvious differences inter se ; and then carry on our discussion on that main idea in this light, and arrive at our conclusions in the same way."

"Thank you, Doctor," said Ramdas. "It is an excellent idea ; and I think none in the company would take exception to it."

"I believe we are all agreed," remarked the hostess looking around, and noting the nods of assent on all sides. "Will Abdul Saheb give us the outlines of the principal plans now?"

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"I have one submission to make," interrupted Dr. Garudeshan, before Abdul could accept the invitation. "In yesterday's discussion I had intended to draw attention to two points, which, if not mentioned now, might be overlooked.

I do not want them to be discussed now, as I think the topic would very likely come before us in some other form when we consider the common elements of these outlines. But they ought to be noted at this stage. I think."

"If you just state the points to be noted briefly," replied the hostess, "I for one would raise no demurrer. But it is understood there will be no discussion on them at this stage."

"I agree," said Garudeshan. "The first point I wanted to submit is in connection with the question already considered, viz. lack of any intrinsic cohesive element in the seceding units *inter se*. I want to illustrate it by (1) the very marked and radical difference in the Land Revenue system of the Punjab and Sind. (ii) The other concerns the share, of the Punjab particularly, in the benefit derived from the expenditure of the Central Government in or for the inhabitants of that Province. Because the Indian army used to be recruited in a very large proportion from the Punjab, the pay, pensions and all allowances of these officers and men, including camp followers, as well as profits of contractors amount to a very tidy sum. At the lowest this would amount to an invisible tribute to the Punjab of over 10 crores per annum from the rest of India on the basis of pre-war expenditure on this head. The war, needless to add, has increased it beyond recognition. In the post-war world, it cannot fall much short of 25 crores per annum. And Lord Wavell has made it crystal clear the British Government will see to it that this tribute paid to the Punjab from the rest of India is duly and fully exacted even after the war. That is one reason why, I think, he and his predecessor have sagaciously insisted upon India being a single natural unit, which ought not to be disintegrated, lest the consequences recoil on heads not seeking them.

“These are both aspects of the problem,” said Krishna, “which must be thrashed out. Even if your wretched idea of secession, or partition, or vivisection of the country, as Mahatmaji has aptly described it, is suffered to materialise, thanks to Muslim intrigue, British connivance, and Hindu cowardice, Hindustan will not accept the burdens of the activities whose benefit go to the seceders or partitionists.”

“That is a matter largely of account adjustment,” said Sir Muhammad, “not an insuperable objection on principle. And even the partitionists would have that much common sense as not to deny or disown any fair liability for which they can be justly held responsible.”

“Partition otherwise cannot take place,” said Rahim. “The pound of flesh would be fully paid.”

“Even though it may involve the loss of ten pounds of blood?” bantered Firdaus.

“I would follow Gandhiji’s principle,” said Abdul, “enun-
ciated at the Round Table Conference, *a propos* of the Foreign Obligations of the present Government of India. India, he is reported to have said there, would meet, if necessary with her last drop of blood, every penny of these obligations that may justly be found due from her by an impartial tribunal. The seceders should accept the same principle, I think, in settling these interstate obligations, and, I believe, they would do so, too, whatever the consequences.”

“That is just my point,” urged Dr. Garudeshah. “Is any such item really due from the rest of India to the Punjab, or the frontier? Or is it not rather due from Britain, whose wars the Punjabi has fought? I remember the analogy of the settlement with America; and I am filled with the deepest misgivings. Right will never be might, and might will always be right.”

“But,” said Firdaus, “have you any recollection, Abdul, of the similar demand made by De Valera when he came to power in the Irish Free State in 1933, in respect of the Anglo-Irish financial obligations. Ireland demanded adjudication by an independent international tribunal on the British claims, even though guaranteed by Treaty only ten years before. And because British Imperial prestige would not permit acceptance of the suggestion of an outside tribunal, or because British conscience may not be quite free from a sense of guilt, they wrote off all their dues from Ireland, rather than submit to such an investigation.”

“Yes, I remember that case very well,” replied Abdul. “But in the instance we are discussing, neither Pakistan, if it comes into being, nor Hindustan, will have any obstructing sense of prestige, or conscience, to prevent a fair adjustment, arbitration, or adjudication of such claims *inter se*.”

“Not either of them, I agree,” insisted Garudeshan ; “but what of the British ? They are the proper party to be sued, if it comes to that.”

“We agreed, however,” reminded Mrs. Ramdas, “to avoid discussing these aspects in detail for the present, didn’t we ? ” she glanced from her husband to Dr. Garudeshan. “Can we not just note them for future reference and discussion ; and proceed with our programme as previously arranged ? ”

“Personally, I have no objection,” answered the learned Doctor.

“Nor I. “Nor I. “Nor I” came from all quarters. The hostess thereupon looked at Abdul, but Rahim intervened at the very last moment.

“If we speak only of individual schemes, or proposals,” he pointed out, “credit must be given for originating the idea to the late poet Iqbal. His poet’s eye first saw the vision, and sowed the seed in his presidential address at a Muslim League Conference in 1930. In the Round Table Conference, too, in 1930-31, the idea was adumbrated, though not explored further.”

“I have heard of both these claims,” interrupted Krishna, “but I wonder if either could be called a scheme, anything more concrete than just a vague feeler. I am a poet, too, or at least a romancier ; but, I thank God, no body can call my work empty visions.”

“No, of course not,” rejoined Sahib Singh. “Yours is all fiction.”

“Jesting apart,” intervened Ram Piari, who was afraid of another explosion side-tracking the discussion, “I think those two cannot be called definite schemes of the kind we should have as basis for our discussion. And besides, no one at the Round Table Conference, or away from it, seem to have paid any attention to it. The idea, I think, did not then commend itself even to Mr. Jinnah ; and so must have been suffered to lapse into the limbo.”

“That is quite true,” rejoined Abdul, “and I am prepared to leave them aside, and put before you other, more definite, but unofficial individual proposals, which are much more specific. Since we have agreed to that course, I must premise that all these four or five individual schemes, though worked out and put forth without any collaboration between the authors, agree in two points :

- (1) That the Hindus and Muslims in India are 2 separate nations, which,

(2) in view of recent experience, cannot live together under the same Sovereign State ; and so they would bring into existence more than one State out of present-day India. These schemes, needless to add, differ from author to author. The only common link between them is the main idea that areas wherein, numerically, Muslims preponderate should be separated from those where Muslims are in a minority ; and erected into separate states.

“ We are not supposed to accept, in any way, these principles,” asked Krishna, “ are we ? ” He looked to Mrs. Ramdas for confirmation.

“ Our discussion hitherto has, if any thing, made it clear that those principles, or bases, have very little substance in them, however strongly the Muslim League leaders insist upon them,” answered Professor Kristodas instead of the Hostess.

“ But these ideas are the *raison d'être* of these schemes being at all put forward,” commented the Begum. “ Their individuality lies in their different *modus operandi*, does it not ? ”

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“ Exactly,” replied Abdul. “ Let me now give you the *five* specific proposals, which, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, a former President of the Congress, has reviewed in a thoughtful article : entitled “ Schemes for Dividing India,” contributed to the Special Annual Number of the *Hindustan Times* on the occasion of the 53rd sessions of the Indian National Congress, held at Ramgarh in March, 1940, a few weeks before the League at its Lahore Sessions adopted the resolution we have discussed.

The first of these schemes is *Punjabi's Scheme*.

1. By Punjabi, styled "The Confederacy of India," which would divide India into :—

- (a) Indusstan,—a federation of the Indus Region. This will include the Punjab (minus its Eastern Hindu tracts, comprising the Ambala Division, Kangra District, Una and Garshankar Tahsils of the Hoshiarpur District) Sind, North West Frontier Province, Kashmir, Baluchistan, the Indian States of Bhowalpur, Swat, Chitral, Kalat, Kapurthala and Malerkotla. Some of these are States and some British Indian, or Tribal territories. These will comprise an area of 3,98,838 square miles, with a population of 3,30,00,000, about 82 per cent Muslims, about 6 per Sikhs, and 8 per cent Hindus.
- (b) The Hindu India Federation, consisting of the United Provinces, Central Provinces, Bihar, with the predominantly Hindu areas of Bengal, Orissa, Assam, Madras, Bombay, and the Indian States other than those of Rajasthan and the Deccan States. The author has not himself worked out the area and population of this federation. Dr. Rajendra Prasad considers its area would be 742,173 square miles,—population 21,60,41,541, with Hindus about 83.72 per cent, and Muslims about 11 per cent.
- (c) The Rajasthan Federation, including the States of Rajputana and Central India, with an area of about 180,656 square miles, and a population of 1,78,58,502, Hindus 86.39 per cent, and Muslims 8.09 per cent.
- (d) The Corresponding Federation of the Deccan States comprising Hyderabad, Mysore and Bustar States, with an area of 125,086 square miles, a population of 2,15,18,171; Hindus 85.28 per cent and Muslims 8.99 per cent.

- (e) The Bengal Federation, including the predominantly Muslim parts in Eastern Bengal, Goalpura, and Sylhet Districts of Assam, together with the States of Tripura and others, with an area of 59,764 square miles; population 3,10,00,000 of whom about $\frac{2}{3}$ i.e. 2,05,00,000 Muslims, and 1,01,00,000 i.e. 33.9 per cent Hindus.

It may be noted that these five are all federations within themselves ; and that they together are to form a confederation of all India—a single sovereign state.

Summarised in point of population and area, this scheme would set up in India 5 different States viz. :—

Name	Total* Population	Hindus	Muslims	Area in sq. miles
A Indus-tan	3,30,00,000	8% (6% ● Sikhs)	82%	3,98,828
B Hindu-stan	21,60,41,541	83.72%	11%	742,173
C Raja-stan	1,78,58,502	86.39%	8.99%	180,656
D Deccan-stan	2,15,18,171	85.28%	8.09%	125,086
E Bangi-stan	3,10,00,000	33.9%	66.1%	59,764

“Comparison of the figures makes it evident,” said Saheb Singh, “that the single unit of Hindustan will be nearly twice the population of all the others put together ; and as much by itself in area as all the others combined. The division seems very uneven.”

“Shall we analyse and examine this scheme by itself ?” asked Krishna. “If so, I have much to urge against this scheme in principle as well as detail, in point of constitutional law and usage, as well as administrative convenience.”

*Population figures are according to the Census of 1931. In the Hindus, are included Caste Hindus as well as Depressed Classes.

“We must not interrupt at this stage,” Ramdas quickly ruled. “Please go on, Abdul,” he added.

“I thought we had agreed to scrutinise them all together.” Rahim supported Ramdas.

“The central idea in this scheme,” continued Abdul, “does not, however, seem to be a complete dismemberment of India into separate sovereign states, corresponding to these 5 units, or federations, as they are called. Rather are these all to be welded into a confederation.”

“This single Confederacy, will be presided over by the Viceroy, assisted by a Federal Assembly, with members drawn from each of these 5 Federations, in such proportions as is fixed according to the importance to the Confederacy of each such Federation from the point of view of geographical situation, population, area, and economic position.”

“The inclusion of Indian States under this scheme, commented Krishna, “in the neighbouring areas, irrespective of the credal affinities of the rulers or the people, constitutes a grave difficulty, which might prove fatal, in fact and in logic, to the working of the scheme in practice and political propriety.”

“The units thus set up will also,” admitted Abdul, “not be homogeneous in regard to the communal complexion of the population in each. There will be no exchange of population *inter se*, so as to make each unit as much predominantly of a single community as possible. On the division suggested, this proposal will help 2,71,14,657 Muslims of the Indus Regions, and about 2,30,00,000 of Bengal and Assam, to escape Hindu domination, while 2,89,63,343 Muslims will remain in the Hindu Provinces. The communal issue will thus not be quite solved; but may be made much more wide-spread,

complicated, and embittering, since the new units are founded on purely communal grounds."

"Punjabi's main reasons for putting forward such a scheme," Abdul continued, "Dr. Rajendra Prasad summarises as follows :—

That India is not a country, but a sub-continent, consisting of several countries, which may confederate, but cannot be consolidated amongst themselves. Each unit will be itself a federation of several smaller units, comprising both British Provinces and Indian States."

"This will only complicate the machinery of governance," observed the Colonel, "without solving the communal tangle."

But Abdul went on without hearing the interruption,

"That Hindus and Muslims of the country are two different nations, according to this view, who have only a foreign yoke and geographic habitat as the only links between them."

"This is an excellent case of *petitio principii*," said the Begum. But Abdul disregarded her interruption also.

"And that historically India has never been one," he concluded.

"History does not confirm the last, at any rate," remarked Krishna ; but no one attended to him.

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II. THE ALIGARH PROFESSOR'S SCHEME.

II. "The second scheme reviewed by Dr. Rajendra Prasad is the joint production of Prof. Syed Zafarul Hasan and Dr. Mohammad Afzal Husain Qadri, of Aligarh. They also assume that the Muslims of India are a different nation from the Hindus, with a distinct national unity of their own. These

Muslims must have a separate national future, and the right to make their own distinct contribution to the betterment of the world.

But this future of the Muslims of India can be achieved only in complete freedom from the domination of the Hindus, the British, or any other people. If the Provinces in which the majority are Muslims remain in a single Indian State, they would be enslaved because of the overwhelming Hindu majority inevitable at the centre.

They are also anxious that the Muslims in the minority provinces should not be deprived of their separate religious, cultural and political identity ; but that they should be given full and effective support by the majority Muslim Provinces, only possible if they are themselves sovereign States."

"That sounds very much like a page from Hitler's campaign in Sudetenland," observed Krishna ; "but we Hindus are neither Czechs nor Slavs. We know how to deal with such threats."

A glance from Ramdas, however, helped Abdul to ignore the interruption, and continue his task.

"According to this scheme, India is to be divided into :—

(a) *Pakistan*, including the Punjab, N.-W.F. Province, Sind, Baluchistan, and the States of Kashmir and Jammu,

Name of Unit	Total Population (thousands)	Percentage of Muslims
Pakistan ..	3,92,74	60.0
Bengal ..	3,01,18	57.0
Hindustan ..	21,60,00	9.7
Hyderabad ..	2,90,65	7.4
Delhi ..	1,26,60	20.8
Malabar ..	49,00	27.0
Free Cities ..	..	...

Mandi, Chamber, Jind, Kapurthala, etc., Simla Hill States, Bhowalpur, etc. In this area the population will be 3,92,74,244 of which Muslims will be 2,36,97,538, or about 60 per cent.

- (b) Bengal, excluding the districts of Howrah, Midnapore, but including Purnea in Bihar, and the Sylhet District of Assam, in which Muslims would be, 3,01,18,184 or 57 per cent.
- (c) Hindustan, comprising the rest of India and Indian States, excluding Hyderabad, Pakistan, and the States included therein. Here the population would be 21,60,00,000, of which the Muslims would be 2,09,60,000 or about 9.7 per cent.
- (d) Hyderabad comprising Hyderabad, Berar and Karnatak, (Madras and Orissa) with a population of 2,90,65,000, in which the Muslims will be 21,44,010 or 7.4 per cent.
- (e) Delhi Province, including Meerut Division, Rohilkhand Division and the District of Aligarh from Agra Division with a population of 1,26,60,000 with Muslims numbering 35,20,000 or 20.8 per cent.
- (f) Malabar Province, consisting of Malabar and adjoining areas, with a population of 49,00,000, of whom Muslims would be 14.40 lakhs or 27 per cent.
- (g) All the towns of India with a population of 50,000 or more to have the status of Free Cities. In these cities the total population of Muslims would be 13,88,693. This would suggest that the Muslims in the rural areas should be persuaded not to remain scattered in negligible minorities, as at present ; but to aggregate in villages with a preponderant Muslim population."

“ This means India cut up in a hundred bits,” said Sahib Singh, “ not seven.”

“ This is Muslim imperialism with a vengeance,” said Krishna. But Abdul took no notice, and continued his analysis.

“ The learned authors suggest that the three main States of Pakistan, Bengal, and Hindustan should enter into a defensive and offensive alliance on the following basis :—

- (a) Mutual recognition and reciprocity.
- (b) Pakistan and Bengal be recognised as the homeland of the Muslims, and Hindustan the homeland of Hindus, to which either can migrate respectively if and when they choose.
- (c) In Hindustan Muslims are to be recognised as a nation in minority and part of a larger nation inhabiting Pakistan and Bengal.
- (d) The Muslim minority in Hindustan, and non-Muslim minority in Pakistan and Bengal, will have :—
 - (i) Representation according to population, and
 - (ii) Separate electorates, and representation at every stage, together with effective religious, cultural, and political safeguards guaranteed by all the three States.
- (e) An accredited Muslim political organisation to be the sole official representative body of the Muslims in Hindustan.”

“ Is nothing stated for non-Muslims on a basis of reciprocity ? ” enquired the Professor. But the analysis went on unchecked.

“Each of the three independent States of Pakistan, Hindustan and Bengal should have separate treaties of alliance with Great Britain, and separate Crown Representatives, if any. There should also be a joint court of arbitration to settle any dispute that may arise between themselves or between them and the Crown.”

“The scheme then contemplates no independence for India,” remarked Krishna, “but a status of perpetual tutelage dignified by a document called a treaty. The Congress and the Mahasabha will never accept it, I can assure you.”

“Are these seven units mutually independent, and individually sovereign?” enquired Dr. Garudeshan.

“The scheme leaves it certainly doubtful if it contemplates complete sovereign States created out of the present territory called India, or whether the proposed units are to form some kind of confederacy joined together by treaties,—if not a common constitution,—and perhaps in a common allegiance to the British Crown,” remarked Ramdas.

“Its main difference from Punjabi,” continued Abdul, “is the peculiar position given to Hyderabad, which is made corresponding to Kashmir State with a Hindu Ruler in a predominantly Muslim area.

“There is no correspondence between Kashmir and Hyderabad,” asserted Krishna. “The former is merged in Pakistan, the latter is given an outstanding predominance in a separate unit.”

“Another peculiarity is the creation of towns of a certain size into free cities, somewhat on the lines of the German Free Cities of old, or Danzig in the age between 1920-40,” added Abdul.

“The lessons of history ought to warn us against resorting to such expedients, if we would ever hope to achieve our country’s economic development, and our people’s redemption from poverty,” observed the Sikh Colonel.

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III. THE LATIF SCHEME

Abdul continued his analysis unmindful of the comments.

III. “Dr. A. Latif’s scheme, elaborated in his *Muslim Problem in India*, radically differs from the two preceding. It is not a “separatist move involving endless complications.” It is rather intended to unify India on natural lines, and claims to be entirely Indian in outlook. Accordingly it seeks to have cultural homogeneous states, to be federated into a composite whole. They would form a nation of the type of Canada, where two different races are working together for a common end, each living in a separate zone of its own.”

“Wasn’t Dr. Latif first in the field with this idea of partition ? ” asked Krishna.

“I would not describe it as partition,” quietly added Ramdas.

Abdul went on : “India should be divided into 4 homogeneous cultural zones for the Muslims, and 11 for the Hindus. The Indian States scattered all over the country should be distributed between these zones in accordance with their natural affinities. In each zone the Government would be homogeneous but highly decentralised, so that each unit composing the zone may have as much autonomy as possible.”

The Muslim zones, according to this scheme, are :—

1. The North-West Bloc, consisting of Sind, Baluchistan,

Punjab, N.-W.F. Province, and the States of Khairpur and Bhawalpur.

2. The North-East Bloc, comprising Eastern Bengal and Assam.
3. The Delhi-Lucknow Bloc ; and
4. Hyderabad, comprising with a strip of territory in the south running through the Districts of Kurnool, Cud-dapah, Chitoor, North Arcot, Chingleput, down to the City of Madras, providing an outlet to the sea.

The 11 Hindu zones are :—

1. Portion of Bengal extending upto a part of Bihar.
2. Orissa, comprising areas of Oriya speaking people.
3. Bihar and the United Provinces, upto the Western Lucknow-Delhi Bloc, extending from the Himalayas to the Vindhya, and including some of the Central India States. This will be Hindustan proper.
4. Rajput States of Rajputana.
5. Gujerat and Kathiawar.
6. Maharashtra.
7. Kanara.
8. Andhra.
9. Tamil Nad.
10. Malabar.
11. Hindu-Sikh Bloc, including portions of Kashmir in the North-West.

“ The scheme contemplates that the Hindus of the Muslim zones, and the Muslims of the Hindu zones, respectively, should be transferred to the nearest Hindu or Muslim zone ; and thus

comparatively homogeneous zones should be created everywhere."

"The transfer of such huge numbers," said the Professor, "is bound to be a colossal undertaking, involving enormous cost, not to mention incalculable complications due to property, sentiment, or tradition."

"The task may be colossal, but it is not impossible," remarked Rahim.

"I think it not only impossible in practice," urged Krishna, "but wholly undesirable in principle."

"This scheme, too, gives a disproportionate predominance to Hyderabad," remarked Garudeshan. "On no principle of such readjustment could this region be rightly regarded as Muslim cultural homeland. Besides, no parity of treatment is accorded to Kashmir, similarly situated in the North-West Bloc."

"Does not this scheme make a special reference to the Untouchables?" asked the Rev. Fandrews.

"Harijans are to be left to choose the Hindu or Muslim zones, and form their permanent homeland," answered Abdul. "The transfer and exchange of population should be carried out gradually in the course of some years. The smaller nationalities, like the Christians, Buddhists, Jains and Parsis, would be given all the necessary religious and cultural safeguards needed to preserve their individuality. They would also have the right to a cantonal life of their own, if they so choose."

"This would make democracy a real fact," commented Firdaus. "It is only on a civic or cantonal scale that democracy can be a working proposition."

The analysis continued : " For the Hindu or Muslim minorities, remaining in the non-Hindu or non-Muslim areas, special safeguards are added, such as separate electorates, etc. Indian States are required to return a given proportion of Muslims not below $1/3$ of the seats at the Centre. Adequate and effective representation in the zonal or regional boards of Muslims must be ensured.

Subjects, moreover, touching the religion or religious customs, personal law, and culture, should be the concern of the members of that community, which will be, for these purposes, constituted into a special committee.

The executive is to be a *composite* executive, representing both Hindus and Muslims, with an agreed policy acceptable to both. This executive would not be *responsible*, that is to say, not liable to be turned out by an adverse vote of the Legislature, but be analogous to the American (Presidential) Executive. The Prime Minister, however, should be elected by the Legislature, not by popular election as the President.

Recruitment to the Public Services should be by a Public Services Commission, of which one at least of the Members in Muslim minority Provinces must be a Muslim.

" The scheme, in fine, is for the regrouping of the country's component units into more homogeneous zones, and not for its complete dismemberment. A common Central Government will be maintained, and effective safeguards will be provided for the minorities."

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IV. THE SIKANDAR HAYAT SCHEME

" Sir Sikandar Hayat's scheme also contemplates reorganization of India into zones. It is an amendment to the

Government of India Act, 1935, which the Muslims had declared to be, in its present form, unacceptable. At the same time it accepts the principle of Federation as indispensable ; and aims at attaining complete control over the governance of the country in the hands of the people of the country or their representatives.

The scheme does not necessarily involve severance from the British connection. Its main object is to suggest amendment to the Federal system propounded in the Government of India Act of 1935, in order to remove the doubts and misgivings of the Muslims and the Princes. It, therefore, provides adjustments which will enable us, with accelerated pace, to achieve the main object.

Instead of bringing the British Indian Provinces and Indian States as two distinct types of members of the Federation, the scheme reorganizes the regional division of India into zones of more or less homogeneous character, and so facilitates the entry of the Provinces and States on a common basis. There are 7 zones contemplated in this scheme, which are :—

1. Assam, Bengal (minus one or two Western Districts to reduce the size of the zone and make it approximate to other zones), Bengal States, and Sikkim.
2. Bihar, Orissa, plus the areas transferred from Bengal to Orissa.
3. United Provinces and the United Provinces States.
4. Madras, Travancore, Madras States and Coorg.
5. Bombay, Hyderabad, Western India States, Bombay States, Mysore and Central Provinces States.
6. Rajputana States, minus Bikaner and Jaisalmer, Gwalior, Central India States, Bihar and Orissa States, Central Provinces and Berar.

7. Punjab, Sind, N.-W.F. Province, Kashmir, Punjab States, Baluchistan, Bikaner and Jaisalmer."

"There does not seem any intelligible principle of reorganisation in this scheme," commented the Colonel ; but no one heeded him.

"The zonal arrangement is tentative, and subject to alteration. Each zone will have a legislature of its own, with representatives of both British India and Indian States contained therein. These representatives in the several zones will constitute the Central Federal Legislative Assembly of 375 members, of which 250 may be from British India, and 125 from Indian States, provided that 1/3 of the total number should be Muslims ; and provided further that other minorities, also, receive their due share, as in the Government of India Act, 1935."

"Does not this infinitely duplicate and complicate the machinery of government " asked Garudeshan. But again there was no rejoinder.

"The scheme also includes effective safeguards for protecting the legitimate rights of minorities, including their cultural and religious rights, to prevent racial discrimination against the British, or violation of treaty and other contractual rights of Indian States ; to preserve the integrity and autonomy of both British India and Indian States against the interference of Federal Executive or regional legislature ; to ensure the safety of India against foreign aggression, as well as internal peace and tranquility of the units of the country as a whole ; and to prevent subversive activities of citizens of one unit in another."

"It seems to have an excessively soft corner for the British," remarked Begum Singh. But no one took the bait.

“The one very significant feature of this scheme is that it requires the communal composition of the Indian Army to be as on the 1st January, 1937, which shall not be altered. In case of reduction, the communal proportion shall be maintained, provided that the proportions may be relaxed in case of war or other emergency.”

“The war has rendered that provision quite obsolete,” noted Krishna. But the interjection remained interdicted.

“The utmost possible autonomy is allowed to the units constituting the Federation, leaving the minimum of powers and functions to the Central Federal Legislature.”

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V. THE AMBEDKAR PROPOSAL

“In his *Thoughts on Pakistan*, Dr. Ambedkar has not adumbrated any concrete scheme. But, reading the book as a whole, it seems also to contemplate a possible splitting up of the country into two, or rather three, independent and sovereign States, i.e. the predominantly Muslim areas in the North-West, in the East, and the rest in Hindustan.

The outstanding implication of his idea seems to set up as much homogeneous territory in each such State as possible. But even so considerable transfer of population would be inevitable. The author does not think it difficult to make the transfer in view of our modern resources, and the trouble and expenditure would be well worth incurring for solving the problem effectively.

The transfer, however, under this suggestion, is not likely to be so considerable as in one of the previous schemes outlined above. The Districts of the Punjab, which would have

predominant Hindu and Sikh population, are to be excluded from the N.-W. Bloc, as also in Bengal, with the result that the balance of non-Hindu population in Hindusthan, and non-Muslim population in Pakistan, may be relatively much smaller. Even so, it may run into millions. But Dr. Ambedkar seems to think that in order to ensure security of peace, the trouble involved in making such transfer may be well worth incurring."

"This is an excellent summary of all the concrete schemes so far put forward," declared Ramdas. "But shall we discuss them in detail in the garden?" he enquired.

"All together, or each separately?" asked his wife.

"Let us consider that also there," the husband replied.

"I agree," said Garudeshan, Rahim, Abdul and Sir John simultaneously. The others concurred, and the party adjourned to the garden.

FOURTH DAY (*Contd.*) TEA

Lunch had long since been over ; but the convives were too absorbed in the discussion to leave the table. When, however, Abdul had completed the outline of all the known schemes, Ram Piari rose, and invited them all into the garden, where the sun was shining, bright and warm ; and where those not present at lunch had already assembled.

“ These schemes wear all a strong family look,” began Ramdas by way of resuming discussion. “ Not only is the basis common to them all,—at least in its essence ; but also many of the details, both positive and negative.”

“ The differences between them are not merely those of detail,” pointed out Dr. Garudeshan. “ For instance, the League Resolution contemplates, and the Aligarh Professors actually outline, completely separate sovereign states of Pakistan and Hindustan, more or less in number ; while the other publicists are concerned with territorial or zonal redistribution, with a view to afford a stronger position to the Muslim majority units, but without denying altogether the need for a central, unifying, co-ordinating or confederative authority for the whole of India. These are important differences and I regard them as vital.”

“ I do not deny that,” answered Ramdas, “ but I was only trying to point out the general similarity running like a single thread throughout the several schemes.”

“ The individual schemes,—even though lacking official recognition,” observed Sir Muhammad, “ have gone a great way to meet the Congress position, in so far as the essential unity of the country is concerned.”

“Do you know what Jinnah has written to Dr. Abdul Latif ? ” asked Krishna, “the most distinguished, perhaps, of the publicists in this category. I read in *The Pakistan Issue* edited by Nawab Nazir Yar Jung Bahadur (p. 100), the following brilliant gem of Jinnah creation :

“I have repeatedly made it clear to you and publicly that the Muslim League has appointed no such Committee (Ref. Haroon Committee for preparing a constitution for Pakistan) as you keep harping upon ; and neither the Muslim League nor I can recognise any of these suggestions or proposals of these so-called schemes. Please, therefore, let me make it clear once for all that neither Sir Abdulla Haroon nor you should go on talking of this Committee or that Committee, and involving the Muslim League or its authority behind the proposals that may be formulated by individuals or groups.” (Letter dated New Delhi, 15th March, 1941.)

If this is the fate of the most distinguished of such publicists, how can you discuss their proposals with any hope of coming to a settlement ? ”

“Mr. Jinnah is a disappointed man and desperate,” remarked Rahim. “He has built up an organisation which he naturally wishes to be absolute, authoritative, and respected. We understand his reasoning, but need not always endorse his utterance. Nor can he prevent thoughtful individuals as patriotic as himself from thinking of such matters, and putting forth their views.”

“The A.I.C.C. resolution of August, 1942 specifically recognises the right of the federating units to secede if any of them is clearly and definitely of opinion that secession would be beneficial to them,” pointed out Ram Piari. “It has thus re-endorsed the principle contained in the Cripps’ declaration

of British policy. And the Congress has further conceded that the largest measure of autonomy, including the undefined or residuary powers of government, should be left to the federating units. What more is left for the moderate Muslim, anxious to preserve the integrity of the country, to desire."

"Many things, Mrs. Ramdas," said Firdaus. "Even if you accept and agree that the future constitution of India is to be a democratic Federation, somewhat loosely held together, there will have to be considerable structural modification in working on the model of parliamentary democracy set to us by Britain. I do not think Muslims would be content to remain, even in such a loose federation, unless they feel satisfied that no unit or combination of units or groups can domineer over them in the Federation."

"How is that to be assured?" asked Ram Piari.

"I would say the entire scheme of parliamentary democracy and territorial representation must be scrapped," replied Firdaus. "A composite executive of the Presidential type, irremovable by any adverse vote in the Legislature, but not irresponsible for that reason, has already been suggested by Dr. Latif as the sort of assurance Muslim mind would desire. Side by side there may be similar guarantees for the due safeguards of Minority rights—Hindu or Muslim—in the Public Services, religious and cultural freedom, and the general development of the country. You would then go a long way not only to maintain the integrity of the country, but also its peace and harmony and steady progress to prosperity."

"An irremovable executive is an indelible curse," Sahib Singh was terse and sententious.

"And a composite ministry is a poor camouflage of all political evils," rejoined Krishna.

“Please,” pleaded Ram Piari, “don’t let us get lost in a futile discussion of the forms of government.”

“For forms of government let fools contend,” quoted Abdul.

“I want also to keep to the point, and save our breath,” said the Professor. “But what exactly is the point now ? ”

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“We have had an analysis of the various proposals to embody the principle of Pakistan,” said Ramdas ; “let us now crystallise their most salient features, and concentrate discussion on them.”

“I would like to know how any of these schemes or proposals solve the communal problem,” Krishna was quick to make his point.

“And I would like to know how any of them, if adopted, would react on India’s international status and prestige,” added Firdaus.

“And I would like to know where and how the States and their rulers will be accommodated, absorbed, or assimilated,” Krida was no less swift to stake her claim.

“For my part,” observed the Colonel, “I am anxious to know how the problem of our poverty is to be solved by these projects of division and dismemberment. I can see the day is only for large scale organisation and operation in politics as well as in economics. Naturally, therefore, I feel apprehensive about the repurcussions of these schemes on the material welfare of the masses, in Pakistan as well as Hindustan.”

“To me, also, the economic aspect is most important,” said Dr. Garudeshan, “but not only from the point of the worker and the peasant. I look at it in the aggregate as affecting

the whole country ; and I see it symbolised in the trade and finance of the country or units ; in their productive resources as well as distribution arrangements.”

“ And what about their revenues and expenditure ? ” asked Sir John. “ I thought you were keen to consider the reaction of this idea materialising on the local as well as federal finances.”

“ That cannot be ignored,” admitted Rahim ; “ particularly as Defence must remain always the most important item of expenditure in any form of government for India,—integral or dismembered—that I can visualise.”

“ Not necessarily,” interjected the Allama. “ If the ideas of world peace and a World State take effect, the present-day problem of national defence must become a back number very soon ; and its place will be taken by public expenditure on projects or departments of nation-building, social security, public utilities, amenities and services for the citizen, defrayed from the share of the national wealth taken for itself by the Government.”

“ I doubt if in the reconstructed world generally envisaged,” put in Ram Piari, “ the distinction between the individual or private wealth, and the state or public wealth would be strictly maintained. I would rather look at the problem from the standpoint of how the new state in Pakistan, or Hindustan, would affect, react upon the daily life of the individual, and promote his chances for self-development and self-expression.”

“ To a large extent that would depend on the size, population and resources of the new states set up, would it not ? ” asked the Professor.

“Not entirely,” answered the Begum. “There is a spiritual side to the life of the individual in modern society, which, I am afraid, our discussion so far has tended to obscure. I for my part would like to know how the soul of the individual would fare under the new regime.”

“Thank you, Madam,” said the Rev. Fandrews, “for such timely reminder of an unfashionable, if not unpopular subject. I, too, would like to know how the masses will fare in the new states, if and when set up, in regard to their spiritual life. What of their freedom of conscience and mutual toleration? What of their way to God, even as you think of their way to mammon? I am not sure that religious freedom and mutual toleration would flourish to the full, and go hand in hand under the proposed system of separate sovereign states set up on communal lines.”

“You have all summed up,” smiled Ramdas in his own summing up, “the various aspects of the great complexity of issue, even if the remedy proposed by our Muslim publicists is applied. Let me now put it to you in three or four generic categories. I take *first*, the *Political* side which will include not only the formation of these states, their alignment or boundaries; but also their internal constitution, mutual obligations or treaties, foreign relations, and defence. This must accommodate, assimilate or absorb Indian States also.

Second, the *economic*, which will comprise not only the question of the production and distribution of material wealth, services, utilities and amenities in each state, but also its trade and transport, fiscal and financial policy and activities. This must survey the available resources and their most economic utilisation.

Third, the *social*, which must deal with the continued existence (if it is tolerated) of economic classes with mutually

conflicting interests and activities ; the structure of the family and the place of the individual in relation to his fellows, especially as affected by the institutions of property, inheritance and marriage or parenthood.

Fourth, the *cultural* (including religious or spiritual) which must embrace certain Fundamental Rights and Obligations of citizens, their guarantees, if any, and exercise or enforcement.

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“ Does this summary of the issues or aspects to be considered include everybody’s point of view ? ” he smiled an inquiry all around him.

“ You have enumerated all the trees, Ramdas,” returned Abdul, “ but overlooked the whole forest. I want to know how, by and large, does the solution implied in these proposals appeal to the company, as feasible or fantastic.”

“ Taking all these schemes as generically the same,” answered the Colonel in place of the host, “ I do not think they, or any of them, really solve the problem of communal conflict in this country. Whether you want, like the League or the Aligarh *illuminati*, completely separate and sovereign states of Pakistan or Hindustan, or a merely zonal redistribution, you will not have wholly homogeneous units, in point of the communal complexion of the population. And so long as there are Hindus in Muslim States, and Muslims in non-Muslim States, I am afraid the conflict will continue, the problem will remain.”

“ That is quite true,” said Kristo Das. “ With the existence of sovereign states,—with a communal basis if not bias,—the minority community in each will look to its neighbour, with its own co-religionists in majority, to protect its interests and

support its claims. These States will, therefore, be a standing invitation to internal friction and disloyalty, or at least divided allegiance, in a section of citizens."

"Even in spite of inter-statal migration, to be permitted and facilitated by the governments?" queried Rahim.

"I do not think such migrations are practicable propositions," answered Garudeshan, "in spite of our modern means of transport, and notwithstanding Dr. Ambedkar's opinion to the contrary,—when they affect such large numbers. Even after making all territorial readjustments, as logically necessary and recognised by the moderate advocates of partition,—the numbers of religious aliens—if I may use the expression without offence,—remaining in each State after partition, will be too numerous to be readily transplanted, and easily contented when so transplanted. Look at the points made in this connection by Dr. Rajendra Prasad, seeking elucidation of the matter from Dr. Syed Abdul Latif, and the latter's reply to the query. I make no apology for quoting it in full :

'Another question, which has not been, as far as I am able to see, discussed, is the question of cost of transfer of populations. In framing the scheme, you must have taken all this into consideration ; and I should like to be enlightened on the estimated cost of transfer. Other questions which arise in this connection are :

- (a) Is the emigrant to be paid anything beyond the cost of transport? It is assumed that he will carry with him all his movables and will be provided with land in the block, to which he is transferred. Will he be compensated for the immovables, which he will leave behind?
- (b) Who will pay the cost? the block to which he is transferred, or the block from which he goes, or both—and if the last, in what proportion?

The reply of Dr. Latif says :

‘ This is again a matter of detail which will have to be worked out by the Commission or the Committee to be. I may recommend to you the Report of “ Commission Mixte Pour L’Echange Des Populations Grecques Et Turques,” 1923, for general guidance. It will give you an idea as to the nature and extent of compensation which will have to be given to migrants for property in all forms left behind by them. It is not necessary that the migrant should carry with him all his movables. Heavy movables, such as furniture and cattle, may easily be disposed of by him before making a move. The compensation will be permissible only in respect of the immovables, such as land and houses, or any legal rights thereto in any form. In respect of such property, committees jointly approved of by the governments involved will have to be appointed for each village and town, and registers prepared of such properties in the blocks concerned will be made accessible to all those affected by the exchange. An agriculturist, for instance, leaving a particular block will know what plots of the value of his own leaving behind are available on the other side. Before migrating, he will be given a chance to make his own selection and register his name for the land preferred in a certain order. And for making his choice in person a period of one year will be given to him to visit the place he would like to settle on, and to register his name for any particular plot of ground he would choose for himself. The bare expenses of his journey to and fro will be met from a common fund pooled, on the strength of a special taxation, by the governments of the two areas concerned. The evacuation will proceed piecemeal, village by village ; so much so, that the process for any single block might even be spread over ten years or even a longer period. While leaving, each migrant would get from his former government a statement to the

effect that he was leaving behind property worth so much and in such and such form. The statement or certificate will entitle him on the other side from his new government either the amount in cash or equivalent property as might be decided upon by the immigrant.

This in a rough way will be the arrangement to be followed in effecting inter-migration and apportionment of compensation.

I have already indicated my answer to this question in *The Muslim Problem in India*. A Hindu or Muslim, or for the matter of that, even a foreigner will be permitted to take up residence in every block for purposes of business or education and similar objects. But he will be there as a national of the block or country he comes from.

Propaganda for conversion, I would restrict ; but full freedom of conscience would be allowed. If any individual or body of individuals in consequence change their religion, they will be entitled to migrate into a block where they could live with those following their new religion, or allow their citizenship in the original block governed by a 'Public Law of Indian Nations' enacted for such purpose, which should allow them the fullest rights of citizenship.

I would request you to read the 'Safeguards' once again given on pp. 36-37. For the sake of convenience, I reproduce, under the proposed order the following provisions which will need to be embodied in the constitution :

Public Law of Indian Nations. (1) Individuals belonging to one or other of the several nationalities may, for special purposes, live in zones to which they do not culturally belong. Such individuals will be afforded security of person and right of citizenship under a 'Public Law of Indian Nations' to be adopted by the Central Government.

Religious Shrines, etc. (2) All religious shrines, monuments and graveyards belonging to the Hindus or the Muslims and left behind by either will be preserved and looked after by each federal state under the supervision of the Central Government.

Christians, Parsis, Buddhists, etc. (3) The smaller nationalities, such as the Christians or Anglo-Indians, Parsis and Buddhists, will be afforded by each state, Muslim or Hindu, all the necessary religious or cultural safeguards which they might need to preserve their individuality. They will at the same time have the right to ask for a cantonal life for themselves, if they should desire it at any time.

Harijans. (4). The various depressed classes and untouchables, styled Harijans, dispersed as they are all over the country, and forming countless racial varieties and possessing no common culture between them, and being most landless, will be given perfect liberty to choose the Hindu or Muslim zones to form their permanent homelands where they will enjoy the fullest right of citizenship, even as the Christians or Anglo-Indians, Buddhists and Parsis.'

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"If wholesale migration is neither practicable, nor desirable," continued the learned Doctor, "even on the minimum scale necessitated by the most moderate of any reasonable scheme for Pakistan, the dismemberment of the country would have been to no avail. The communal canker will continue, will be fed and nourished by the very remedy employed, and will weaken both sides without solving the original problem."

"Personally, I think, with adequate and effective guarantees of all reasonable Minority Rights, with satisfactory arrangements for their enforcement," observed Abdul, "the problem

of transferring populations will not be quite so serious—or even common—as you anticipate.”

“You must be prepared for it, however,” said the Professor, “when the very basis of your new states is of a religious character. Otherwise there would be an unending feud in the name of protecting national minorities,—a perpetual case of Sudetenland all over India on both sides of the communal border.”

“Need we then consider any other aspect ?” asked Krishna, “if the creation of wholly homogeneous states is all but impossible under the Pakistan principle ? The remedy was designed to solve the problem of minorities ; and if it cannot do that, why waste time over any consideration of it ?”

“Our discussion should not be so summarily ended,” pleaded Ram Piari. “It may be that even if the proposed solution does not seem effective from one point of view, it may have other advantages which we cannot discount without any examination. I suggest, Mr. Chairman, we should go through the main issues you have enumerated just now.”

“There is another point of the same character,” pursued Dr. Garudeshan, “which also deserves attention. Whichever of the schemes analysed just now is accepted, the Hindustan unit (or units) will be the largest, richest and most populous contiguous territory, which will always be a terror to its neighbours, if it is so minded.”

“That is a big if,” rejoined Ramdas, “and I am not prepared to accept it without careful consideration, or fuller experience.”

“There is not much doubt possible on the subject,” put in the Colonel. “The new states being expressly based on religious demarcation, there would be no lack of provocation

or excuse to interfere in the domestic affairs of their neighbours. And the strongest, most powerful and resourceful must inevitably be a menace to its neighbours."

"I am reminded of the precedent of Prussia in the nineteenth century Germany," supplemented his wife ; "and there the temptation to swallow all smaller units of the Reich was not half so great as it is bound to be in India under the Pakistan principle. At the very best it will be a case of armed neutrality for ever on all sides within the natural frontiers of this land."

"I do not think you make sufficient allowance for the growth of a spirit of mutual toleration," said Rahim, "and the realisation of one's own interest in the continued peace and harmony with one's neighbours."

"You may make any allowance you like," answered Krishna, "but you cannot gainsay the logic of facts and figures."

"Let us agree that Pakistan, to be at all fruitful, must involve," Ramdas tried to end the debate, "wholesale transfer of large numbers, even after the most careful delimitation of communal areas ; that such transfers are neither feasible nor desirable ; that in the absence of such transfers creating homogeneous states, the minority problem will not be solved, but will only be multiplied ; that with the existence side by side of states of unequal strength in numbers or resources, and based on communal lines, there will be constant fear of breach of peace, and armed neutrality ; and that, since under any scheme of Pakistan, the Hindu areas are bound to be more compact, more populous and more wealthy, the tendency to be aggressive on the latter's part would be irresistible."

"That is why the sanest proponents of the idea do not insist on complete separation," said Sir Muhammad, "a divorce

a mensa et thora. Dr. Latif expressly guards against it by demanding a common central government for the confederation or the federation ; possessing the most clearly defined powers and functions. In fact, except the League, or the Aligarh Professors, no one has suggested a complete severance of the bonds now subsisting between the different parts of India."

"I think Dr. Ambedkar's reasoning tends the same way," observed the Begum, "as the League Resolution."

"But at the same time the learned Doctor so heavily underlines the inherent difficulties, that one doubts if he really approves of the principle at all," rejoined Krishna.

"May we then take it that the League demand or the Aligarh Professors' suggestion need not be further considered?" asked Ram Piari.

"No," said Rahim, "if we are to follow your own advice. Let us, now that we are embarked upon it, examine all aspects Ramdasji has summarised ; and come to our conclusion after an exhaustive investigation."

"Meanwhile, it is time to adjourn for the day," put in Abdul. "Let us meet tomorrow to continue the discussion from this point."

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The company dispersed shortly after to resume the next day.

FIFTH DAY—LUNCH

The entire company was present at lunch on the fifth day, as discussion was becoming extremely interesting. On one point or another, every one had something to say. The full assembly, consequently, stayed through the entire and prolonged sessions.

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“I suggest, Ramdas, that we take up one by one the groups of issues or aspects you put forward yesterday,” Abdul began almost as soon as the company had assembled, “and consider each in reference to the concrete schemes put forward for Pakistan.”

“I made four groups in all,” rejoined Ramdas, “political, economic, social, and cultural. But, at pinch, we can reduce these into two, taking in the first political with cultural, and in the second economic with social.”

“It is not necessary to reduce the issues thus,” remarked Krishna, “as the four groups of issues are clear and distinct enough. I second the suggestion to take them one by one in the order indicated.”

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THE POLITICAL ASPECT

“The political group will include,” observed Garudeshan, (a) alignment of the boundaries of the new states, if agreed to be set up ;

- (b) their sovereign attributes and powers ;
- (c) basic principles of internal constitution of each ;
- (d) mutual relations and treaties ;
- (e) foreign relations, including those *inter se*, and with Britain ;
- (f) local defence ;
- (g) relations with adjoining states.

(a) *Boundaries of Pakistan and Hindustan States.*

“ I do not think there need be any discussion here,” said the Begum, “ on (a) the alignment of the frontiers of the new states *inter se*. Even if agreed upon to be finally carried out, it must needs be a matter of such infinite and meticulous detail that there must inevitably be border commissions, who will proceed on certain predetermined general or guiding principles ; and whose recommendations will be given effect according to previously agreed terms.”

“ But must we not have some clearer notion of those same general principles ? ” enquired Krida.

“ We have already agreed to these, I think,” replied the Professor. “ If the principle of Pakistan is agreed to, separate states, zones, or units will have to be set up in what we today call India, out of contiguous territory made as far as possible homogeneous in population as regards their religion,—or as large a majority of the population as possible.”

“ There must be a minimum of population and area, also,” pointed out the Colonel.

“ We have already agreed that contiguous areas of at least 25,000 square miles, and 5 million people, should be entitled to demand secession, subject to the conditions and procedure agreed upon,” answered Rahim.

“ This will, of course, mean reconstitution of the existing units,—which are loosely spoken of as likely to form the Pakistan states, zones, or units,” pointed out Sahib Singh. “ The districts of the Punjab, and of Bengal, with predominantly Hindu population, must not be forced into the so-called North-Western, and Eastern Muslim majority states. They must have the right to withdraw, secede from these predominantly Muslim areas ; form their own separate federal units of Hindustan ; or become merged in the neighbouring existing units.”

“ Not only that,” added Krishna. “ You have also premised the possibility of large scale transfer of heterogeneous populations out of even the remaining non-Muslims in Muslim areas ; and vice versa. I think it highly impracticable, and even undesirable. But if you accept such suicidal solutions of what after all is an artificial agitation of a handful of Muslim egoists and jingoists, in mere parity of reasoning you must provide for such eventualities,—which must happen.”

“ I recognise it forms one of the strongest arguments against the creation of Pakistan states,” commented Sir Muhammad. “ But if it has to be, we might as well be ready for all such eventualities, however impracticable or undesirable.”

“ But, granting all this, we cannot agree, I think, to any corridors being created on the Danzig model in India,” suggested Ramdas. “ The Muslim zones in the North-West and the East are separated from each other by hundreds of miles, with non-Muslim states intervening all over that distance. I have heard it said that they be linked up *inter se* by a corridor on the Danzig model ; but I can see no reason to agree to it.”

“ Except an unconditional surrender to rank Muslim imperialism,” put in Krishna, “ and Jinnah-type jockeying. I would

say the same thing to the suggestion about another imitation of medieval Germany—the creation of Free Cities out of every 50,000 unit of urban population.”

“I am, also, against that idea, as to the corridor suggestion,” remarked the Colonel, “though I feel we make much too much of our villages, and cry loud and long about Rural Uplift,—whatever that may connote. If I had my way, I would de-ruralise India completely, abolish all villages, and settle their population in towns of say 50,000 each. A 100,000 civic units in this country will intensify and expedite economic development, progress in industrialisation, justice in distribution, and sufficiency in consumption of goods and services, far more rapidly and effectively than any programme of Rural Uplift. I would at the same time abolish all the present provinces, as I regard them not only as a fifth wheel of the coach ; but positively objectionable as leading to conflict of local and national loyalties.”

“This may sound magnificent idealism, but it is not practical politics,” Krishna’s tone was caustic in its comment. “And, as a practical statesman, I refuse to discuss it.”

“How much of the world’s woe is owed to these practical statesmen !” soliloquised Sahib Singh in ill-concealed sneer.

“But you also agree, don’t you, Colonel,” asked Ram Piari, “that the Aligarh proposal to set up Free Cities is as unacceptable as it is dangerous.”

“As also about the corridor,” confirmed the Colonel.

“Then the details of boundary-making may well be left to the expert commissions, if and when the principle is agreed to.” Ramdas was anxious to conclude this phase of the debate.

"You must not omit the conditions about making the new states, if ever we agree to that," said Garudeshan, "homogeneous to the utmost degree possible, and also to the right of heterogeneous population to be transferred to more congenial areas."

"The question of expense for such huge transfers is also not inconsiderable," reminded the Professor, "while the disposition of existing property of emigrants and their resettlement in their new home on equivalent alternative is no less complicated."

"The conditions are, I am afraid, alarming in their stringency," interposed Rahim.

"But just and inevitable," replied Krishna, "if such vivisection is at all to be permitted. For my part, I would not touch the notion with a pair of tongs."

"Most of the schemes we have now reviewed," added Abdul, "seem to accept, expressly or by implication, at least the basic principle of these conditions. But I am free to confess, if they are rigidly insisted upon there will be little hope of Pakistan materialising in any shape or form."

"I hope you won't regret," smiled Sir John in an impenetrable enigma.

"Let us then leave this issue of boundary-making to expert commissions," concluded Ramdas, "if the principle of Pakistan is accepted in any shape or form, in accordance with the basic principles, and subject to the conditions mentioned above."

They all agreed.

(b) *The Sovereignty of Pakistan and Hindustan States*

“The next point in the political group of issues,” continued Garudeshan, “is to determine the sovereign powers, functions, or attributes of the dismembered states. Except the League Resolution by some sort of an implication, and the Aligarh Professors’ proposals, none of the schemes we have reviewed contemplates completely independent and absolutely sovereign states.”

“The idea of absolute independent national sovereignty will have to be placed on the scrap-heap after this war,” commented the Colonel. “A World State, common sovereign of all countries, must be set up, if such suicidal struggles repeating every generation are to be avoided. Co-operation will be the rule of life between all communities, not competition the motive force ; co-ordination is the only way out of universal distress and despair ; and concerted effort the only remedy for chaos. Neither Pakistan nor Hindustan States can thus be sovereign states, in the sense sovereignty has been understood so far.”

“We shall accept the conditions, limitations, and requirements of world co-operation, if and when a world state is set up,” said Firdaus. “But, meanwhile, what of the demand for national independence from the British Imperialist domination.”

“I think we are all agreed on that,” put in Mrs. Krishna. “Even the Muslims don’t say we should continue to be subject to British domination and exploitation.”

“The ‘even’ is superfluous, if not supercilious,” remarked Rahim. “There are the Liberals, you know, almost all non-Muslims, content to remain a British Dominion.”

“A Dominion is not the same thing as being under domination,” Krishna ran to the rescue of his wife. “Sir Sikandar Hayat’s scheme at least is based entirely on India remaining for ever in Dominion Status.”

“It is a traditional association camouflaged by consent,” Sahib Singh was sententious and ambiguous.

“It is a voluntary partnership of mutually independent and equal units,” corrected Sir John. “No Dominion is in any way compelled to remain in the Commonwealth, nor share the burdens of the Commonwealth, or any other part of it, while a Dominion remains a member. On the contrary a Dominion may remain a member, sharing in all the benefits of the Commonwealth, and yet entitled to refuse participating in any of its burdens. Witness the case of the Irish Free State remaining neutral in the midst of this war.”

“Is the Irish Free State a Dominion ? ” enquired Firdaus suavely.

“An independent, sovereign state for all practical purposes,” answered Abdul before Sir John could reply, “who has abolished even the ornamental symbol of Commonwealth connection by abolishing the Governor-General ; and does not even observe all the treaties made at the time the Free State was established.”

“Because one party to an agreement acts unlawfully,” queried Sir John, “does the agreement become void, and the violator justified ? ”

“If the party presumably aggrieved acquiesces,” answered Garudeshan, “does not that constitute its own justification ? ”

“Let us not wander off the point,” intervened Ram Piari, “but please concentrate on the nature and scope of sovereignty in the new states, if agreed to set up.”

“Even if Pakistan is agreed to against every dictate of commonsense,” rejoined Krishna, “the Hindu State will be an independent sovereign Federation. The seceding Muslim areas may, under the cloak of self-determination, be left free to determine their own sovereign attributes. They can have no right to dictate the nature or limits of the sovereignty of Hindustan.”

“Sovereignty,” said Abdul, “my learned friend should know, is not a matter of self-creation. It is not the result of the unilateral action of a unit by itself ; but depends upon the recognition accorded to it by other states.”

“That does not affect my point,” Krishna insisted, “that Hindustan must be an independent, sovereign, federal State, irrespective of the recognition by our own seceders. As for others we shall know how to secure,—compel, if need be,—recognition of our sovereignty from all, including Britain.”

“Qui vivra, verra,” Sir John was brief, but cryptic.

“According to the League demand, the Pakistan States must *each* be separate and sovereign ; but the full assumption of sovereign status and function by *each unit* is not an immediate condition. It is contemplated as a sort of eventuality, a distant possibility ; and, pending its achievement, there is to be a transitional stage, when matters of common concern are to be dealt with by some sort of a central organisation. Nor is the eventual federation among Pakistan units themselves excluded.” Abdul took pains to explain.

“If each of the Pakistan units in the North-West or the East is to be a sovereign state,” remarked the Professor, “it will be small in size, poor in population, backward in enterprise, and weak in resources.”

“We have already discussed the League proposal and its implications,” pleaded Ram Piari, “have we not ? Need we

go over the same ground once again ? I thought we had agreed to the inherent weakness of the League proposal on all these heads, and in consequence to set it aside."

"The League proposal seems weak in material particulars when one scrutinises it carefully," said Garudeshan. "But, to my mind, its basic weakness is its utter vagueness and indefiniteness."

"Perhaps that is its real advantage in the eyes of *Qaid-e-Azam* and his colleagues in the Muslim League," said the Sikh. "If it is vague, you can twist it to mean anything,—and even nothing. That, I think, is the only reason why Mr. Jinnah disowned the report of the Haroon Committee purporting to prepare a constitution for the Pakistan units ; and falls foul of publicists like Latif who want to definitise their ideas, or would be willing to compromise."

"Let us agree, I suggest," intervened the Professor, "that absolute independence, and complete sovereignty for each of the Pakistan States is neither politically desirable, nor economically advantageous ; that, even if they are agreed to be set up, they would have, at least among themselves, to agree to some sort of a federal union, which means divided as well as limited sovereignty ; that for the sake of their own co-religionists in minority in non-Muslim States,—and following that course of the League resolution itself,—they must further agree to limit their own sovereignty, even if recognised, by treaty with their non-Muslim neighbours, to make the safeguards for minorities real as well as effective, adequate as well as mandatory ; and that they may even discover advantage exceeding disadvantage by working up some kind of a consortium, or joint sovereignty, with their non-Muslim neighbour state to work in harmony and co-operation matters of common concern and mutual advantage."

“ I would go further, as Dr. Syed Abdul Latif does,”* added Sir Muhammad, “ for the sake of Mussalmans in minority in non-Muslim states, that we may—we should—even agree to a common central government, somewhat on the Swiss model. The idea of sovereignty for each unit seems to me to be imprudent, if not fantastic. But that does not prevent the constituent units of a confederation enjoying the greatest autonomy in their own affairs, without prejudice to the integrity of the country, and the external sovereignty of its central government.”

“ Is it absolutely necessary that the central government alone should be sovereign for external relations,” asked Abdul. “ Canada and Australia in the British Commonwealth have their separate representation with foreign countries ; and the U.S.S.R. has recently allowed the same privilege to its constituent Republics. Here is one important attribute of sovereignty lopped off from the federal government. Why can we not follow such precedents in India ? ”

“ That does not affect the central sovereignty either of the U.S.S.R. or Britain. For my part, however, I think it would be in the common interest, at least for some years to come, to have a single central sovereign authority to conduct the country’s external relations,” answered Sir Muhammad, and continued. “ If the central executive is composite in complexion, and not necessarily removable by an adverse vote in the Legislature ; if due safeguards are provided and effective and adequate representation of Muslims in the Central Legislature as well as executive, judiciary and administrative services, I would not insist upon complete secession of Muslim majority areas to be set up into separate sovereign states, federated or not *inter se*.”

**The Pakistan Issue.*

“ I think this is eminently sensible,” said the Begum. “ But will Mr. Jinnah and his League agree ? ”

“ I am not worried about Mr. Jinnah and his League agreeing or not,” answered Abdul. “ But the question is will the Hindu Sabha or the Congress consent ? The League, and, with it, Mr. Jinnah, have got all the importance in the public eye, because Congress has agreed to Muslim demands as if they were forced upon them ; and not made out of good grace, and as a generous gesture. The Muslims, therefore, have never felt aught but irritation,—certainly not gratitude,—towards the Congress for its hesitation, and grudging concession. Why must it always allow the British Imperialist to score in generosity, if not sagacity also ? ”

“ The Hindu Mahasabha will never agree to such a suicidal step,” Krishna hastened to put in his caveat.

“ I am not sure,” slowly remarked Ramdas, “ if the Mahasabha has really got the wave-length of the Hindu masses. The Congress, I believe; still holds the country’s pulse, as recent elections have everywhere shown. And the Congress at the A.I.C.C. meeting in August, 1942, has practically accepted all these points, except that about a composite, presidential government at the centre on the Swiss-cum-American model, and specific safeguards and administrative services. These, I think, are matters of detail ; and if I at all know the Congress mind, they would not demur to such points if the alternative is the continued domination and exploitation of the whole country by Britain.”

“ Reading all responsible Congress leaders’ utterances together,” added Garudeshan, “ I, too, am inclined to the same view.”

“ I also,” “ I also,” said Sahib Singh, Kristodas, Fandrews and Ram Piari.

Krishna and his wife remained silent ; but their silence was taken as acquiescence, if not consent. Abdul and Rahim and Firdaus did not oppose.

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(c) *Basic Principles and Salient Features of Internal Constitution*

“The next item on the list,” said Begum Singh, “you have drawn up relates to the Basic Principles of the Internal Constitution of each such state ; and, if we have time and patience, I should also add to it the salient features of the Constitution.”

“What can you discuss under this head ? ” enquired Krida.

“If the country remained united, and becomes an independent sovereign nation by itself,” observed Begum Singh, “it could easily have been agreed, I think, that the new constitution of India must be an exclusively and entirely the Indians’ own creation, for example, by a constitutional assembly. Certain basic lines would, of course, have to be laid down, for example, that

- (i) the structure should be federal ;
- (ii) the forms and working should be democratic ;
- (iii) the widest possible scope for autonomy be left to the constituent units,—States or Provinces ;
- (iv) these units were admitted into the Federation on a par as far as possible, subject to or following upon any agreed arrangements about the treaty rights and obligations of the States and their rulers or peoples ; and
- (v) certain fundamental rights and obligations to be guaranteed to individual citizens or minority communities.”

A committee of the Constituent Assembly could work on excellent models, like the latest constitution of the U.S.S.R. ; or those of the British Dominions, like Canada or Africa, where many problems are similar to our own ; or even those of France before, 1940, the U.S.A. or Switzerland, not to mention the British Constitution. As against the problem to be faced with the dismemberment of the country into Pakistan and Hindustan states, I am sure, these general lines might prove universally satisfactory or acceptable," she completed her observations.

"I do not see why the coming into being of Pakistan states should cause any special obstacle," remarked Abdul. "Even if they exist independently and apart, they would sooner or later have to form their own federation, and devise a suitable constitution for the same on very much like the lines you have sketched."

"I am not sure," observed Firdaus, "that the ideal of democracy is not over-worked or obsolete under present conditions. For effective and expeditious achievement of the country's development, democratic machinery would be cumbersome, slow and ineffective. And to me the problem of poverty seems much more serious than the problem of political theories ; and that problem cannot be really solved except by some new device like the Proletarian dictatorship."

"Or Fascist reaction," remarked Garudeshan.

"Names and labels don't matter to me," rejoined the Allama. "Democracy,—working democracy,—on a continental scale is impossible, as it is absurd. But I do not rule out altogether the combination of real self-government, on a local scale, with effective centralisation, discipline, and co-ordination even on the national scale. If the substance is tried and good, I'll take the contents despite the label."

“It is not the label only that condemns Nazism,” Col. Sahib Singh intervened, “but the facts as well.”

“Let us not discuss now the contrast between Nazi leader principle,” suggested Ram Piari, “and the Proletarian dictatorship A la Stahlin. Let us instead confine ourselves to considering whether some form of democratic federation will meet the needs of India, free and independent and sovereign in her own right, with or without Pakistan.”

“Our Muslim friends also can have no objection to that, I suppose,” said Krishna.

“The Muslim social system,” returned Firdaus, “is much more democratic than the Hindu any day ; and if democracy ever comes to be endangered or denied in India, it will not be because of Islam, but because of Hindu ideas.”

“That is so,” said Kristo Das. “If there be difference as regards democracy in India, it is rather as regards the form than the content, the working organisation than the basic principle.”

“If the basic principle is agreed to,” said Garudeshan, “need we waste any time here on the specific form, or actual working, of the state and government we set up ? ”

“I am afraid you will have to be a little more specific,” advised Begum Singh. “You would, would you not, provide and ensure that no state in India, or no component unit of the Federation, should be a monarchy, or dictatorship ? If you become one or more independent sovereign states, outside the British Commonwealth, you will have to adopt some form of Republican organisation of the state, and abolish all social classes.”

“No objection to a republican constitution for the whole of India,” said Krishna, “but if by abolishing social classes,

you mean to abolish the very foundation of Hindu society, I will have to think."

"Political democracy does not necessarily mean social equality," corrected Garudeshan. "The latter is a traditional division of labour, while the former may be only a co-ordination of public effort, or enterprise."

"If social stratification of the type familiar in Brahmanic Hindu society is maintained," quietly remarked Sir John, "or is even tolerated, good-bye to any hope of any working democracy in India."

"Your squirearchy is not yet dead in Britain," reposted Krishna, "and yet Britain claims to be the world's foremost democracy. The Brahmanic social stratification is even more innocuous, if not impotent, to influence or obstruct political democracy."

"I do not think Mahatmaji would agree," supplemented his wife, "to abolish the Princes of India in the breathless craze for democracy."

"I rather take Sir John's view," countered the Colonel. "The British squirearchy is certainly not defunct ; and, so far as it is a living force today, Britain is no model of democracy to me. *The Money Lords* of Britain, however, though tending to be hereditary, are not all made by birth, while Brahmin aristocracy—or social classes—knows no other source of recruitment except by birth."

"Remember it represents three thousand years of unadulterated aristocracy," boasted Krishna, "or scientific race culture, without any taint of money making the man."

"I accept neither your history nor your biology," retorted the roused Colonel ; "neither your eugenics nor your economics. The accident of birth is seldom the hall-mark of race,

and never the outward index of genius. Biology is yet in its infancy ; heredity still a mystery ; and so Eugenics can scarcely be regarded as out of the stage of magic. But even in scientific breeding, if a systematic programme is applied to the human species, I see no reason why it should be made a pretext, at this stage of our knowledge, to cast our political constitution in an exploded, obsolete, reactionary mould. Even if one accepts the aristocracy of intelligence, there is no reason to tolerate the aristocracy of birth only as represented by the Princes ; even if one welcomes the aristocracy of selfless service to the community, there is no reason to put up with the pinchback prominence of purse-proud plutocrats. I would, therefore, insist on our future constitution being republican and egalitarian, as well as democratic and federal."

"If the Muslims are to remain with you," observed Sir Muhammad, "this is inevitable and *sine qua non*."

"I agree," added Firdaus, "except that the actual form of the constitution,—and all institutions, bodies, authorities, or officers thereunder,—must be determined by agreement hereafter."

"On that condition, I would have no objection to support the Colonel's stand," supplemented Rahim.

"Nor I," Abdul voted in the same lobby.

"Ramdas and I have already endorsed this view," put in the hostess, "and I think we would not demur to the conditions and limitations, would we ?"

Her husband nodded agreement with her view.

"My point was not so much against an egalitarian, democratic, federal constitution," said Krishna, "with guaranteed Fundamental Rights to citizens and communities, to be prepared in a constituent assembly of Indians only, but against

intervention, influence, or dictation as to the nature of our future constitution from non-Indian sources. And I include in these non-Indian sources those, also, who want to leave the bosom of this great and ancient mother of ours."

"I doubt if, after this discussion, any one here really feels, in his heart of hearts, that the so-called Pakistan units would demand—insist upon—separate sovereign statehood for themselves," assured Sir Muhammad. "I think they would be willing to be confederates,—you may call them federal units—subject to such technical or specific formal modifications, conditions or limitations as may be agreed upon. It is but an elementary principle of politics that the components or constituents of a federation or confederation cannot have a constitution fundamentally different from that of the common state. If there is to be republic at the centre, there should be republic in the units."

"I do not think the form and function of the Federal Executive is quite a matter of detail only," Krishna gave a final kick. "An irremovable, non-responsible Executive is a negation of democracy, as I understand the term."

"And yet such is the fact in the U.S.A. and Switzerland,—two of the foremost democracies of the world," Abdul quietly pointed out.

"I would much rather these Pakistanis should go out of the Federation of India, than that our democracy should be thus diluted," insisted Krishna.

"None so zealous in a Cause as a new convert", remarked Sir John in an audible aside.

"Is this not a personal remark?" hotly demanded Krishna.

"Yes, in the sense that it was only an aside, and not part of the debate," smiled Ramdas in reply.

"I can also tell my learned friend," added the Colonel, "that there can be no real democracy,—in the Greek sense,—on a nation-wide scale, in a country like India."

"Well, since you are all determined to surrender at discretion to the Muslim traitors," rejoined Krishna, "I can but record my protest."

"Your protest is noted," said Ramdas. "Let us pass on to the next point."

The company agreed.

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(d) & (e) *Mutual and Foreign Relations and Treaties*

"The next point, then, to consider is in regard to the control and conduct of foreign relations, including those with Britain, as well as *inter se*," reminded Ram Piari to expedite discussion.

"If the idea of Pakistan is found impracticable," said Garudeshan, "as our analysis is showing at every stage, and if, in consequence, India reconstituted remains a single, integral, federal, democratic republic, the Foreign Relations of the country should be in the hands of the single central sovereign authority."

"I am not so sure of the wisdom or necessity of your conclusion," said Sir Muhammad, "even if I grant your premises. The model of the British Commonwealth permitting each dominion to conduct its own Foreign Affairs is reinforced by the Russian innovation on the same lines even in the midst of a war. I see no reason, therefore, why Bombay should not have its own representatives in Japan for example ; and Madras and Bengal, in Burma or Malaya ; Sind and Punjab, in Persia and Afghanistan, while U.P. and Behar, in Nepal."

“The analogy of the British Dominions is not quite fitting,” said Ramdas, “even if one admits that Bombay may have some special affinity with Japan, or Bengal with China. They must all conform to a single foreign policy for the whole country, even if they are allowed to have their own separate Agents, Consults or Trade Commissioners. If Pakistan eventuates, the rest of India nevertheless must have a uniform foreign policy, preferably conducted by a single common centre.”

“Even if Pakistan does not eventuate,” pointed out Sir Muhammad, “you will have to consider,—for some years to come at least,—two questions as peculiar to India. The relations with Britain, which must and will remain in a class apart, owing to our long connection and many common interests. Very probably, if our connection is ended by amicable settlement, these relations will have to be regulated by Treaty ; and so these relations will necessarily stand in a class by themselves. And secondly, the relations between the units, also, may have to be conducted by some sort of treaty, whether it relates to regulation of inter-provincial rivers, or roads, or even some sort of zollverein, business consortium, or industrial enterprise. It may not be advisable for the central government to intervene every time, and appear to dictate on the excuse of common interest, even if the matter should concern two or three provinces only. The war time experience of movement of goods and control of prices has revealed many directions in which provincial agreements may not only save bother to the Central authority ; but may make for greater smoothness and harmony.”

“How will they affect the constitution ? ” enquired Begum Singh.

“In so far as treaties affect and regulate the internal functioning of your constitutional machine,” replied Sir

Muhammad, "they are bound vitally to affect the constitution. In fact, treaties regarding the guarantees of minority rights may become part of the constitution, if Pakistan states eventuate. And even if they don't, the constitution may have to provide definite safeguards for the enumeration, definition and due observance of these rights and obligations. If any special machinery,—judicial, arbitral, or otherwise,—is established to make these guarantees real, that must also form part of such treaties, or the fundamental Constitution of the Indian Federation, if Pakistan proposals do not materialise. If any third party guarantee is provided, the same consequence would follow."

"By parity of reasoning, then" added Abdul, "similar treaty obligations with Britain, to enable the present vested interests of that country being liquidated peacefully and satisfactorily, may also form part of, or at least vitally affect, the constitution, whether or not Pakistan eventuates."

"I would, however, insist," remarked Krishna, "that these agreements or provisions in the constitution, are of our own making, and with our own free consent ; and that they in no way represent any undue pressure, influence, or dictation from outside. Nor should there be left the slightest vestige of a Dominion Status in these agreements or provisions."

"We are all agreed on that," rejoined Abdul ; "but you must not make it any part or symbol of Dominion Status. This part of the constitution of the sovereign Indian State—whether included by treaty, or by direct provision, in the constitution,—should not be amendable, alterable, or in any other way affected or prejudiced, except by some special procedure provided in that behalf, e.g. due notice, or a prescribed majority of proportion of the total vote to make a valid change.

And the same may apply to more than one sovereign states, if the Pakistan idea materialises.”

“ I approve of that,” said Ramdas, “ but would like to add a caveat. In the event of the Pakistan idea materialising, and there being more than one sovereign state in the India of today, the treaties or agreements with Britain must be identical in wording, scope, and duration. It may be wholly unnecessary ; but I would like no room whatever being left for British Imperialism to play its time-honoured tricks, and make one part of the country feel jealous of another, and vice versa.”

“ To this there can be no objection by any class or community of Indians,” said Firdaus.

The rest all agreed.

FIFTH DAY—TEA

(f) *Local Defence*

Lunch had long since been over, and the company had adjourned to the verandah to continue the discussion. It was resumed almost without any preface.

“The problem of Defence is next on your list,” said Mrs. Krishna, who was feeling herself being too long left out of the picture.

“The problem of defence will be mainly financial,” remarked Fandrews. “Why not discuss it under that heading ?”

“With all respect,” demurred Firdaus, “the problem of defence in this country is essentially and predominantly a political one. Finance is only incidental ; and may be adjusted to the gravity of the main issue. But the main issue will be influenced by many extraneous forces, which we cannot adjust of our own accord, and to our own liking. It depends so much on the constitution and interests, ideals and outlook, of our neighbours, near or far,—which must shape our organisation, equipment and expenditure for defence. We cannot treat it otherwise than as part of the political aspect of the Pakistan proposals.”

“That is so ; and besides,” Abdul supplemented, “in our own land, there are many aspects of the problem which are purely political. The class composition of Defence forces ; the question of martial and non-martial races, the relative

contribution to the defence personnel from the different provinces,—those are not minor matters. So also the question of the location of the most important defence industries, which may also serve our peacetime needs. In essence they are all purely political.”

“ If Pakistan comes into being in any form,” added Prof. Kristodas, “ the problem will be duplicated for all parts. I think closer consideration of the technique, equipment personnel, and finance of Defence, for the several parts of the country, ought to make the strongest argument against dismembering the country, and weakening all parts at one and the same blow.”

“ The pages devoted to this subject by the author of the *Thoughts on Pakistan* make fearful reading,” said Begum Singh. “ Before the war it seems over half the Defence force of India was recruited from the Punjab and its adjoining south-eastern area.** Out of a total of 158,200 recruits, the Punjab (86,000) N.W.F. Province (5,600), Kashmir (6,500) provided 98,100 or 62% ; and if we add the United Provinces (16,500) the total percentage comes to very nearly 75%. And the communal composition of the Defence forces, as revealed by Dr. Ambedkar, is also highly suggestive. Mark his words :—

“ The figures show a phenomenal rise in the strength of the Punjabi Mussalman and the Pathan. They also show a substantial reduction of the Sikhs from the first to the third place ; by the degradation of the Rajputs to the fourth, and by the closing of the ranks to the U.P. Brahmins, the Madrasi Mussalmans and Tamilians.”

*cp. p. 75, *op. cit.*

“The war has changed all that. This is now ancient history,” said Sir John.

“Even if the war has changed it substantially, which I doubt,” said Krishna, “the change must be of a purely passing nature. The fact remains that the Punjabi Mussulman has a disproportionate strength in our defence organisation ; and gets a disproportionate share of the benefit of the defence expenditure at the cost of the rest of India. This cannot be tolerated in independent India. Every part must have its due share.”

“If the Punjabi Mussalman has the largest share in the defence contribution to the country,” rejoined Rahim, “and you think it unfair, the best thing to do would be to exclude the Province from the country altogether.”

“That will not solve the problem,” said Sahib Singh, “even though Ambedkar reads the figures he has adduced to reveal in a striking manner that the fighting forces available for the defence of India mostly come from areas which are to be included in Pakistan. From that it may be argued that without Pakistan Hindustan cannot defend itself.*

Of course the learned Doctor himself does not accept the conclusion, and gives excellent reasons for not doing so. For my part I hold that the mere institution of Pakistan—or exclusion of the Punjab, Kashmir and Frontier areas from India—will not solve this aspect of the Defence Problem, but will only duplicate it.”

“The late Sir Sikandar Hayat, Premier of the Punjab, used to make of this a condition precedent to any attempt at a communal settlement, i.e. that the communal proportions in

*cp. *Thoughts on Pakistan*, pp. 65 et seq.

the Indian Army should be maintained as on the 1st of April 1937 ;” remarked Dr. Garudeshan.

“ I can well believe it,” returned Sir John. “ Not only do the Muslims regard it as one of the effective guarantees of their Minority Rights being observed in practice ; the Punjab stands to gain too clearly from such a stipulation to omit making it.”

“ But it would be meaningless when conscription comes,” pointed out Firdaus.

“ With Gandhi at the helm conscription is a very remote prospect.”

“ Gandhiji has already agreed to conscription for Social Service,” said Krishna. “ And what can be a greater Social Service than National Defence ? ” It was only a rhetorical question to which nobody deemed it necessary to make a specific reply.

“ This is a grave danger,” said Ramdas, “ and not merely a matter of money. It is a matter of the rights of citizens as well as of local units, who would all like to have their own share in the task of National Defence. And the organisation of a nation like India’s defence in modern times is not a matter only of man-power, whether derived from martial races or non-martial. It is a matter of machines, equipment, materials, in which the country as an aggregate may be quite well endowed, but not each part of it, in all respects.”

“ You have hit the nail on the head, Ramdasji,” said Garudeshan.

“ And the nail goes into the coffin of the Pakistan idea,” said Sahib Singh. “ In the days of highly mechanised warfare, the mere brute strength of the so-called martial classes is of no avail ; and so neither the Punjabi Muslim nor Sikh

can claim, on communal grounds or because of past tradition, a marked preference, if not pre-eminence, in treatment as suitable material for national defence. The region, moreover has neither coal nor iron, nor rubber, nor tin, nor copper, nor tungsten, nor wolfram, nor even gasoline on the scale needed in modern warfare. Against any likely aggression from behind the N.W. mountains, they would be powerless to put up effective defence, if deprived of the support and collaboration of their neighbours to the south and the east. And if the defence organisation of the N.W. Muslim majority block is only a cloak for aggressive intentions across the Satlej, the much better resources, skill, and enterprise found in the southern and eastern Provinces, with a much more highly developed industrial system, would easily assert themselves to disabuse the fanatic or the ambitious in the N.W. block."

"On the authority of the author of the *Confederacy of India*, p. 205, Prof. Coupland takes the view 'that attack from the North-West would be far less likely if the State which held the passes were not India, but Pakistan' p. 77, Part III of his Report," remarked Rahim.

"I would say that is no reason why due preparation should be ignored even by the Pakistan state, or provision for Defence neglected, so long as world organisation necessitates such precautions," pointed out Garudeshan.

"My learned friend has missed the point altogether," observed Krishna. "What they want is not to have a separate homeland for Indian Mussulmans ; but a basis in India, for a Pan-Islamic State, which can then terrorise this country. And as a sop to the credulent or the weak-kneed among us, they tell us there is no need even for defence provision or preparation on the North-West, if Muslim States are established

in sovereignty in those parts. I hope none of you would be so short-sighted as not to see through this game."

"I see much less likelihood of a Pan-Islamic State eventuating in or after 1945, than of a Pakistan State," rejoined the Begum.

"I think the aspect has now been sufficiently discussed," added Ram Piari.

"The case of the Muslim majority regions in the east is not much better," said Garudeshan, "even though they may appear at first sight better endowed with resources. Eastern Bengal containing the Muslim majority has little coal and less iron ; neither tin, copper, rubber, nor petroleum worth the name ; not even the possibility of grand scale chemical industries, which the salt mines of the Punjab may seem to offer. The mass of the people is poverty-stricken in the extreme debilitated and inefficient ; and their leaders show little genius for business or modern enterprise beyond mere sentiment. One may, therefore, wonder if they would be able, in the event of Pakistan materialising and they being separated from the rest of India, to hold their own either on the east or the west."

"I do not hold with such wholesale condemnation of a whole people," quietly remarked Rahim. "Besides you do not know what a region or a people may be capable of, until they are tested in the crucible of a national emergency."

"And I would also remark that the problem of defence will wear a radically different aspect," said Firdaus, "after this war, if Russia and America have anything to say in the matter. I take it to be among the most likely and the most effective innovations of the post-war world that a World State would be established, which will, as it must, take over the functions of international police by common consent. Universal disarmament will, and must, gradually follow ; and

the task of national defence will become either obsolete, or merely a matter of local policing. The disadvantages you have noticed will not, therefore, operate quite so acutely as you seem to apprehend."

"I am at one with you there, Allama," said Sahib Singh. "But if you realise the possibility of a World State, international police, and universal disarmament, why would you consider the possibility of Pakistan at all ? and the necessity to provide for separate defence of the newly created states ?"

"The creation of Pakistan," replied Firdaus, "if ever it takes place by agreement, would not obviate the need for local policing. The forces of disorder within each community have yet to be destroyed. And then one must also not forget, that, however desirable the goal, it has yet to be achieved ; and so one must provide for the transition stage."

"That provision can be much more effectively and economically made," returned the Colonel, "by keeping the country intact, and making the fullest possible and the best arrangements we can on an all round basis. Even if the world state comes into being, and universal peace reigns among nations, the duty to defend against emergencies, against the outbreak of untutored savages, or unruly passions of even civilised (?) individuals, will be there. But it must be the duty of all without distinction, and also the privilege. The society of the future must adopt conscription, but not for the negative or destructive purpose of warfare only. We must have complete, thorough going social conscription, in which none who works would starve. And if that extends, as it must, to defence, it would be for physical training ; body-building ; inculcating habits of regularity, discipline and teamwork,—all to be utilised in the larger, more productive and constructive work of mankind. We can do that much more effectively for the

whole country from one pivotal centre ; and at the same time give every unit its fullest due. We can abolish the nightmare of the frontier or border in our midst, and yet make every citizen, man or woman, contribute his best to national defence."

"Not to mention the further consideration," supplemented quietly Garudeshan, "that if the country remains intact and undivided, the deficit of one unit may be made good from the surplus of another, as much in the matters of defence equipment and material, as in those of foodstuffs ; as much in regard to industrialisation, as in that of social services, public utilities,, and civilised amenities. India, united and integral, properly developed and suitably governed, has in her possibilities of self-sufficiency, and even surplus contributable to the common needs of humanity, which will, I feel confident, amaze the world, if only she is given a fair chance to develop herself. But if she is divided, dismembered, disorganised ; if the country, a natural unit by geography as Lord Wavell has recognised, is split up into several states, which would, from the very nature of their being, be mutually antagonistic ; if in place of willing co-operation and effective co-ordination of effort, resources and requirements of all our people in all parts of the land, we have, like a canker eating unperceived at the vitals of our being, clash and conflict, not only shall we not be able economically to be self-sufficient, and so provide a decent standard of minimum living guaranteed and realised all over the land ; we shall have no chance to defend ourselves adequately or effectively against our enemies, east or west, north or south, from beyond mountains or across the seas. Our energy will be dissipated ; our material resources wasted or unexploited ; our manpower poor, ignorant, debilitated, unable to hold their own against the least inroad of hostile forces, whether of nature or of neighbours."

“The Doctor’s eloquence is persuasive as it is pervading,” complimented Sir John. “I think his case is irresistible ; and will be driven home more and more if you consider the purely financial aspect. I call to mind that passage in the *Thoughts on Pakistan*** in which the learned Doctor, the author, comes to the conclusion : “To put it in concrete terms : while the revenues of Pakistan and the Eastern Muslim State will be 60 crores minus 24 crores, i.e. 36 crores, the revenues of Hindustan will be about 96 crores plus 24 crores, i.e. 120 crores.”

“The study of these figures, in the light of the observations I have made, will show that the resources of Hindustan are far greater than the resources of Pakistan, whether one considers the question in terms of the area, population or revenue.

**RESOURCES OF PAKISTAN

<i>Provinces</i>			<i>Area</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Revenues*</i>
N. W. F.	..	..	13,518	2,425,003	1,90,11,842
Punjab	..	..	91,919	23,551,210	12,53,87,730
Sind	..	..	46,378	3,887,070	9,56,76,269
Baluchistan	..	..	54,228	420,648	—
Bengal	..	..	82,955	50,000,000	36,55,62,485
Total	..		288,998	80,283,931	60,56,38,326

RESOURCES OF HINDUSTAN

<i>Provinces</i>			<i>Area</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Revenues*</i>
Ajmere-Merewara	..	..	2,711	560,292	21,00,000
Assam	..	..	55,014	8,622,251	4,46,04,441
Bihar	..	..	69,348	32,371,434	6,78,21,588
Bombay	..	..	77,271	18,000,000	34,98,03,800
C. P. & Berar	..	..	99,957	15,507,723	4,58,83,962
Coorg	..	..	1,593	163,327	11,00,000
Delhi	..	..	573	636,246	70,00,000
Madras	..	..	144,277	46,000,000	25,66,71,265
Orissa	..	..	32,695	8,043,681	87,67,269
U. P.	..	..	206,248	48,408,763	16,85,52,881
Total	..		607,657	178,513,919	96,24,05,206

“ These figures are somewhat different from those given by Prof. Coupland,” said Sir Muhammad. “ He finds the resources and expenditure of the Pakistani areas not a cause for pessimism. The revenues and expenditure of those areas, both in the North-West and in the North-East, according to the 1942-43 Budget estimates the learned Professor gives as follows :—

(In thousands of rupees.)

<i>Province</i>		<i>Revenue</i>	<i>Expenditure</i>
Bengal		15,69,79	16,75,38
Punjab		14,49,18	13,63,50
N.W.F.		1,96,54	1,95,86
Sind		4,80,74	4,96,01
		36,96,25	37,30,75

To these he adds the aggregate share of the Pakistani areas from the Central Revenues and Expenditure as under, figures being in thousands of rupees on the 1938-39 accounts basis :

<i>Revenue</i>		<i>Expenditure</i>	
Customs	4,48,06	Direct Demands on	
Excise	1,00,92	Revenue	51,49
Corporation Tax	15,28	Irrigation	7,02
Other Income Taxes	1,21,10	Debt Services	1,86,00
Salt	76,65	Civil Administration	1,45,56
Railways	1,50,00	Civil Works	10.83
Posts, etc.	2,37	Miscellaneous	33,13
Current & Mint	2,80	Contributions &	
Other Heads	18,87	Adjustments	2,05,00
Total	9,36,05	Total	6,39,03

Prof. Coupland thus finds the Pakistan areas to have a credit balance of 297 lakhs in their favour in the aggregate.”

“ I too, have read Coupland’s Report,” retorted the Colonel, “ but find in him nothing but a biased judgment throughout. His figures of Central revenue and expenditure are objectionable not only because they are based on 1938-39 accounts, and so out of date ; but also because they leave Defence outlay utterly out of account ; and make no allowance for the readjustment in the territorial boundaries of the proposed partitioned states.”

“ Even apart from that,” added Dr. Garudeshan, “ the Professor does not make out a very rosy picture, on the financial side, for the partitioned areas. There is not much room, he says, for additional income for these areas. Nor is there any doubt that the social services, and nation-building departments in those parts would need much greater expenditure than is the case today. Above all, the Professor, engaged unconsciously, perhaps, in a special pleader all the while, tacitly assumes a federal organisation for the partitioned parts, which the League Resolution, at least, does not desire.”

“ And, so far as I can see, his Report,” said Ramdas, “ no account is taken, at least in the Appendix which gives the basis of the learned Professor’s calculations, of that other Pakistan area in the east. That is, I fear, somewhat of a handicap, as a chronically, though unnecessarily, a deficit area.”

“ That, I believe, explains the variation in the figures between the text and the Appendix,” explained Sir Muhammad.

“ His calculation about the deficit on the strategic railways,” added the Begum, “ which is at present deducted from the net profit on the railways collectively, but which he regards as an item of the Defence Budget, is, in my opinion, utterly misconceived, if not misleading.”

“The Professor was engaged by the Government of India to plead a case,” said Krishna ; “and he has tried to earn whatever fee he has been paid. I should not bother myself too much about his Report and calculations. The fact is clear that, on the financial side, Pakistan would be nothing to write home about,—at least for the Pakistanis.”

“On that count, at least, do you realise that it might be good for the Hindustanis, if they agree to Pakistan, and let them reap the harvest they have sown,?” asked Firdaus. “If Pakistan happens, the remainder would obviously be left with larger resources, and better chance for quicker prosperity.”

“We Hindus are not selfish, and would not, even on that ground, agree to Pakistan partition of the country, however much one might like to leave such traitors to national unity to stew in their own juice,” returned Krishna.

“In justice to the Professor, however,” said Ramdas, “I would like to add that he is fully aware, and makes no secret of his knowledge, that any hope of provision for defence on the North-West being unnecessary if a Muslim State holds the passes is utterly unfounded. His concluding words in that section (p. 95-6 are worth very serious and careful consideration.”

“There need, therefore, be no apprehension on the score of resources. Creation of Pakistan will not leave Hindusthan in a weakened condition,” pointed out Rahim to Krishna.

“Dr. Ambedkar has not, it may be added, much concern with the material resources needed for modern defence. If he had added a section on that, the case would have been very much stronger against Pakistan.”

“I am not an irreconcilable adherent of Pakistan,” said Abdul. “In fact I am inclined very much against it for many reasons,—amongst them the fear that the masses of the people in Pakistan would be exposed to the tender mercies of the exploiting upper layer of the governing class,—perhaps not more than 5% of the population—if the counterpoise naturally provided by the rest of the country is lost by partition. But I am not yet convinced, that we need worry so much about the problem of local defence of the new states, if set up, against each other as well as against external aggression proper. If the Pakistan states are set up by amicable agreement amongst ourselves, there need be no provision for border defence within the present single country of India, any more than there is any such provision as between Canada and the U.S.A.”

“That is not a correct parallel,” answered Sahib Singh. “The two states of the U.S.A. and Canada have had for over 130 years no conflict inter se ; and are never likely to have. There is much more in common between Canada and the U.S.A., than there is between Canada and Britain, even though the King of Britain is also the King in Canada. But as between Pakistan and Hindustan,—if ever they separate into independent states, there would be mortal enmity, especially as the severance will be on religious grounds ; and demarcation of religious lines is indelible. They must, therefore, be ready and prepared against mutual aggression on both sides of the border.”

“A closer,—though, even then, not really accurate and strictly applicable,—analogy would be that of Prussia and Austria after 1870. They were countries of the same stock ; they were on the same Germanic soil ; but they were divided by religion, by tradition, by sentiment. And so, until the

Austrian empire had vanished in the smoke of the last war, there was no stopping of defence provision on their respective mutual frontiers, even though they were in close alliance." added his wife.

"I believe we have considered this matter enough," said Ram Piari, "and there seems to be general agreement that, looking carefully into all that is involved in the problem of national defence,—finance, man-power, material resources, geographical conditions, traditional alignment of transborder neighbours and their policy—setting up of wholly independent sovereign states on religious or communal grounds would be as impolitic as it is unprofitable."

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No one opposed this concise statement of the general position.

(g) *Relations with Indian States*

"Remains then, to consider only the place of the adjoining Indian States, under the Pakistan proposal," said Krishna, "if it ever comes into being."

"I am afraid that would prove the toughest hurdle to jump," remarked Sir John. "If you fashion your own future constitution after the war, the absorption or assimilation of the Indian States within the border will make an acid test of your political sagacity, I can promise you."

"You are safe to make such a promise," retorted Sahib Singh, "for you have made such a tangled skein of the whole affair, the devil himself would find it a task to unravel it."

When it suits your book, you call these museum monuments sovereign states in alliance with you by solemn treaties ; but when it does not suit you, you treat the greatest of the princess with courtesy less than due to a domestic servant, and consideration less than demanded by a shop-girl. When it suits you, you speak of the engagements with them as solemn treaties ; but when it does not, you treat those very engagements as less than scraps of paper. You have all but asked their people to treat them as demigods, what time your humblest subordinate in the Political Agency can charge the biggest of them with murder by poison, rape, or worse. You deposed the reigning Gaekward, hanged a Prince of Sikkim, and exiled goodness knows how many rulers in Rajputana, Punjab, Central India, or the South. You arrogate to yourself, though mere allies, the right to permit adoption, recognise heirs and marriages of ruling princes, or declare a state Khalsa. You feed them with lies about the Indian people's leaders, and surround them with spies. You corrupt them by titles, and corrode them by drinks and drugs and diseases brought by your venal beauties from Mayfair or Belgravia. You poison them by education, demoralise them by training, and discourage them by every manoeuvre of duplicity and diplomacy your agents or representatives can devise. You have filled them with false pride, and surfeited them with every sin that any Holy Writ ever thought of and warned against. You have taught them to commit every crime in the calendar against their people, and also to cringe and cower before every underling in your Foreign Office. How can the leaders of the people hope to make them listen, and see the writing on the wall before them, when your henchmen are there at their elbow every second to twist and turn and travesty every action, every gesture, every utterance of the best among us, the noblest and the saintliest."

"I did not know, Colonel, you had such a soft corner for the Ruling Princes in your heart," commented Abdul.

"All men are born equals—as snobs," Firdaus was brief but bitter.

"I have not a grain of softness in my heart," added Krishna, "or snobbishness, for these obsolete, impecunious, decadent remains of a once glorious race. But I could not have defended them with half the Colonel's eloquence and energy."

"I am only waiting for the first day of real power in the Indian people," rejoined the Colonel, "to get them all strung upon the first convenient lamp post or tree. But I cannot overlook the fact that what the Princes of India are today, not in outward trappings but in real substance, they owe entirely to their masters and models in everything, that is evil, that is vicious, that is degenerate and decadent."

"It is curious to my mind," intervened Dr. Garudeshan, who was anxious to avoid this line of debate, "that, except the vague generalisations of the Lahore resolution, every proposal for setting up Pakistan in India we have reviewed, seeks to embrace the Indian States along with their new proposed States irrespective of the creed or wishes of the people concerned, and of course regardless of the treaty rights of rulers. And in marked contrast stands out the case of Hyderabad, which, irrespective of population majority, is sought to be made into a centre of Muslim power in the south, and of Muslim culture in a region where the Muslims are in a minority of less than 10%."

"None of these schemes, as applied to the case of the States," said Sir John, "appears to me to have carefully

considered the juridical, political or constitutional problem. Without discriminating for the moment between state and state, you must consider—

What is the juridical status of each state ;

What are the treaty rights and obligations of each and the reaction of the precedents built up in a hundred odd years with reference to each state or in general ;

To whom should the treaty burdens or benefits, rights or obligations, revert or be entrusted, and how ;

What are the rights, or place, of the people of each state, in the State itself, and in the larger unit whichever it is, the whole of India, or any smaller zone or section of it ;

What will be the constitution applicable to these states, and peoples, including the ruler and his family ;

Will the States be all absorbed or assimilated in British areas adjoining, or will they or any of them be permitted to maintain their individuality intact, and, if so, on what conditions ; Will any of them be allowed to join the Federation by itself on a status different from the Provinces ;

What, if any, financial adjustments, and administrative re-arrangements, be necessary or desirable for carrying through the merger, absorption or assimilation of States in adjoining British areas. . . .”

“With all respect,” interrupted Ram Piari, “may I say these all sound to my ears matters of complex detail, which will, of course, have to be determined by expert commissions later ; but which need not detain us in vain disquisition now.”

“Some of these points made by Sir John cannot be dismissed as mere details,” rejoined Garudeshan. “We must,

for instance, be quite sure on whom must devolve the mutual rights and obligations under the treaties,—to the component units, or the composite whole, of India as successor to the present Government of India. The juridical status of the States is, for example, an extremely thorny question, even for forming our Federation.”

“In juridical propriety,” answered Krishna, “and even as legal necessity, they can only descend to the whole of India, the Central Government of the legitimate successor to the present Government of India. We assume a peaceful transfer of power,—including rights and obligations, assets and liabilities, after such adjustment of accounts as may be deemed proper and necessary.”

“But the assumption itself may be challenged,—and will be,—by the States, you may be sure,” said Sir John.

“We shall meet the challenge when it comes,” rejoined Abdul. “Meanwhile we have no desire to allow you to keep it in your arsenal a reserve weapon for internal division among us.”

“The Government of the seceding units,” he continued, “may as well claim to be the rightful, legitimate successors of the present Government of India, as that of the whole of India, on your own assumption of an amicable transfer of power. At least so far as the States within the areas included in Pakistan,—or adjoining it are concerned, it seems to me to be the only logical and equitable course.”

“I do not see either the logic or the equity of your view,” retorted Krishna. “The treaties and engagements have been made by the Government of India as a whole ; and the burdens or benefits under them must come only to their collective successor.”

“ But assuming there is no collective—single—successor ? ” argued Abdul.

“ And even if there is, the present Government of India would have much to say in making a settlement on this issue,” insisted Sir John, “ would they not ? ”

“ Just as much as the Rulers would have,” rejoined Krishna. “ Treaties are, after all, bilateral engagements, you know.”

“ If the rulers are allowed their say, the people of the States would be automatically excluded,” pointed out Colonel Singh. “ They would be exchanged or bartered as if they were so much cattle, or less. And would that be tolerated in the post-war world ? ”

“ That would depend on the nature of the general settlement which effects and regulates the transfer of power in India,” replied Sir John. “ After all, the treaties are and have been always with the rulers, and not with the people of the States,—whatever one may think of the dues of the peoples now, or in the post-war world. The British Government is in honour bound to see that their treaty obligations are duly honoured, and will continue to be honoured, when they get ready to clear out of this land.”

“ The treaties and engagements are only an excuse,” said Krishna, “ just as the fate of the Minorities is made out to be. It is a trump card for them to stave off as long as they can the final surrender of power to Indians in India.”

“ Not at all,” rejoined Sir John. “ It is much more like an Irish bog in which we have stumbled in our own ignorance. It is a handle for every tub-thumping yankee to revile Britain and execrate her designs, as it is for every one of your pinch-beck politicians to cast stones at us in the name of Indian independence, the peoples’ rights, and what not ! I wish the

tangle could be ended as the Gordian knot was cut,—by Britain boldly making a take-it-or-leave it offer, in the face of all the world, to the Rulers, their peoples, and the rest of India, too.”

“And just what would be that take-it-or-leave it offer,” asked Col. Singh with ominous suavity.

“That the Indian Government of India, duly constituted and recognised as the successor to the British Government of India, should take over these treaties, sanads, engagements and obligations, with all their attendant implications and consequences, *en bloc*, lock, stock and barrel ; promise to maintain them as they have been maintained hitherto, until the parties agree amongst themselves to the contrary ; and may the devil deal with you all as you deal with yourselves,” rasped out Sir John.

“You accept, then, that the transfer must be to the whole of India,” said Krishna, “and not to any part of it ?”

“I have never concealed my abhorrence of the idea of dismemberment of this country,” returned Sir John, “however righteous, necessary, or politic it may be to support and encourage the demand for the due, the fullest recognition of the rights of communal minorities.”

“But if the treaty rights and obligations are transferred as Sir John advises,” argued Garudeshan, “the new relationship will be as between the Central Government of India and individual States. That would mean not only that the peoples of the States will have no recognition ; but, what is far more exceptionable, the States as units of the Federation will have a wholly different status from that of the Provinces.”

“The States will claim to be sovereign—at least within their own frontiers, and for their own internal concerns,”

pointed out the Professor. "That will mean grave complications."

"The States may even claim the right to stand out of the whole of India, in virtue of their treaty rights," remarked the Reverend Fandrews. "If those parts of the country which have been for a century and more integral units could be suffered to secede, those which have never technically been part and parcel of the juridical unit called India could surely not be expected as a matter of course to remain part of the new constitution whatever shape it takes."

"And even if, they do not claim such right to start with," observed Abdul, "they may reserve the right to secede later, if experience shows them the unwisdom of uniting."

"None of these apprehensions have any ground in reality," said Ramdas, "so far as I can see from the nature of the treaties, etc. and the history of the relations between the States, their rulers or peoples, and the Government of India. No State is a sovereign unit in its own territories,—not even Hyderabad. Not only they have no recognition in international relations ; few of them have any other marks of sovereignty—like the right of their own monetary or fiscal system ; to their own separate defence organization and equipment in all arms ; their own posts and telegraphs and radio communications. They have had to fall into line in regard to railways and currency, excise and exchange, Company Law and contracts, and all other matters of common concern, whenever the Central Government of India came to have legislation, or executive action, on a uniform pattern on those matters ; and there is no reason to believe they would not be ready or willing to do so hereafter with Indians at the head of the Government machinery of their own country."

“ You are dead right, Ramdas,” complimented Sir John, “ and I felicitate you on your perspicacity. These things have been done over a hundred years by treaty, by patient persuasion, by silent pressure where necessary. But they have been done ; and you will be wise not to raise a needless hornet’s nest about your ears by raising all kinds of hypothetical troubles before they come seeking you. The paramount power is always paramount ; and will ever remain so.”

“ Sir John speaks from experience,” smiled Sir Muhammad in an inscrutable enigma. “ Treaties are not identical with all States, nor their interpretation on all occasions. And, at pinch, the Indian Government of India of the future could as well do with the most powerful or recalcitrant of the Princes what Lord Reading did as his parting kick to the Nizam in 1926 ; and what the British Parliament is doing even now in regard to the compulsory merger of the smaller States into their larger neighbours. I never thought Parliament could legislate in regard to the States and relations *inter se* of the individual States ; but I do not believe even the Privy Council will question the competence of Parliament or the validity of its enactment.”

“ Once the main issue with Britain herself is settled,” continued Krishna, “ I apprehend very little difficulty from the States, their rulers or peoples in being assimilated with the rest of India. There are a thousand and one ways of making individuals see the common good, even against their own interests for the time being. And if the Foreign Office of the Government of India was fecund in ruses or remedies for complicated situations *vis-a-vis* the States, the corresponding organisation under the National Government of India need not be presumed to remain for ever deficient in the technique of convincing, cajoling or coercing the Rulers or their ministers in the Indian States.”

“ I recall the Opium treaties with China ; and their reaction on States like Indore or Gwalior,” Begum Singh continued the trend and exhibited her erudition to advantage. “ They had to submit to loss without compensation of millions upon millions ; and they may well be expected to copy their own excellent precedents in the matter of ports or radios in recent years when dealing hereafter with the national, representative and responsible Government of independent India.”

“ All this may be some consolation,” urged Dr. Garudeshan, “ but does not answer my original anxiety about the peoples in the Indian States. What will happen to them ? Will they remain mere chattels of their rulers to be dealt with at their own autocratic will ? Or would they be given any right to share in their own Government ? Will they even have any fundamental rights guaranteed to them ? ”

“ Not even the Indian Princes can be so dead to the march of time,” answered the Rev. Fandrews, “ as not to perceive that their best guarantee of continuing in anything like their present position is the goodwill of their people. They can no longer be treated as dumb, driven cattle.”

“ This may be a comforting reflection, Padre,” said the Sikh, “ but until some machinery is devised to enable them to exercise their will, I shall not be satisfied about their future ; and, therefore, the future of this whole country. In any settlement made with Britain for effective transfer of power, we must insist upon a clause to secure and guarantee the rights and position of the people in the Indian States. This must be a *sine qua non*.”

“ I take it the Fundamental Rights of Citizenship in the new India,” put in Ram Piari, “ as well as of communities, guaranteed in the constitution, will be common to all India, and not merely to British India.”

"And these may include right to representation, as well as vote, in the federal as well as local legislature," added the Begum.

"And also the right to choose whether to remain apart from, or be assimilated with the rest of India," added Garudeshan. "Given a properly framed referendum on this head," remarked the Colonel, "and I have no doubt what the decision of an overwhelming majority of the people in every State will be. In less than a decade there would be no State left in India ; and in less than a generation, no ruling prince, however snail-like your progress in other directions."

"That means both Hyderabad and Kashmir will disappear as separate entities ?" Krishna wanted to make certain.

"It would be a bitter pill for the Muslim intelligentsia to swallow if Hyderabad is eliminated," pointed out Rahim, more in sorrow than as complaint.

"The special treatment suggested to be given in several of the schemes, here reviewed, to Hyderabad," said Garudeshan, "as a centre of Muslim culture, cannot be justified on any ground that would at all support the Pakistan idea. Hyderabad must go with the rest of the adjoining regions in any scheme of reconstruction. On the linguistic basis, it will have to be split up into the Telugu, Kanarese, Marathi and Tamil areas ; and be absorbed respectively in the larger units which represent this principle all round the present State of Hyderabad."

"It must be admitted, in justice to the Muslim League," observed Begum Singh, "that it makes no such discriminating demand for special treatment to the Nizam and his dominions."

"What the Muslim League really demands is known to nobody,—not even to the League itself, nor its President," said Krishna. "I question if even God knows it."

“Don’t blaspheme,” said Firdaus in some heat. “But if the right of the people to choose their own rulers,—or the system of Government they would live under, and the fellow citizens they would work with, is recognised, Kashmir, too, will vanish from the face of the political map of India.”

“That would be a matter of no regret to me, I assure you, Allama Sahib,” rejoined the Sikh. “We have had enough of Mr. A. and his cliqueish, clannish, clever Dogras and Pandits.”

“I recognise Kashmir as the still surviving centre of the ancient Aryan culture,” remarked Krishna, “as symbolised in the temple of Martand. But I won’t mind very much its disappearance as a State, the more so as the Muslim leader in that region has unequivocally declared against the idea of Pakistan.”

“The disappearance, elimination, or abolition of the State as such must be,” said Ramdas, “by the free decision of the people of those units, not as an act of political vandalism by the senior partner and sole judge of such questions. We must observe good faith if we take over the treaties of the Government of India with the individual States.

“The poet has well parodied the prophet,” remarked the Colonel *sotto voce*.

“Thou shalt not kill,
But needst not strive
Officiously to keep alive.”

“Are we then agreed,” asked Ram Piari to definitise the day’s discussion, “that the States, large or small, will fall in with the rest of India ; and that the Central Government of united India will be the heir and successor to the rights and obligations, the assets and liabilities, in respect of the

States and the treaties with them, and not the Government of the units making up the Federation of India."

"If the idea of Pakistan does not materialise," Abdul answered her, "there is no alternative but to agree. But if Pakistan emerges in any form, some States may have to go with the Central Government of Pakistan, too."

"The greatest obstacle to the realisation of Pakistan," put in Sir John, "is, to my mind, the position and future of the States. So long as the States remain as separate entities at all, they will preclude any possibility of Pakistan, especially if you eschew the big stick."

"And, further," added Garudeshan, "even if Pakistan comes on the lines of the Muslim League resolution, no State will consent to join the newly emerging autonomous and sovereign State of the North-West block, or in the East. If at all they join, they will join the Central Government of the seceders."

"If you postulate the peoples' right to self-determination," interjected the Sikh, "there is no danger in that direction of either sort."

"Even if, collectively, the treaty rights and obligations are inherited by the Central Government of India," remarked Sir Muhammad, "the individual States must be aligned with, absorbed in, or assimilated to, the adjoining unit component of the Indian Federation."

"It may not be one unit, but several, as in the case of Hyderabad or Kashmir," pointed out Krishna. "Or the States may themselves form a solid unit by merger or combination among themselves, as in Rajasthan or Kathiawar, to make a unit of their own in the Federation. If they are to be real members of the Federation on a par with the Provinces, most of them must have some preliminary federation of

their own. We cannot have every lord of half a village posing as an equal member of the Federation with Bombay or Bengal."

"I would not agree to blocks of adjoining States territory to be consolidated into component units of the Federation by themselves," objected the Colonel. "The reactionary forces are too strong in those areas to augur well for the future progress of their peoples, unless they are distributed among more than one adjoining British unit."

"That is a matter of detail," said Ramdas, "which may be left to follow its own natural affinity in due course of time. But for the present shall we agree to the concise proposition put forward by Mrs. Ramdas, as regards the place of the States in the future India?"

"As a juridical deduction and political necessity, I see no alternative but to agree," Sir John signified his adhesion.

"Subject to the right of the States people to choose their form of government, under and in conformity with the common national constitution, being expressly reserved, assured and guaranteed, I agree, too," declared Dr. Garudeshan.

"Subject to the fundamental rights of citizenship and of minorities being common to the States people as well as the British Indian people, and guaranteed by the Constitution, I agree also," voted Begum Singh.

"Subject to the reservation that, should Pakistan eventuate in any form, the States adjoining the Muslim majority States shall go with the Central or Federal Government of those units," added Rahim.

"All necessary reservations being recorded and admitted and accepted," smiled Ram Piari, "the general proposition is passed."

The rest of the Company expressed their concurrence.

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“The question, however, does not end at this stage,” pursued Sir John. “What will be the status of the States—considered as areas or peoples, if they join—or accede to,—the Federation of India. Will they come in as equal partners or associates, singly or in combination ;—or will they demand, in virtue of treaty rights, special position ? ”

“They must join as equal components,” said Col. Singh, “provided they are at all comparable.”

“Only the larger States,—perhaps not more than fifty,—would be able to comply with this condition, if your definition of comparability applies to areas or population or revenue resources,” pointed out Krishna.

“Except about a dozen States,” added Dr. Garudeshan, “or at most a score, I do not think individual States should be allowed to join the federation in their individual capacity. No State with less than 2500 square miles of area, or less than 2,50,000 population, or less than 10 lakhs of annual revenue, should be allowed to join the Federation in its own individual right. All States below these limits must be required to form a merger of themselves with their neighbour—State or province, as the case may be,—and then join as fairly comparable units composing the Federation of India.”

“Memories of negotiations with the Princes under the Act of 1935 do not encourage any hopes of a smooth attainment of the goal,” Krishna was somewhat pessimistic.

“That was the fundamental mistake, under the Act of 1935, of the negotiations with the Princes,” pointed out the Colonel.

"In future the decision must be left to the peoples of the area ; and then there would be no doubt as to the result."

"Then what would become of the sanctity of treaties," asked Krishna, "which we have just agreed to accept as a heritage from the present Government of India ? "

"The treaties, and all other obligations, will be taken over," reassured Ramdas, "subject to the constitution of the country we devise. And if the constitution recognises the right of the people to be consulted, we cannot be said to violate the treaties, by merely permitting exercise of that right."

"That is more a quibble than an argument, Ramdas," said the Colonel, "and not quite worthy of you. A better, at least a franker, method would be to make it impossible for the Princes or peoples of the States to keep out of the union. If the Princes insist on their Treaty rights, and elect to keep out, let them take the consequences of this suicidal step. They will soon have enough pressure from within not to persist in this fatal policy."

"I think once the Rulers clearly realise that there is no outside authority to back them up in all their absurd pretensions or impossible demands," remarked Ram Piari ; "once they understand that they have no alternative but to make common cause with the rest of the country, they will soon come to know that their own best chance lies in joining up."

"Well said, Mrs. Ramdas," said Krishna. "It is the same logio as with the Muslim Communalist intransigence. Once the British get out of the seat of power in India, there will be no difficult in making the Muslim as well as the Maharajah see reason, and make common cause with the rest of their countrymen. Look how the Permanent Settlement is crumbling to ashes in Bengal."

“Even if the main issue can thus be settled satisfactorily,” observed Abdul, “we have yet to settle the *modus operandi*, for bringing the States into the Federation.”

“I would not repeat the mistake of the framers of the Act of 1935,” said Sahib Singh, “nor of the negotiators under it. There must be no individual right of accession to the Federation, nor, of course, of secession. They must be required within a definite time to make up their mind,—princes and people combined ; and join or keep away for good *en masse*, subject to such adjustment of grouping in detail for administrative convenience as may seem necessary and be agreed upon. I may add that, personally, I would leave the decision to the people only, and in no sense to any Prince. In my opinion, he and his family should be summarily disqualified, even from voting on the Referendum.”

“The right of secession, we have already agreed,” pointed out Rahim, “should not be denied, in principle, to any component unit. That is the best insurance against its exercise in practice, of course subject to the limitations agreed upon.”

“I accept your sage advice, Shaikh Sahib,” returned the Sikh, “but even granting the right in principle, it would, in practice, be extremely difficult for the States to separate once they have federated with the rest of India. I am so certain they will be completely assimilated with the adjoining areas that I believe no vestige of their separate identity will be left in less than a generation. Who remembers nowadays Oudh or Nagpur as separate kingdoms ? ”

“Whatever that may be so far as the future is concerned,” Sir Muhammad took up the running, “how do you expect the first union will be effected ? ”

“I envisage, for my part, some such procedure as the following,” explained Ramdas, “assuming, of course, that we

are all agreed on the main issue of India's independence, and her constitution as a free, sovereign State, integral and indivisible, by herself. The British Government will make a treaty somewhat on the lines of that bringing into being the Irish Free State, with the representatives of India including the principal parties, acknowledging and recognising India's independence and sovereign status as a state by itself. The Treaty will contain a general clause or chapter, regarding the Treaty rights of the States, and their obligations towards British India, and *vice versa*. Assuming that the States have collectively agreed to the transfer, this clause or chapter will declare that all such rights and obligations have been transferred to the Indian National Government as successor to the British Government of India, or the British Sovereign, by common consent ; and also providing that the future relations will be conducted under the treaty and subject to the Constitution. If any States do not agree, the transfer of rights and obligations should nevertheless be made ; but the representatives of the successor State in India as a whole should bind themselves to deal with such States according to their respective treaties, until the same should be modified by common consent. Mention must also be made in this treaty of the new Constitution for India, recognising in principle the right of secession of federating units on certain prescribed conditions, and under certain definite procedure, as also the fundamental rights of citizens and communities duly guaranteed. The new Constitution, the Treaty may further provide, should be devised by representative Indians themselves from all parts of the country, all states and provinces ; and should be submitted for acceptance or ratification to the people as a whole, as well as by each component unit—State or Province. A three-fourths majority of votes cast in favour of the constitution should bring it at once into effect. Its basic principles

and features should be common to all units federating. This is, of course, a bare outline ; but I think it is sufficient for our purpose."

"I think so," said Garudeshan, "and, for my part, I approve of it, endorse it, and accept it."

"I too," came from most of those present.

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"I have only one matter still to definitise in this regard," continued Garudeshan. "What will be the constitution for the State areas that federate ? I understand, of course, that those who refuse to federate will not be affected by this question,—until they, too, see reason."

"The common constitution of the country should apply to the States as well," hastened the Colonel to put in his oar,—"at least in regard to the fundamentals."

"I would rather put it negatively," said Ramdas. "No federating State can be allowed to have a constitution which would be repugnant in its basic character, to the fundamentals of the national constitution ; and every State should be expected, in matters and institutions of common concern, to get on common lines laid down by the national constitution. Within these limits, I would allow a fair margin for local autonomy, at least in the initial years of the new constitution."

"I would be satisfied," said the Colonel, "provided the Princely Order (!) is given clearly to understand there will be no more room for autocracy, irresponsibility, or individual idiosyncrasy and princely vagaries in the new India minus the British."

"We have devoted disproportionate time, I am afraid," said Ram Piari with a sigh, "to this subject. But I suppose it was necessary, and is well bestowed."

"It is the main obstruction, Mrs. Ramdas," said Sir John, "to India acquiring full, independent sovereign statehood,—far more than the communal tangle. The communities I think are only bargaining ; and so would close the deal when they realise nothing better could be got, and much worse might well be feared if they remain intransigent. In the communal display, moreover, there is always possible an appeal to the masses. But in the case of the Princes you may be sure, opposition would be much stronger and more persistent."

"Don't you be frightened, Mrs. Ramdas," assured Krishna, "by Sir John's bogey. The Princes as a body have at least as much sense to perceive their own long-range interest as the communal leaders. When they realise there is no outside power to incite them, encourage them, support them in any intransigent demands, they would cave in even more thoroughly than the communalists. We may easily expect those, who gave their daughters to the Mlechha to save their skins once, will not baulk at their obsolete rights being abrogated in tune with the times they live in."

"I am not so confident about the Princes' good sense," said Sahib Singh, "prevailing over their selfishness. There is no other single group of the same strength in India so degenerate, so decadent, so demoralised as the Princes,—no greater perverts, debauchees, and dishonest devils in such exalted places. India will neither have peace nor independence until the whole lot of them is sent to the lethal chamber. Leave them the least breath of life, and they will try to corrupt our leaders, subsidise our press, suborn our legislators, and in every way undermine and obstruct and frustrate democratic governance, economic development, and social justice. To the nearest lamp-post with the Princes and the Zamindars, the capitalist and the land-lord I say,—and the sooner the better."

“The colonel forgets,” remarked Garudeshan, “that we are thinking of a peaceful transfer of power, an evolutionary change in the constitution, and not a violent revolution on the Russian model. I fear such revolutions are much too apt to be followed by reactions à la Bourbons—or Buonapartes, to be quite acceptable to peaceable peoples intent upon smooth progress of national evolution.”

“I do not regret the time we have devoted to this matter,” said Ramdas, “even though it seems disproportionate. Nor do I fear the Princes would prove insurmountable obstruction to our programme of national independence and social equity, even though I recognise the complexity of the problem presented by them, their treaties and their people. Let us be content for the moment with noting that they make Pakistan almost impossible.”

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“Remains still to consider the financial adjustments that may be necessary to make”, said Garudeshan, “if the States join the Federation of India.”

“I think it would be best to take this with the general economic aspect of the whole problem”, returned Abdul. “After all, the main points will be the same.

“We have had an unduly long discussion today,” remarked Krida as she got up to signify her own intention to move for an adjournment ; “and it is very late already. There are, however, still many aspects of the schemes of Pakistan to be still reviewed ; but we cannot continue the discussion today. Shall we, therefore, adjourn till tomorrow ? ”

The company was unanimous in favour of adjournment ; and so discussion was ended for the day.

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SIXTH DAY—LUNCH

When the company reassembled at lunch on the sixth day, there seemed to be some casualties. Sir John had again pleaded official business through Kristo Das, and excused himself from lunch, promising, however, to join the company before the afternoon was much advanced. Krishna, too, was absent with his *arriviste* of a wife, because at long last a command call had been received from the Viceregal Lodge. Even if it did not mean an invitation to stay to lunch, the Krishnas were much too seasoned anglers to let the chance slip without trial. At least it might make a good story—properly handled; and there was always the Eager Press willing to oblige. Even Rahim had been detained by some chance find in a book shop, which he was too keen a bibliophile to leave without properly looking through. He, too, was expected to join soon after lunch, Abdul had assured.

The rest of the company was, however, keenly interested in the discussion so far as it had already proceeded; and so, without losing much time in preliminaries, it was begun almost as soon as lunch began.

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“We have considered very fully, I think,” began the hostess, “the political aspect of the proposals for Pakistan, or partition of India into Hindu, and Muslim States, zones, or homelands as they have been variously called. What shall we take up now?”

“In the scheme of discussion as outlined the other day,” rejoined Begum Singh, “the Economic Aspect came next after

the Political ; and that aspect is no less complicated and important. I even think it would prove decisive. Shall we take it up now ? ”

“ We have incidentally covered a good deal of that aspect,” said Abdul, “ at least in regard to Sind, the Punjab, and the N.W. block as a whole. I am anxious to avoid repetition, you know Ramdas. And, besides, I think a greater affinity lies between the (I) Political Aspect already examined, and the Cultural Aspect (IV) which you have placed last in your synopsis for discussion ; but which, I suggest, will be best considered while our minds are still fresh from our examination of (I) the Political Aspect.”

“ I have no objection,” replied Ramdas. “ Let us take up, if the company agrees, the Cultural Aspect, which, I have suggested, should include religious as well as spiritual considerations, the Guaranteed Fundamental Rights of Citizens or Communities based on them, and the exercise or enforcement of these rights and responsibilities.”

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(IV) *Cultural Aspect of Specific Schemes for Pakistan.*

“ Culture is an extremely vague and difficult concept to define,” Sahib Singh opened the innings, “ though I prefer it to Religion which is mischievous. It includes affinities of language and beliefs of tradition, as well as social customs and individual habits. But how will the creation of separate Muslims States help to preserve or promote the separate (sic) Muslim culture is more than I can say.”

“ I have read it somewhere,” observed Sir Muhammad, “ that although culture is primarily born out of the satisfaction of biological needs, its very nature makes man into

something essentially different from a mere animal organism. Man satisfies none of his needs as a mere animal by himself. Man has his wants, too, as an implement-making and implement-using creature, as a communing and discoursing member of a group, as a guardian of a traditional continuity, as a toiling unit within a co-operative body of men, as one who is haunted by the past, or in love with it ; as one whom the events to come fill with hopes and anxieties ; and finally, as one to whom the division of labour and the provision for the future have given leisure and opportunities to enjoy colour, form, and music."

" This sounds very well," said Singh, " but I confess it does not advance the discussion at all on definite lines. To me it is all a matter, a complex of biological and psychological factors, in which man's differentiation from mere animal, as you call it, is only a matter of degree, not of kind."

" The entire process of cultural advance, or human civilisation is," returned Firdaus, "a matter of degree only. But it is none the less a fact to be taken stock with."

" The essential or important ingredients of Culture," remarked Dr. Begum Singh, "include inherited artifacts, technical processes, ideas, habits and values. It—I mean culture—is connected with mental and moral discipline, of which religion, laws, and ethical rules are the ultimate source. Church, flag, empire are symbols or catchwords behind which are vast, and living cultural realities."

" This is no improvement over Sir Muhammad's vague beautiful description," repeated Col. Singh. " I think, Ramdasji, it would be better if we confine the discussion to the main times as you have summarised, i.e., the religious aspect, the fundamental rights of citizens and communities,

their guarantee, and the exercise and enforcement in practice of these rights."

"That will certainly confine our discussion to definite, specific issues," said Ram Piari. "Taking them in the order suggested by the Colonel, I should say it is unnecessary to spend any time on the Religious Aspect, since it is the basis of the very idea of Pakistan. Whether or not partition of the country eventuates on Pakistan lines, Religion must be included amongst the Fundamental Rights of Citizens as well as communities. Freedom of worship and belief must be a guaranteed reality."

"Speaking for myself," observed the Colonel, "I would make the State, whether in Pakistan or Hindustan, wholly secular without a taint or a contact with any credal or ritual concern."

"Provided the guarantee of the freedom of belief and worship is real and effective," said Kristodas. "I do not see any ground for further guarantee on that head. And if that guarantee is adequate, effective and mandatory, there will be no need for splitting up the country into separate states on lines of religion."

"Even the President of the Hindu Mahasabha, Savarkar," remarked Garudeshan, "declares somewhere that, in the future constitution of India—Minorities will be free to follow their religion, speak their language, develop their culture amongst themselves, provided it does not infringe on the equal rights of others, or is not opposed to public peace and morality."

"While we deal in such beautifully vague generalities," said Abdul, "or high-sounding platitudes, there is no danger of difference of opinion arising. But it is when we begin to translate in practice the doctrine of full religious toleration and protection, that acute differences arise over the translation

of the doctrine into facts. As Choudhary Afzul Haq, the author of *Pakistan and Untouchability* has caustically remarked, we have learnt to soar high like kites, but we always search for a dead body. We talk of very high generalities in matters religious, and shed blood and break heads on music before mosques."

"I think, Abdul," said Ramdas, "that is a passing phase ; and stressed unduly because of outside influence. I think once we are really free from outside interference, we won't have to fear much from such occasional ebullitions."

"The Holy Quran says somewhere ' Warfare is ordained for you," said Garudeshan.*

"That is a garbled quotation," retorted Firdaus, "even if it be true in part. For the same verse adds ; "Though it is hateful unto you." And I can quote a number of other verses from the same *Surah* which show a totally different spirit from that alleged by the learned Doctor. For instance, verse 190 of *Surah II* says ; "*Fight in the way of Allah against those who fight against you ; but begin not hostilities. Lo ! Allah loveth not aggressors—Persecution is worse than slaughter.*" (191) *And again ; "But if they desist (from fighting), then let there be no hostility except against wrong-doers* (193). *And one who attacketh you, attack him in like manner as he attacked you.*" Islam is essentially a religion of peace ; and the calumnies its enemies have fabricated and popularised throughout the centuries only bespeak their own envious nature."

"You may call them calumnies," said the Sikh, "but history seems to show everywhere Islam intolerant and aggressive. The image of the Arab follower of the Prophet,

with the Quran in one hand and the sword in another is too vivid, too well substantiated by facts of experience to be doubted."

"Allah hath sealed your hearing, and your hearts, if I may slightly edit the Holy Writ," rejoined Firdaus, "and on your eyes is a covering, since you will not see that which is so obvious from the example of the Holy Prophet himself. What was the meaning of the peace he signed with the Jews of Medina, or the Qureish of Mekka, if not to drive home, by his own example, the lesson ; *"And if they (the enemy) incline towards peace, thou shalt also incline towards it."** And elsewhere the Book declares, as regards even those who have started hostilities :

*"If ye make hostilities, then make them to the same extent that ye were injured ; but if ye can endure patiently best will it surely be for the patiently enduring."****

"These quotations will not lead us very far," said Begum Singh, "For I can quote you any number of passages from the Bible, the revelations according to the Prince of Piece Himself, which seem to set the seal of Divine approval upon dissension in His holy cause. Take Mathew X, 34 :

"Think not that I am come to send peace on earth ; I come not to send peace but a sword." Or again ; "For I am come to set a man at variance against his father and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. (Mathew X, 35).

"I am come to send fire on the earth ; and what will I, if it be already kindled. (St. Luke, XII, 49).

cp. the Holy Quran, VIII, 61.

* * cp. op. cit. 127.

"If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple."
(St. Luke, XIV, 26).

"All these might well be twisted to mean that the Christ incites to war in the bosom of the family itself, not to mention civil war. All virile faiths, and particularly new converts in those, tend to be aggressive and fanatic, as you see in Communism before our very eyes. It actually seems to have carried out the teachings of Christ as given by Matthew and Luke, where children testified against their parents, and husbands did against their wives to keep ablaze the fierce flame of the Communist torch in its anti-Kulak drive. But does that really mean that Islam and Hindustan cannot live in peace together, even as Islam and Christianity do in one Federal Union in Russia ? "

"I fancy Imperialism, or the land-hunger of military adventurers is much more responsible for the seeming intolerance and aggressiveness of early Islam than the essential teachings of that religion," said Ram Piari. "In India, too, if Muslim leaders have, in recent years, assumed a tone of aggressive intolerance, I would rather ascribe it to their personal vanity, ambition, or disillusionment than to the real, intrinsic impossibility of the two communities living together harmoniously in one State."

"Religion is, naturally and rightly conceived, a personal matter for the individual to decide, like his love affair," said Sahib Singh, with unwonted seriousness. "I would no more dream of telling the vulgar world of how I approach my God, if I believe in one, than of publishing how I approach my earthly divinity."

"I know," said the Allama, "a friend of mine, who delights in being reckoned an atheist, who is, however, to my knowledge, one of the most deeply, sincerely religious men I know. And, if the Colonel's analogy may be pursued, I can cite his case in that regard, also, who has adored a woman for over twenty years without even once shaking hands with her, though, I believe, he regards the permission to touch her feet in reverence as the highest honour he could have on earth. I don't know if he keeps some press photograph or other souvenir of her about him on some intimate part of his person, and offers her image all earthly worship ; but outwardly he is the bitterest opponent of idolatry in any form or shape. I am at one with the Colonel in this matter. Public exhibition of religious zeal is vulgar, and should not be encouraged."

"Is that an autobiographical touch, Allama," asked Abdul. But Firdaus did not reply.

"Religion is nowadays, in any case, a weakening force," said Begum Singh, "as a bond between the several classes of a country's people. If economic equality were not only postulated, but realised and assured in every day life ; and if that equality represented a decent standard of living in harmony with the climate of the country and habits of the people, there would be no danger from religion to create disturbances of the type you have witnessed so far, especially if the outside disturbing influence is eliminated."

"Guarantees for religious freedom and all cultural rights of Muslims regarding the language, literature and arts, in so far as they differ from the rest of the country, on the model of the guaranteed rights of National Minorities in Poland, or of Czechoslovakia ought to suffice for all reasonable requirements and allay all legitimate apprehensions," said Prof. Kristodas.

“And, for my part, said Firdaus, “I would be willing to accept as sufficient the guarantee of Russia and the U.S.A.,—jointly if possible, singly or severally if necessary,—for the maintenance and enforcement of those rights,—assuming of course, that the same have been enacted and provided in the basic constitution of the whole country as the Guaranteed Fundamental rights of citizens and communities on the lines mentioned in the Lahore Resolution of the A.-I. Muslim League. There would then be no need to insist upon separate statehood for the Muslim majority areas.”

“If and when the world state comes into being,” observed Dr. Garudeshan, “I take it the Allama and his friends would be content to accept that central authority’s guarantee in place of Soviet Russia’s or America’s.”

Firdaus and Abdul nodded assent, like Sir Muhammad.

“The nature of such a guarantee would involve some kind of intervention in your domestic affairs from time to time,” said Begum Singh ; “But, if the basic doctrine of sovereignty is so radically changed, there need be no apprehension on that score. In any case it is a price you must pay willingly and cheerfully to maintain the integrity of your Country.”

“We need, then, devote no more time to the further particularisation of the guaranteed rights, need we ? ” Ram Piari asked. “We all have a fairly clear generic notion of those rights ; and there are plenty of models in modern constitutions to base our wording upon.”

“We may then take this section to be capable of being settled,” concluded Ramdas, “without involving partition of the country.”

The convives all agreed. Lunch was also coming to a close ; and the party soon adjourned to the sunny garden.

THE SIXTH DAY (*Contd.*) TEA

The Economic and Social Aspects of Pakistan Schemes

“The Economic and Social Aspects of the schemes we have reviewed,” began Ram Piari, as soon as the company was reassembled in the garden, and the members absent at lunch had joined the party, “have yet to be considered.”

“We have already covered a good deal of the economic and financial aspect of the Pakistan proposals,” said Abdul. “Need we go over the same ground again?” he asked.

“If you accept the conclusion inevitable from that scrutiny,” Krishna fired the first shot, “we need not say a word, but bury the corpse of Pakistan proposals in the deepest grave we can dig.”

“I realise, after the expose given by the learned Doctor,” Rahim rejoined with a bow to Garudeshan, “that

- (a) The N. W. block of Muslim majority regions may prove weak in the raw materials, the technical skill, and mechanical power as well as equipment for modern industry ;
- (b) That, lacking thus in prerequisites of large-scale industrialisation on modern scale, those regions might find a great difficulty in diversifying their local economy,—either singly or in combination among themselves,—with a view to its more proper balance, greater yield, and more even, more adequate distribution ;
- (c) That, considering their initial natural endowment, they would be all predominantly agricultural in their economy, which would mean that they would compete with one

another in the same outside markets if they remain unfederated ; or perenially discontented and mutually jealous, if they form a closer political combination among themselves ;

- (d) That, devices like tariff treaties or Zollverein, or internationalisation of common rivers, or joint consortium for the administration of matters of such common concern as the roads and railways, post, telegraphs, telephones and radio communications ; even currency and exchange, may alleviate, to some extent, the intrinsic incompatibility of these units *inter se*, but cannot altogether eliminate it ;
- (e) That, if they remain parts of the larger federation of India as a whole, there is much better prospect of these units securing the utmost advantage for themselves from the large-scale, planned and co-ordinated economic activities of India as a whole than if they fall apart and remain as separate units ;
- (f) That their financial resources, as reflected in their several provincial Budgets, are already extremely slender and severely strained, on which the strain would be unbearable if they lost the aid and general support now available from the common central Government of India, and have at the same time to bear the added responsibilities by way of defence etc., of a separate, independent, sovereign statehood, as also to repay the benefits or loans or advances hitherto received from the rest of India for their own local advantage.

“ Are there any more such considerations, Doctor,” he asked Dr. Garudeshan.

“ You have summed them up admirably, Sheikh Sahib,” returned the learned Doctor, “ and, if I may add, what applies to the North-West block applies also, in somewhat smaller

measure, to the South-East block of Muslim majority regions. The Bengal-Assam districts that may form Pakistan in that direction may be richer in point of initial natural advantage or endowment, at least as compared to the corresponding N.W. territories, not as compared to the rest of the Bengal-Assam districts containing non-Muslim Majority. But even they cannot by themselves be held enough to provide that suitable and sufficient basis for a balanced and diversified economy—as between agriculture and industry,—which is nowadays generally agreed as indispensable for a sound national economy. The disadvantage, moreover, of the Punjab, the Frontier and Baluchistan—not to mention the Indian States or Tribal areas in that region,—as land-locked territory, without even any considerable possibility of economic or commercial air communication and transport, may not apply in the same degree to the Eastern block with outlet on the sea. But, even there, if Calcutta votes to go with Western and non-Muslim Bengal, as is but too likely, their biggest and best developed port would be unavailable, even though Calcutta is a river-port, and not a sea-port like Karachi or Bombay. Trade in these parts, too, must, accordingly, suffer, or be heavily handicapped, though not so much as in the case of the land-locked units in the N.W. with not even sufficient river outlets for foreign commerce. From the point of distribution, moreover, Bengal is a much poorer province,—thanks to her over-crowded land,—or, as the Colonel would, I fancy, hold, to her Permanent Settlement, the Zamindari system, and utterly unconscionably inequitable distribution. She would consequently need more aid from industry to improve the material standard of living in her population, than would be needed even by the Punjab, to bring it upto any reasonably decent minimum. But the prospect for that consummation would be gloomy, if the best coal and iron producing districts are

lost, jute is reduced, factories part company, and tea-gardens go into another State. Add to all this the wasteful financial administration in those Provinces ever since 1920 ; the effects of the recent famine ; the loss of the indirect subsidy now derivable from the Central Government of India under the Niemeyer settlement ; and the heavier responsibilities of separate statehood under defence etc., and you will realise the financial plight of these Eastern districts of Bengal separated into distinct statehood of their own cannot be very alluring."

"Do you find no compensation for Bengal in her separate existence as a State through Customs, Direct Taxes on Income and property. what are now central excises, and the like ? " asked Sir Muhammad."

"There would be some addition to the Bengal revenues," admitted Garudeshan, "from the sources you have mentioned if she separates to become an independent state by herself. But the added responsibilities of eastern defence by air, land or sea against China, Burma or Malaya,—not to mention the far more formidable might and threat of Japan—, and the demands of local material development, would far more than absorb all the additional revenue that may possibly be derived from these sources, as Coupland has shown."

"You mention just now the neighbours on the east of the Bengal Pakistan," intervened Firdaus. "Do you not think it possible that a working agreement, if not alliance, with them might help the independent Bengal to tide over—to compensate for—these additional responsibilities."

"If Bengal separates from India as a whole," answered Sahib Singh, "her bargaining power would be very much reduced ; while the appetite of her eastern neighbours to appropriate for their own advantage whatever of goodly resources may still remain with independent Bengal would be

proportionately greater. The greater the distance from the frontier, the greater the edge of the appetite."

"I cannot say what degree of affinity and harmony subsists between Bengal and her neighbours on the east," remarked Rahim, "but I fancy the sympathy and similiarity of interest between the N.W. Regions and their neighbours further north and west is quite clear and much more definite. I wonder if the possible disadvantages and handicaps of separation for those regions into separate states by themselves,—singly or in federation,—cannot be counterbalanced by such working agreements or alliances in that quarter."

"I question if the harmony and sympathy you mention," rejoined Col. Singh, "Sheikh Sahib, will be found for the separated Punjab or Sind, in Persia or Afghanistan or in Central Turkestan. I have lived and worked in some of those regions during the last war ; and I can say from personal knowledge, your hopes or our fears are unfounded."

"What do you mean by our fears, Colonel ?" enquired Ram Piari.

"The dread of a Pan-Islamic State on the border," Krishna hastened to answer in place of the Colonel, and went on :

"Savarkar has long ago warned the Hindus that the Muslims are likely to prove dangerous to our Hindu nation, and the existence of a common Indian State even if and when England goes out. This proposal of Pakistan is the first step for the establishment of a pan-Islamic State on our North-West Frontier. And so, were there no other ground, I would oppose any proposal for breaking up Indian unity on that score alone."

"I assure my learned friend," smiled the Colonel, "there is no need to be hysterical on that score. There is much less

likelihood of the Pakistan in alliance with Iran, Afghanistan and Turkestan to invade, overrun, and conquer Hindustan, than there is of Pakistan itself materialising. And our discussion would have been all to no purpose if it has not shown Mr. Krishna that much. The only chance of Pakistan ever taking shape is for Hindus to become hysterical, and threaten an all-out resistance before anybody has attacked them. It is the surest symptom of their cowardice."

"I confess," intervened Sir John, "I have been unable ever to understand the credit given in this country to the strength of the religious sentiment in the trans-border areas. Neither in Iran, nor in Turkey, in Iraq, Egypt nor Turkestan, is that sentiment strong enough to undertake crusades for the benefit of Indian Muslims against the rest of that country. They are always and every time rather Turks, or Persians, or Afghans or Arabs, than Muslims. You may be sure they have no desire to risk their own national existence or economy by venturing upon such obsolete arguments as a crusade or a crescentade."

"There is, in fact, if I may mention the results of my observation and experience," observed Prof. Kristodas, "much greater chance, under a liberal constitution, for the federation of India securing the adhesion of the Afghan and Persian peoples, of the Nepalese and the Ceylonese, than of any of these joining in a conquering crusade against the peace and independence of this country."

"Need we, then, discuss any further the economic aspect of these proposals for Pakistan?" asked Ram Piari.

They all nodded in conformity with her view. Discussion proceeded on the next item.

Social Aspect of Pakistan Proposals :

“ We have then only left to consider the Social Aspect of the several schemes of Pakistan placed before us by Abdul Saheb,” reminded Mrs. Krida Krishna. “ And I do not suppose that will yield any special commendation of the idea.”

“ There is a much better chance for social equality under the genuine democracy of Islam,” said Firdaus, “ than under the caste-ridden, stratified, oligarchic, social system of the Hindus. With a Pakistan area, offering a living contrast in human equality in everyday affairs, Hindustan itself may be shamed into making the actual conditions of life for all classes of people much more equal than would be naturally the trend under the Hindu social system.”

“ Is it not said somewhere in the Holy Quran,” enquired Dr. Garudeshan, “ Wed not idolatresses till they believe ; for a believing bondswoman is better than an idolatress, though she pleases you. Give not your daughters in marriage to idolaters till they believe ? ”

“ What has that got to do with the point we are here discussing ? ” asked Rahim somewhat angrily.

“ It points attention to the origin of all social classification, and exclusiveness,” replied Garudeshan. “ Social classes, which are based on birth, seem to be irremovable. But I do not quite understand how they can be treated as coming in the way of political equality of all citizens *inter se*. And after all, democracy, as we now use and understand the term, is concerned only with political equality.”

“ Social inequality of birth or status, money or power,” said Sahib Singh, “ inevitably reflects itself in politics or all public affairs. We cannot, therefore, rest content with placing

our political machinery on an egalitarian basis, and leaving social stratification and inequalities untouched."

"The caste system of India is a suprahuman institution," said Dr. Garudeshan, "not the result of mere monetary differences."

"The class system of every kind must be scrapped and abolished once for all." The Colonel was now on his hobby horse, fully armed and ready for fight. "Any thing which tends in any way, or form, or shape, or size, to recognise, tolerate, acknowledge, or encourage it must be ruthlessly penalised and put down. In India today the ancient caste-system is honey-combed with a variety of criss-cross distinctions and demarcations, which are further emphasised and made abominable by the admixture of economic differences. Where the ancient caste-system is breaking down, new currents are causing new ripples with their basic impetus in money, which has not even the sanctity of history behind it, or the memory of past service to the community."

"Differences due to money or property are the result of in-eradicable differences in individual intelligence or ability," remarked Sir John. "You cannot altogether abolish them, because they are not of human creation."

"Material wealth or property is seldom gained honestly," retorted the Colonel. "It is usually the result of legalised robbery called speculation. And even where it is the fruit of personal skill or enterprise, it is, in our existing system, invariably a disproportionate return to some particular individual, whose fortune is built up by the surplus value created by the sweated labour of hundreds collaborating with him to make his skill, luck, genius, or enterprise bear fruit. Even if such acquisition is condoned, in the first acquirer, its trans-

mission by inheritance is unconscionable and unpermissible. And castes—or classes, in their worst aspects,—are formed only by the descendants. They are the holders of unearned increment, they are the social burdens and parasites, who nevertheless hold the largest proportion of material prestige and political power. That is why I suggest they should be ruthlessly put down and eliminated.”

“Your quarrel, Colonel, should rather be with those who inherit, than those who acquire material wealth in excess of their fellows,” rejoined Dr. Garudeshan.

“I object to both—the disproportionate return of surplus value to particular individuals,” the Colonel went on in a frenzy of indignation ; “which leads to initial acquisition of great wealth, and its accumulation in fewer and fewer hands in larger and larger quantities ; as also to its transmission by inheritance for no other reason except the supposed or real blood bonds between the original owner and his heir or legatee. Even if there be some justice in allowing the original inventor, entrepreneur, or skilled craftsman, artist or professional to own and hold the surplus value he is allowed by law to acquire and accumulate, I see neither logic nor justice in permitting his children and grandchildren, who have contributed not an ounce of energy or a moment of intelligence to producing such wealth, to inherit that wealth. Inheritance must go even before private property is abolished.”

“Inheritance is a divine ordinance,” commented Rahim, “and can and should not be abolished by human legislation. Muslims will never agree to abrogate the injunctions of the Holy Quran ; “It is prescribed for you, when one of you approacheth death, that he bequeath unto parents and near relatives in kindness.”

"I do not read this to mean, necessarily, bequest of material wealth," said Firdaus, "certainly not in the sense that bequeathing must take place under all circumstances."

"Do you think, Abdul Saheb," asked Dr. Garudeshan, "Muslim Law, or Quranic injunction would preclude direct taxation of wealth, the levy of death duties, or any other form of capital levy?"

"Zaquat is ordained as a duty on all true believers," answered Rahim in place of Abdul.

"Zaquat is voluntary by the individual in response to a religious injunction," returned Dr. Garudeshan, "not a levy or impost by the secular state, to be exacted by the authority of that body, sanctioned and respected because, in the ultimate analysis, there is physical force behind it."

"If the Pakistan states would eschew direct taxation of property," remarked Sir John, "because the Quran enjoins to the contrary, it would be a paradise on earth for all capitalists and proprietors."

"That is not the meaning," Abdul defended his side. "But I certainly fear Muslim conception of social justice may not permit the abolition of inheritance altogether."

"Hindus will certainly not permit the wholesale abolition of private property," observed Krishna. "It is the result of each individual's past or present *Karma*,—enterprise—and as such must be held sacrosanct."

"Notwithstanding the consequence in the shape of poverty, prostitution, and crime?" asked Ram Piari.

"Private property cannot be said to be a divine institution among the Hindus," remarked Ramdas, "enjoined by their religion, as inheritance might be said to be under Muslim law and belief."

"Continuity of the family, with the bond or cement of

private property and inheritance, seems to me," said Abdul, "the essence and foundation of the Hindu Socio-religious system. There would, otherwise, be no need for the entire doctrine of adoption, nor any ground for the joint undivided Hindu family."

"Nothing is so abominable to me," the Colonel again returned to the charge in red hot fury, "as this spectacle of adoption and the will-making power of individual proprietor, when the perpetual corporation of the Joint Hindu Family is dissolved by partition. It is a projection, or prolongation, of the will and power or personality of a deceased, who, not content with all the power and importance and influence he enjoyed in virtue of that wealth during his life-time, seeks to dominate and control the life of those who receive it even after his death. Surely, God could not have intended such an unnatural enormity."

"Do you realise, Colonel," asked Abdul mildly, "that you are attacking also the doctrine of Wakf under Muslim Law, and of wills of private property?"

"Wakfs, in so far as they are public charity foundations," remarked Firdaus in place of the Colonel, "would be unnecessary, if and when private property is wholly abolished, as the Colonel seems to envisage. And as for Wakfs for private benefit, I seriously doubt if they are compatible with the basic doctrine of the Quran."

"Thank you, Allama," the Colonel acknowledged the aid heartily, "for this elucidation of the Muslim jurisprudence. For my part, however, I do not regard Abdul's observation as in any way a threat. And, besides, threats don't affect me. I hold quite definitely that unless and until private property, its inheritance, transmission and locking up by wills, Wakfs or Trusts, is altogether abolished, there will be no real social equality, no working democracy in India."

"I do not think the forces which would lead to, or the elements which are interested in setting up separate Muslim States—or Pakistan", noted Sir Muhammad, "would be quite suited to bring out the radical social change the Colonel desires. They are much too conservative for that."

"That is why I am opposed to Pakistan in principle," returned the Colonel. "Its acceptance and institution would mean a triumph of reaction, which no progressive social student should accept. No social reform of any sort is possible with such mighty forces and elements being entrenched in the seats of the mighty."

"Speaking as a Hindu social reformer," added Dr. Garudeshan, "I would echo and endorse the Colonel's sentiment. For I fear the guaranteed rights of minorities, demanded under almost any proposal for Pakistan, would invariably make a cloak or shield for reaction. Caste will not be ended, nor untouchability abolished, nor social justice, as the Colonel understands it, secured, if and so long as the reactionary majority of conservative Hindus are entrenched and established in power by the very basis of the new constitution. With communal electorates, inevitable and perpetual under any system of separation or partition, all our ancient institutions, customs and ceremonies will receive a new lease of life, however out of tune they may be with the conditions of time. If we desire social reform in the wider as well as the narrower term, the intelligent and progressive of every community must seek and have the support and co-operation of the corresponding elements in the other communities. And that is why, for the sake of the Hindus themselves, I am not very happy at the idea of Pakistan materialising."

"The guaranteed Fundamental Rights demanded for the benefit of the minorities in any case would tend to bring about

the same evil that you apprehend, Doctor," observed Rev. Fandrews.

"I know," rejoined the Doctor, "and I trust in course of time, if not all at once, when mutual trust and confidence are re-established between communities ; when there is no apprehension on the score of economic justice, and social equality, we may be able to dispense with such guaranteed rights as separate electorates, reserved seats, or a bar on any social legislation, smacking of religion, which a given proportion of the representatives of the community affected can veto."

"What ? " asked Rahim in amazement, "you propose to override or undo the guarantees ? "

"No," answered Garudeshan, "but I propose so to educate my countrymen and women, of the rising generation if not the present one, as to make them all agree and consent to a waiver or modification of these Guaranteed Fundamental Rights. It will be achieved by mutual consent, not by one-sided coercion."

"The substance, however, of the discussion on this aspect, also, amounts to a clear balance against the creation of separate, Hindu and Muslim States out of the present country of India," summed up Ram Piari. "There seems no great chance of economic improvement, or social justice and equality, likely to result by the mere setting up of separate Hindu and Muslim sovereign states. On the contrary, there seems greater likelihood of that objective being attained, if we remain together, subject to such provisions and safeguards as regards the rights of units, of individuals and communities, as may be agreed to be provided in the Constitution. Am I correct ?"

"I think so, Madam," said Sir John ; and the rest of the company nodded assent.

“We seem to have covered every aspect of the problem we set out to examine,” said Ramdas, “and the general conclusion seems to me to be that materialisation of the idea of Pakistan, on the lines suggested by the A.-I. Muslim League Resolution, or in any of the form put forward by distinguished publicists, is fraught with grave difficulties, and promises serious prejudice to the social, political, and economic interests of the people of India.”

“The discussion as a whole also makes it clear that on no account of economic welfare, political betterment, or social justice,” said Prof. Kristodas, “the proposal to dismember India on the lines of the League resolution would result in any benefit to the peoples either of the suggested Pakistan, or of Hindustan resulting after the separation of Pakistan.”

“My main objection to the concession of Pakistan,” said the Rev. Fandrews, “was and remains, even after this discussion, unshaken. The problem of the Communal Minorities would remain as intense as ever—only, it would be duplicated or multiplied in the several states. Pakistan, or all its states, will have non-Muslim minorities ; and Hindustan will have Muslim minority. The remedy suggested of;

- (a) a wholesale transfer of population from one zone to another to create wholly homogeneous states is not practicable, not only because of the expense involved ; and the complications of transfer, exchange or equivalence of real or moveable property, occupation and residence ; but also because of the local attachment or sentiments of the peoples concerned. And
- (b) the device of guaranteed rights of minorities,—however adequate, effective and mandatory they may be worded in the constitution,—would not remedy the situation, not only because the letter of the law is not always in accord

with the spirit of its administration, but also because there will be a ceaseless, jealous watch on either side of the communal border for cases of infringement of the constitutional or treaty provision, and not for their honourable observance. This is inevitable from the very nature of the motive force leading to the setting up of such Communal States. Every instance, real or fancied, of the breach of constitutional or treaty provisions guaranteeing minority rights, will be used as an occasion for intervention by one State claiming to be guardian of the minority in the other ; and vice versa, which would mean a state of continual tension. The device of a third party guarantee, —whether that of the United States, Soviet Russia, or even Great Britain,—would be very likely unavailable ; and, in practice, unworkable with any degree of effectiveness.

As for the Defence, let me quote the words of Prof. Coupland, summarising his own shrewd survey of that aspect of the proposal :—

‘ It appears, then, that the greatest difficulty of Pakistan and its gravest risk lie in Defence. If the probabilities discussed above are really probable, it would have to face the prospect of defending the north-west frontier without the help of Hindu India ; and to do that on anything like the same scale as it was done before the war, even without considering the increased cost of modern armaments, would be far beyond its powers. Even to raise a substantial fraction of the money needed would require such extra taxation on the one hand, and such drastic cutting down of administrative costs and social services on the other, as would greatly lower the general standard of living, and not only render the backward

masses of the people still more backward, but doom them to that state for years to come. And that might not be all. Might there not be some anxiety as to the safety of Pakistan's eastern frontier, too ?

In the earlier part of this chapter an attempt was made to state the advantages of Partition as objectively as possible, and the examination of its disadvantages must be no less objective. What, then, is the conclusion to which the facts or the reasonable probabilities point in this crucial matter of Defence ? Is it not clear beyond dispute that Pakistan would not be able to maintain the security it has hitherto enjoyed as part of India ? Even the minimum necessities of defence would strain its resources to the utmost, and hold up the social advancement of its people. For the rest it would have to take the risk.*

As for the idea of a World Sovereign State, centralising and monopolising the entire armed forces of the world to police the globe, much as I would wish to see it realised, I am afraid it is,—and will for a long while to come,—remain an unattainable dream. You cannot bank on its guarantees to solve your communal minority problem."

"The Padre has made a fair summary," commented Rahim, "but not quite exhaustive or conclusive. He has omitted to mention the possibility,—in fact the condition precedent to any scheme of Pakistan being achieved,—of readjustment of territorial boundaries which will make the problem of communal minorities relatively insignificant in point of numbers."

"And his summary is addressed," added Sir Muhammad

Constitutional Problem in India, by Prof. R. Coupland : Part III, p. 95.

Ismail, "to a scheme of Pakistan based on the general principle enunciated by the A-I Muslim League resolution, which contemplates wholly separate states, mutually independent and intrinsically sovereign each. The problem of guarantee, of intervention, of constant tension and bickering could only arise on that assumption. If definite zones,—cultural as well as communal—are set apart, in some of which there may be Muslim predominance and in others Hindu ; and if each of these zones or units are given the widest powers of local autonomy, conformable to the All India Congress Committee's resolution of August, 1942, while these constituent units remain part of a common Federation of India, I, for my part, think all the legitimate rights and just demands of Muslims, conscious of their political possibility and cultural individuality, will be amply met ; and yet the strength, integrity, and importance of India as a nation will not be prejudiced in any way. I assume, of course, that the Constitution of Federal India, as well as of each component unit, will contain Fundamental Rights of Citizens as well as communities, expressly provided and guaranteed in the Constitution, and observed and enforced in practice by mutual goodwill."

"I had, of course, addressed my summary to the main basis of Pakistan, as adumbrated by the A.-I. Muslim League Resolution of 1940," returned the Padre. "I recognise the terms of the resolution do imply some territorial readjustment, presumably on lines of the communal complexion of the population concerned. But, even so, the problem of religious minorities will not be ended root and branch on either side of the border, until wholly homogeneous states are created,—which I hold to be utterly impracticable. And hence my apprehensions. The creation of separate, cultural and communal zones, within the integral union of India, does not seem to me to be a real Pakistan, a final severance of the

bonds that have held together all communities and provinces so far, and complete separation by dismemberment,—amicably or forcibly.”

“Even if the Pakistan, as contemplated by the League Resolution of Lahore, should come to be,” added Sahib Singh, “and territorial readjustments take place as implied in the terms of the resolution, the resultant fragments of India, constituting themselves into separate sovereign states, would be so small in area, so poor in population, so lacking in resources, that there would be no hope for them of intensive industrialisation, and consequent betterment in the standard of living of their people. If they remain within the same federation of India, the collective resources of the country, its aggregate area and population would more than suffice to make up the deficit of one part by the surplus of another ; and at the same time step-up the all-round prosperity and improve the individual standard of living without which political freedom has no meaning to me. The day is everywhere for large-scale operations, and I see no reason to think Pakistan units will be an exception.”

“Do you mean to say,” asked Krishna, with some emphasis “that the Muslim leaders do not know all this, and much more besides ? They are, take it from me, much more sagacious and perspicacious ; and must have thoroughly evaluated all these considerations. They are, however, out to bargain,—bargain for the best they can get by taking up an intransigent attitude, and putting forth impossible demands. For my part, I think it is a waste of breath to discuss this matter with the irreconcilables. Tell them plain, and tell them straight, thus far and no further. Upto a point indicated by Sir Muhammad, for instance, they are welcome ; beyond that we shall fight, fight for every inch, fight to the bitter end, fight without asking or granting quarter. Let the Con-

gress adopt this—the only realistic attitude ; let it cease flirting and finessing—which satisfies not the Muslims and deceives not the British,—and you will soon see how the realcitrant, intransigent Muslims cave in.”

“ This is the best method to drive the Muslim to intransigence born of despair,” answered Abdul. “ And when you talk like that you must remember that the Muslims have not the same amount to lose that you Hindus have, if either side becomes adamant, and the stranger within our gates takes advantage of it to entrench himself still further. For every anna the Muslim will lose, you will lose four. And when the poor and the backward and the disinherited are driven to despair, you do not know what strength of resistance the fury of despair lends them. I would not counsel the Congress, or the Hindus, to take the advice of Mr. Krishna, if they desire peace and harmony and brotherliness in the country.”

“ Thank you, Abdul Saheb,” rejoined Krishna, “ but I remain unconverted and unrepentant. I give every due to the Congress ; but, as Savarkar has remarked in one of his presidential speeches from the Hindu Mahasabha platform, the Congress had, though consequentially and without that special end in view, contributed immensely to the consolidation of Hindudom as a whole by rubbing off their provincial, linguistic and sectional angularities, divisions, and diversities, provided them with a common political platform, and animated them with a consciousness of a common national being with a definite common goal of a United Central State. But the Congress has not yet realised that Muslims remain Muslims first, and Muslims last, and Indians never. They retain extra national loyalty, and even anti-national allegiance ; and it does no good to the cause of India’s national integrity and independence to tolerate or encourage them in such behaviour. I would not waste any time even in discussing the Pakistan

proposal seriously ; but simply tell them from every national platform : they can have all the reasonable and necessary protection and safeguards for their religion, their language, and even what they are pleased to call their culture. They can share fully and equally in all the fundamental rights of citizenship and even of communities as laid down in the constitution ; they can have their due share in public services and national as well as local bodies, provided the efficiency of the service and the integrity of the country are not undermined thereby. But *non plus ultra*."

"I cannot and will not call the discussion we have had all this week to be a waste of time or energy," asserted Ram Piari. "I have for my part learnt a great deal, which I had never dreamt before was involved in this problem. I understand only now how complicated and bewildering it is ; and why, even as the last resource of bankrupt statesmanship, we cannot have it without inviting immense social harm and economic injury both to Hindustan and to Pakistan. At the same time I have come to know, only as the result of this discussion, the forces dictating the League trend of view ; and why they do not consider the usual safeguards and guarantees sufficient for their purpose. They seem to have a genuine apprehension, as I see the matter, that their religion would be in danger, their culture under domination, their community in permanent tutelage and subordination, if a common Central Government of the single sovereign Indian State is maintained. Of course, I believe they are mistaken or misled. But it is not enough for us merely to assert that, and ask them to desist. We must convince them they are not acting in the best interests of the nation—our common people. We must prove to them our *bona fides*, and remove all reasonable apprehensions or misgivings by concrete evidence of our intentions not to establish Hindu Raj in place of the British,

but Indian Raj, people's Raj, equal for all, equitable for all, comforting and reassuring to all. I think this discussion has revealed possibilities of providing these assurances in a real, ample, measure, which, if genuinely put forward and honestly worked, must convince all reasonable, moderate, honourable men and women among the Muslims, Christians, Buddhists, Jains, or Parsis, that the new democracy of united, independent India will not be a mere phrase or a farce, but something real and living and working, in which every one of us would have an equal share and the same chance at self-expression and self-realisation. I deem this possible, feasible, immediately attainable ; and I would deem him or her the country's enemy, the nation's foe, who, by word, or gest or deed, causes doubt or suspicion in the minds of any minority."

"You are developing a new vein of eloquence, Rama," her husband smiled his congratulations, "which must put us other mortals to shame if we do not look out. But I must say you have given expression to my own sentiments though perhaps a bit too warmly."

"When one feels so strongly, one cannot help expressing so warmly as Mrs. Ramdas has done," assented Begum Singh. "I endorse every word you have said, and congratulate you on the manner of saying it."

"I, too, congratulate you," Krida put in her word, "on your magnificent effort. I am sure it must go a long way to convince even such a hard-nut as my husband. Is n't that so ? " she asked her lord and master.

"I never resist when such eloquence pours out from such lovely lips," returned Krishna, staring the while at Ram Piari.

"This is not a matter to me of mere verbal felicitations," said Firdaus, as he bowed his congratulations to the hostess,

“or else I, too, would join the chorus. I am, besides, not quite sure if Ram Piariji’s noble hopes and earnest beliefs are all well-founded. But I agree with her that the attempt to satisfy all just claims and reasonable demands of minorities is well worth making ; and if it is made in the spirit Shrimati has shown, I think there would be every chance of the disaster of dismemberment of this country being avoided.”

“I am of your view, Allama,” said Rahim, while Abdul and Sir Muhammad nodded assent, smiling to the hostess at the same time in congratulation.

“Shall we then summarise the results of our discussions ? ” asked the Begum.

“What else have we been doing for the last half hour,” asked her husband, “if not summarising and summarising again the conclusions. What would you gain by further repetition ? ”

“I agree there is no need to repeat what we have been saying hitherto,” added Kristodas ; “but speaking as a mere teacher or student, I think it would be very helpful, if one or two among us are asked to put down the substance of our discussions in writing. I suggest, Ramdasji, that yourself, Abdul Saheb, and, if you will allow me to help, I could sit down for a few days, and put this in shape suitable for publicists. I am sure it would be of considerable advantage to the country as a whole, to all its communities, and even to its leaders and spokesmen.”

“I welcome the suggestion,” said Rahim, “as I am sure every one else does, too.”

They all agreed. The company dispersed shortly afterwards ; and the sub-committee appointed prepared the substance of the discussion which appeared in the preceding pages.

