In the Margins of Independence

A Relief Worker in India and Pakistan (1942–1949)

Richard Symonds

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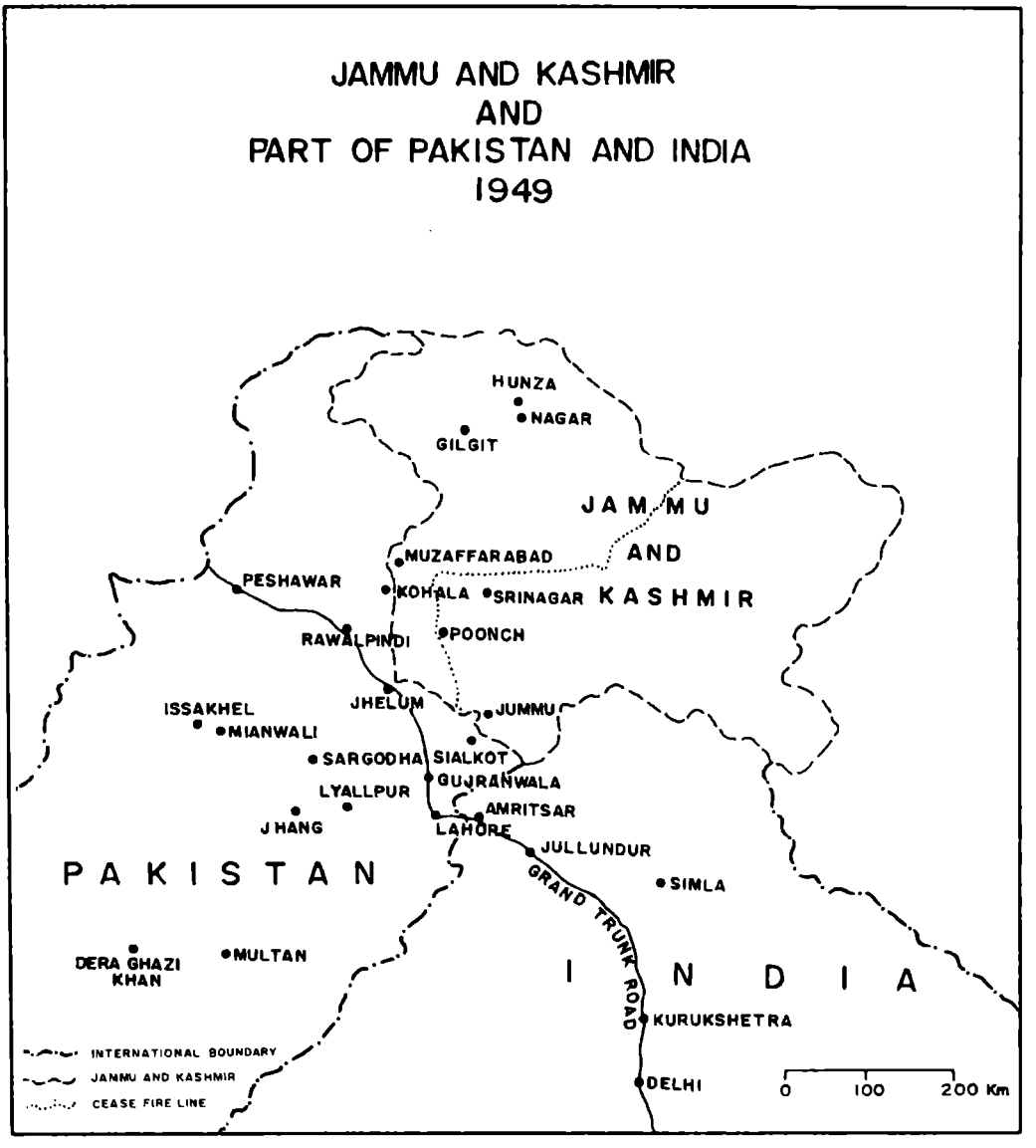

To

the memory

of

those Officers of the Indian and Pakistan Armies

in the Punjab in 1947

whose calmness, humanity and efficiency

saved many lives.

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Throughout my United Nations career, during transfers of postings between New York, Europe, Asia and Africa, there accompanied me what my family called Richard's Posterity Box. This contained among miscellaneous accumulations a diary of events in which I had been involved, as a relief worker and in other capacities, in India and Pakistan shortly before and after Independence. While I was a United Nations official, its publication would have been inappropriate, for emotions remained strong about much which had happened in and around 1947. Nor in any case was I convinced that this record by a marginal actor on the scene was likely to be of wide interest when so much else was being written by people who had played a much more important part.

Since my retirement it has been suggested to me that so much attention continues to be devoted to the last stage of British rule and to the early days of India and Pakistan that even these kind of recollections from the sidelines could usefully be placed in the public domain.

I am grateful to two friends at Oxford Colleges of which I have been a member, Sir Keith Thomas, President of Corpus Christi, and Dr Iftikhar Malik of St Antony's, for drawing the attention of the Oxford University Press in Pakistan to these papers and to Ameena Saiyid, its Managing Director, for her prompt expression of interest in their publication.

In addition to Dr Malik, Pamela Bankart, my former colleague in the Friends Ambulance Unit and Government of Bengal, and Geoffrey Carnall, who is writing the biography of Horace Alexander, have kindly read the book in draft and improved it by their comments. I am very grateful to them. My wife Ann Spokes Symonds has also read the draft and been a constantly helpful support and critic. I also wish to thank Marie Ruiz for

her patient secretarial assistance. In Oxford the friendly and efficient help of the staff of the Indian Institute Library has been invaluable, as has that of Penny Rogers at Queen Elizabeth House in dealing with new techniques of communication. I am also grateful for the kindness of staff at Friends House Library, London in opening up old files.

I have dedicated the book to the memory of the officers of the Indian and Pakistan armies whose work I witnessed. Even though their troops sometimes became naturally agitated about the fate of their respective communities in the appalling cruelties which they witnessed in 1947, they themselves acted with outstanding humanity and impartiality; but for their devotion the loss of life and misery would have been far greater. Looking back, I would associate two individuals with them in my admiration. One was my colleague Horace Alexander who throughout his long connection with the subcontinent constantly strove to maintain the traditional Quaker capacity to see God in every man and woman.

He also opened for me the door to a greatly cherished friendship with Mahatma Gandhi. The other was Edwina, Lady Mountbatten whose cheerfulness, energy and ingenuity gave hope to many refugees who might otherwise have despaired.

Indian and Pakistani friends who helped me to try and understand the historical, cultural, political, social and economic factors are too many all to be mentioned. Among them in Bengal were Amiya Chakravarty, S.K. Dey, K.S. Ray, A.R. Siddiqi and H.S. Suhrawardy. Later S.M. Ikram and Professor Ahmed Ali helped more specifically to explain the intellectual and political origins of Pakistan whilst Chaudhri Muhammad Ali and Aftab Ahmed Khan encouraged me to write a book on the subject at a time when there was rather little understanding of it in Britain.

The accuracy of any account of the still highly controversial events of Indian and Pakistan Independence is liable to be challenged in some respect or another. I have tried to record what I saw honestly and accurately. I am conscious however from conducting oral history interviews that elderly people,

without being aware of it, are sometimes prone to describe their role not as it was but how they wish it had been.

That is why I have thought it better to include the raw text of my diary when it exists rather than to polish it into a more elegant style. I sympathize with Ralph Waldo Emerson who, when asked in old age what he thought about some serious subject, replied 'show me what I have written, and I will tell you what I think'.

Whilst it has not been possible to trace the copyright, if any, of photographs taken fifty years ago, the publishers will be glad to acknowledge in future editions copyrights brought to their attention.

I should like to thank my helpul editors at OUP, Karachi, Rehana Khandwala and Ghousia Ghofran Ali.

R.S.
Oxford, 2000

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INTRODUCTION

In 1949, shortly after Britain's Indian Empire was divided between the newly independent nations of India and Pakistan, a popular book by Professor C.H. Philips of London University described the plan for independence and partition as having been carried out 'without a major hitch...once more demonstrating the political ability of the British'.[1]

To some of those who had witnessed the consequences of Partition in the Punjab, this description of its execution seemed unduly complacent. The British had handed over authority before the boundaries of the new states had been determined. They had failed to take measures to deal with the fury of the martial Sikhs at finding their community divided between India and Pakistan; at Independence, those in the West Punjab marched into the East to join their compatriots there, occupying the lands of the Muslim minority who were massacred or driven out. There were similar attacks by the Muslims against Sikhs and Hindus in Pakistan. On both sides, the villages of the minorities were burned. As they fled by road and train they were ambushed and massacred. Thousands of women were raped and abducted. The flight of police and civil officers who were members of the minority communities, often taking the keys of the armoury with them, accelerated the breakdown of law and order. The Punjab Boundary Force which had been set up to keep the peace, composed of Muslim and non-Muslim troops with British senior officers, had to be disbanded because the soldiers refused to fire on murderers and rioters from their own communities. In all, perhaps a million people died in the massacres and in the sudden floods which swept away the columns of fleeing refugees. Some eleven or twelve million left their homes for ever.

By a curious turn of the wheel, the British, who had so recently been stridently and violently called upon to 'Quit India', were now the only people who aroused no antagonism and who could safely move about on both sides of the Punjab without an armed escort. As we did so, helping where we could, it hardly appeared to us that partition had been 'carried out without a hitch'.

When the violence in the Punjab subsided following the virtually complete migration of the surviving members of the minority communities on both sides, the violence spread to Jammu and Kashmir, a state with a Hindu ruler and a Muslim majority population whose future the British had left unsettled when they withdrew their rule. The consequent struggle between India and Pakistan for its control poisoned their relations for generations, caused them to divert vast sums from economic and social development to armaments and even drove them to war. This result did not seem 'once more to demonstrate the political ability of the British'.

The time had certainly come for the British to leave. Yet after I read the passage quoted above, I wondered whether some day a footnote might be added to what had been published about the circumstances of Independence, relating how differently its consequences appeared to relief workers in the field, than to constitutional historians in London.

Between 1942 and 1949, during the period before and after Independence, I happened to serve in India and Pakistan in several different capacities. From 1942 to 1944, I was based in Calcutta, engaged in civil defence and famine relief as executive officer and then, officer-in-charge of the India Section of the Friends Ambulance Unit. From 1944 to 1945, I served as Deputy Director of Relief and Rehabilitation and Deputy Secretary in the Revenue Department of the Government of Bengal. After a year and a half in Austria with the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), I returned in September 1947 to work with the Friends Service Unit among refugees in Delhi, the Punjab and Kashmir. In the course of this work I contracted typhoid and was rescued from a government hospital by Mahatma Gandhi, who had me cared for in his

house for a month. The experience in Kashmir led to my appointment to the staff of the UN Commission for India and Pakistan which was sent out from New York to mediate in the dispute between India and Pakistan. After a cease-fire had been obtained there was no apparent possibility of further progress; in 1949 I left the Commission's staff and spent a few months in Pakistan gathering material for a book that would attempt to explain how and why Pakistan came into existence. Thus I found myself, at different times between 1942 and 1949, observing the scene from the perspective of a voluntary relief worker, a civil servant, an official of the United Nations and a freelance writer.

I have not published these recollections earlier because, after 1950, I worked for many years as a permanent official of the United Nations. The Kashmir dispute continued to smoulder and it did not seem prudent whilst in that position to write about events which still aroused strong emotions in India and Pakistan.

In my book *The Making of Pakistan*, published in 1950 before I joined the United Nations Secretariat, I quoted the observation of a Punjabi official grown old in the British Service who said to me: 'You British believe in fair play. You have left India in the same condition of chaos as you found it'. This remark was picked up by the biographer of Field Marshal Auchinleck; he considered it an unfair reflection on his subject, who had continued gallantly for three months after Independence in the hopeless position of Supreme Commander of both the Indian and Pakistan armies.[2] It was not at all my intention to criticize Auchinleck. On the contrary, after the Boundary Force was disbanded, the Indian and Pakistan armies generally performed as the most constructive and least vindictive elements in the Punjab. Any implied criticism was of the complacency of some British politicians and writers which indeed was to be shown also by Mountbatten, in the later recollections of his role shared with the sometimes gullible authors who interviewed him.

I launch this book with an awareness of its modest importance in comparison to the considerable number of accounts which have appeared by major participants in the events which it

discusses. It cannot be a whole picture nor even always an accurate one. The diaries on which it is based contain the impressions of a young man still having the confidence to react rapidly, whether wisely or unwisely, to the unexpected and unfamiliar. Some of my judgements at the time I now indeed find embarrassingly confident but, if the evidence is to be of any archival value, the diaries which are the basis for Chapters 2 to 6 must stand as they are.

My introduction to India was considerably influenced by Horace Alexander, a Quaker with extensive experience of India and old enough to be my father. Through him I came to know Gandhi and many other prominent Indians. Although Horace and the Society of Friends were sometimes felt by British officials to be unduly sympathetic to Gandhi and to the Indian National Congress, the Quaker base proved a good one from which to learn and also to make friends. Our motives were not suspect, and our reports were, I think, accepted as honest not only by British officials and Congress members but also by Muslim League leaders such as Liaquat Ali and H.S. Suhrawardy.

Although these memoirs are mainly concerned with the events which followed Partition, they start with a brief account of my time in Bengal between 1942 and 1945. The contacts made then and the experience, both as a non-official relief worker and an official in the antiquated government machine, considerably shaped my reactions to the crises of 1947.

The role of Horace Alexander and myself in the Punjab in late 1947 was unusual. Much of the violence which was occurring and of the strained relations between India and Pakistan was in reaction to reports and rumours of brutal actions on the other side. It was very difficult for their representatives to travel around across the frontier in order to obtain authentic information; the accuracy of their reports was in any case likely to be disputed. Horace was, therefore, appointed as an honorary official of the West Punjab (Pakistan) Government and I, of the East Punjab (Indian) Government, to provide neutral reports and do what we could to alleviate the suffering of the minorities.

Because our position was perhaps unique until representatives of the International Red Cross arrived, I have included full accounts from my diaries of what we saw and did as well as of the extension of our work into Kashmir at the request of the Governments of India and Pakistan when violence and hostilities broke out there. Copies of some of Horace's reports, parallel to my diaries, are in the archives of Friends House Library in London. It was, however, often our practice to give the authorities in the area in which we were working an opportunity to initiate action to improve the situation of refugees before we made our reports, so that information on remedial measures could be included in them. There is a brief chapter about the month in December 1947 which I spent with Gandhi being nursed for typhoid in Birla House in Delhi where he was assassinated in the following month. This says little about contemporary events, for though Gandhi visited me daily he usually avoided discussion of what was going on outside as likely to be disturbing to a patient. The vignette may perhaps have some interest however, as an impression of how he and those around him were living in the last, and heroic, days of his life.

The work of the United Nations Kashmir Commission in 1948 has been vividly described by Ambassador Josef Korbel of Czechoslovakia, who was one of its members.[3] I have no confidential revelations to add, nor would it be appropriate for me to do so, having been a member of the Commission's staff. The recollections may throw a light on how one of the earliest UN Commissions operated and on the kind of influences to which it was subject.

When I later travelled round Pakistan in 1949 writing a book, *The Making of Pakistan*, I kept notes on interviews. A chapter based mainly on these gives a picture of how Pakistan appeared shortly after it had become apparent that it would survive the tremendous stress of its birth.

Finally, in fairness, it should be added that in 1970, C.H. (later Sir Cyril) Philips, edited a book in which leading Indian, Pakistani and British participants in the events of Partition were

able to be as critical as they wished.[4] The publication of the very comprehensive series of documents on the *Transfer of Power* by the British Government also made available with considerable frankness the evidence of the official papers, throwing much light on what happened and why.[5]

NOTES

1. C.H. Philips, *India*, London, 1949, pp. 149–150.
2. J. Connell, *Auchinleck*, London, 1959, p. 888.
3. J. Korbel, *Danger in Kashmir*, Princeton, 1966.
4. C.H. Philips and M.D. Wainwright, *The Partition of India*, London, 1970.
5. *The Transfer of Power* (ed.) N. Mansergh, London, 1970 onwards.

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Prelude in Bengal (1942–1945)

In April 1942 Sir Stafford Cripps, then a minister in Churchill's government, was sent to India to try to negotiate a constitutional settlement which would obtain the cooperation of the main Indian political parties with the British rulers in an apparently desperate situation after the Japanese army had taken Burma and had reached the Indian border. A member of Cripps's staff carried a letter offering the services of a small section of the Friends (Quaker) Ambulance Unit to assist in the organization of civil defence. The offer was immediately accepted. I had been in charge of the FAU's work in air-raid shelters during the German bombardment of London and was appointed to lead the section. Subsequently however, Horace Alexander, a Quaker with long experience of India but who had not been a serving member of the FAU on account of his age, became unexpectedly available on the death of his invalid wife. I was delighted to hand over the leadership to him and to serve as the section's executive officer.

Horace was to have such an important role in my introduction to India and in our later partnership that something may be said about his background. He was 53 and I was 23 when we went out to India in May 1942. He came from a Quaker family with a strong moral sense about imperial affairs. His father, Joseph Alexander, had visited India in 1893 to study and expose how cultivators were made to grow poppies for opium against their will. After taking a first class degree at King's College,

International Affairs and Director of Studies at the Quaker Woodbrooke College in Birmingham. In 1927 he was persuaded by C.F. Andrews to spend a sabbatical year in India, following in his father's footsteps and enquiring about the opium trade. It was then that he came to know Gandhi with whom he stayed and had long discussions about Quakerism and politics whilst they peeled potatoes together in his village *ashram*.

In 1930, with the backing of the Society of Friends, Horace again visited India to see whether the Government and Indian leaders could be brought together on a programme of social reform as a first step towards political understanding. He was allowed to visit Gandhi in jail and the accounts of his conversations with Gandhi and the Viceroy, Lord Irwin, which he passed between them, may have made a modest contribution to their better mutual understanding and to the Gandhi-Irwin pact which led to Gandhi's release and his attendance at the Round Table Conference on Indian Constitutional Reform in London in 1931.

When Gandhi arrived as the sole representative of Congress at the Conference, he characteristically slept on the roof of a Methodist settlement in East London. This was an impossible meeting place for the many busy people who needed to meet him confidentially in connection with the Conference and a house was rented in the West End where he had his meals and where C.F. Andrews, Horace and Andrews' secretary, Agatha Harrison, helped to deal with the visitors and correspondence.

Before returning to India, Gandhi asked Horace to set up the India Conciliation Group in London in order to interpret his ideas on Britain and, in the other direction, to keep him informed of thinking in Britain about India. Horace, living in Birmingham with an invalid wife, was unable to take full-time responsibility for the Group, of which Agatha Harrison became secretary. He was, however, a very prominent member of it. Cripps, before he went out on his unsuccessful mission in 1942, consulted the Group; Horace and Agatha then cabled Gandhi to remind him that Cripps was one of the 'best Englishmen' in the tradition of

Although our FAU experience would find a direct application in the government civil defence services in India, we considered that in light of the long Quaker friendships with nationalist leaders, our special contribution might be in helping to obtain the cooperation of non-governmental agencies which were not on speaking terms with the Government and its officials. Although Horace had no experience of civil defence we felt that his leadership could be vital in this; from our work in London we were keenly aware of the importance of the role of voluntary organizations before, during and after air raids, as complementary to that of the official services.

The work of the India Conciliation Group was, at Gandhi's request, financed by his millionaire supporter, G.D. Birla. The India Office, the Department of State in London which handled Britain's responsibility for India, tended to view Horace as a lobbyist for Gandhi and for the Indian National Congress; his appointment to lead the FAU section thus aroused some misgivings. In an interview before our departure with the Secretary of State for India, L.S. Amery, Horace undertook not to engage in political activities whilst working with the FAU, though it was understood that he would 'meet old friends'. Unfortunately, the India Office failed to notify the Viceroy of India, Lord Linlithgow, that Horace had been appointed to replace me as leader of the FAU section nor of his conversation with Amery.

Horace and I went out by sea and flying boat ahead of our colleagues who travelled all the way by sea. We landed on a lake in Gwalior in central India in June 1942. Horace was clear that we should immediately visit Gandhi in his village home at Sevagram, which was not far away, so that he could learn of our mission at first hand, and hopefully give public approval to it, before we went on to see the Government of India in Delhi. There is a record of our conversation in Gandhi's paper *Harijan*. We had no difficulty in obtaining Gandhi's blessing for our work. After all, he had himself raised and led an ambulance unit to serve with the British forces in South Africa but he was far more interested in discussing the political situation. He spoke of

his disappointment with the offer brought by Cripps and of his conviction that the British should now withdraw in an orderly fashion, implicitly leaving India's leaders to establish relations with the Japanese. He told us that our role of interpretation was more important than our humanitarian mission and said to Horace that the mantle of Andrews had fallen on him: 'So now you have to do what Andrews did, understand me, pitilessly examine me, and then, if you are convinced, be my messenger'.[2]

To me he was kindness itself, placing me at the bottom of the bed to pull the fan, saying, 'you shall be the *punkah-wallah*'. He teased me when a scorpion, which he maintained was non-violent because it lived in his *ashram*, was discovered in my bed. He showed me with pride a new and very cheap type of village latrine which he had recently designed.

On this and subsequent visits I was struck by how smoothly and quietly the life of the Ashram proceeded according to a routine. Each day would start with Gandhi's walk, leaning on the shoulders of two young women, accompanied by serious questioning visitors and by the playful children of the village. Everyone ate together meals of such blandness that occasionally portly visiting business men might be encountered stoking up secretly behind bushes on biscuits and chocolates sold by cycling pedlars who would also purvey illicit cigarettes. In the evening all attended the prayer meeting at which Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Sikh and other hymns and prayers would be sung and recited and Gandhi would give an address, usually of topical significance.

The life was intended to be as similar as possible to that of a typical Indian village. As I recollect there was no electricity or telephone, though telegrams were frequently sent from the post office. Gandhi would almost always find time, sitting on his bed, to receive whoever turned up seeking his views on public or personal questions. I never saw a file, though somewhere the very competent and charming disciples who were his secretaries must have maintained a considerable office to house his vast correspondence. He would usually write letters in his own hand, economically on small pieces of paper. If you came on a

Tuesday, which was his weekly day of silence, you could ask questions but he would reply on these scraps of paper. Sometimes a secretary would be present and write a note on the conversation to be published in Gandhi's fortnightly paper, *Harijan*, in English and various Indian languages. The Ashram was not primarily an office however but an experimental centre in rural living, so that discussions of political, social and religious questions would be mingled with practical consideration of the daily events in the community's work.

In Delhi, we stayed in the house of G.D. Birla. We were received by the Viceroy's Secretary, Sir Gilbert Laithwaite, to whom Sir Paul Patrick at the India Office had commended me, explaining that he had been at Rugby School with my father and with my maternal uncle, the famous rugby football player, Ronald Poulton, and that I had been a member of his College at Oxford. When, in addition to the politically innocent young man from a sound school, and family, he was confronted by Horace, arriving via Sevagram and emerging from Birla House wearing the mantle of C.F. Andrews, he was disagreeably surprised, as was his master Lord Linlithgow.

However, nothing was said of this and it was explained that the Government of India wished us to proceed to Calcutta and to work out our plans with the Government of Bengal which was directly in the path of the Japanese.

Bengal in 1942 had a population of about sixty million, with Muslims in a slight majority. The Government was a shaky coalition led by Fazlul Huq who had recently left the Muslim League and organized his Krishak Proja Party. Allied with him were the Forward Bloc, which had split off from Congress, and the Hindu Mahasabha. The Governor, Sir John Herbert, had previously been a Conservative Parliamentary whip. When Japan came into the war at the end of 1941, a rudimentary civil defence system was set up in Calcutta which, because of its size, proudly claimed to be 'the Second City in the British Empire'. Recruitment, however, was hampered by the communal ratio, a regulation that out of every twenty government posts ten must be given to Muslims, five to scheduled-caste Hindus and the

rest to others. The Governor, though stressing the needs of the government services for our assistance, left us free also to cooperate with the voluntary agencies. Our section, in addition to Horace, consisted of five men and two women. With a strong sense of urgency we helped the Government to establish air-raid shelters, and organize fire-fighting units, first-aid posts, and ambulance services, as well as to set up information centres and centres for those whose homes were destroyed. Our recommendations would usually be accepted in light of our experience in the London blitz, but if the appointment of a senior official was required to implement them, one of us would often have to hold the post until the Public Service Commission decided whether a Muslim or non-Muslim should be appointed. Among my other duties I thus found myself for six months Commander of the House Protection Fire Parties of Calcutta. These fire parties consisted of thousands of part-time volunteers throughout the city, issued with stirrup pumps and buckets, whose task was to extinguish incendiary bombs. The greatest danger of conflagration was in the vast *bustees* or shanty towns inhabited by the migrant population. During the day the men were out at work and their wives were too shy to volunteer, so we mainly recruited the prostitutes who were delighted to come forward and when I came on inspections, would greet me with the cry: 'Long live our Commander'.

We received eager cooperation from a number of voluntary organizations of which the largest was the Bengal Civil Protection Committee (BCPC) whose President, B.C. Roy, was a leading Congressman, former Mayor of Calcutta and Vice-Chancellor of the University. We were able to help train its personnel to staff and equip first-aid posts and mobile dispensaries throughout the city; an FAU colleague and I served on its executive committee.

Japanese planes bombed Calcutta in December 1942. The European old hands had told us that Bengalis were timid and that sturdy upcountry people from the Punjab and elsewhere should be preferred in recruitment. It was, however, these up-country people who fled back to their homes. As far as the eye

could see the fire parties trotted away up the Grand Trunk Road, carrying their possessions on their heads in our government issued buckets.

Why the Japanese did not continue the bombing is difficult to understand, for though the damage was small the disruption was great. It may be that they considered that further bombing would turn against them the potential fifth column which Subhas Bose and others had encouraged them to believe would assist in an invasion.

Our education was greatly broadened by the friendships which developed through this work. The Chairman of the BCPC, Dr K.S. Ray, was the leading tuberculosis specialist in Bengal who liked to have us witness his deft operations in collapsing infected lungs. In long evening talks with him I learnt much about the problems of poverty and health. There were also less orthodox members of the medical profession. A board near the main hospital cheerfully proclaimed: 'We cure cholera, smallpox, malaria. Dead restored to living, etcetera'.

In the University, Amiya Chakravarty, Professor of English, was a brilliant conversationalist. He was the first Indian to hold a fellowship at an Oxford college and had been secretary to Rabindranath Tagore. He introduced us to some of his women students, mostly with Communist sympathies; with no desire to sabotage the Government now that the USSR was in the war they were invaluable to us as interpreters and colleagues, though embarrassing us with erudite questions about the latest works of W.H. Auden and Cecil Day Lewis. With their help we secured the cooperation of many women's organizations and assisted in organizing the Women's Emergency Volunteers along the lines of the British Women's Voluntary Service.

Among officials, S.K. Dey, an ICS officer who was Deputy Civil Defence Controller, became a particular friend. When he had served as a District Magistrate he had become an enthusiast for cooperative societies and loved to discuss imaginatively the future social and economic development of the province.

With a foot both in the official and non-official worlds, we found ourselves invited in all sorts of circles and made aware of

the wide interest in Bengal in British intellectual and literary history. For those of us who were Oxford and Cambridge graduates the sentimental ties with our fellow alumni were particularly strong. Among these was the Oxonian H.S. Suhrawardy, to whom I carried an introduction from his uncle Sir Hassan Suhrawardy, a member of the Council of the Secretary of State in London. H.S. Suhrawardy was the most powerful figure in the Muslim League, then in opposition, and was regarded by many Hindus as an unscrupulous rabble rouser. With us he was genial and constructive and we developed a lasting friendship. Another Muslim friend was A.R. Siddiqi, editor of *The Morning News*, a rather old fashioned but spritely Aligarh and Oxford man who had worked with the Red Crescent in Turkey's wars together with his Oxford friends, the famous Ali Brothers. An Oxford contemporary of Suhrawardy was Kiron Sankar Roy, the leader of the Congress in the Legislative Assembly. Our contacts with the press were informal and amiable perhaps because they picked up from us information and impressions from an unusual angle. Ian Stephens, editor of the *Statesman*, the most important British-owned newspaper in India, encouraged us to drop in at his house unannounced in the evenings and published articles by us, particularly later during the famine.

We had Indian colleagues living with us in our house in Upper Wood Street. All sorts of people came to stay. Among them was Mrs Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit. On her release from jail, she told us how her brother, Jawarharlal Nehru, had seemed almost glad to be arrested in 1942, so wretched did he feel at the prospect of assisting fascism by disrupting the Allied war effort through the Quit India Movement. Another visitor was Rajagopalachari, the former Chief Minister of Madras, who had parted from his Congress colleagues by accepting the principle of Pakistan. He was contemplating visiting London (where he had never been) to try and start up a dialogue with the British Government which could produce a new initiative for a political settlement after the failure of the Cripps Mission. He asked if I might accompany him as a companion/secretary. I do not think

We were able to bring together socially people who had never met and found our house a useful neutral ground. Thus the Chief Secretary of the Bengal Government was able to make the acquaintance of the leader of the Congress Party in the Legislative Assembly, K.S. Roy. Similarly, the Metropolitan (the head of the Anglican church) came together with the leader of the Hindu Mahasabha, Dr S.P. Mookerjee.

Meanwhile, Horace was finding the mantle of C.F. Andrews uncomfortable. He received indeed an understanding letter from Gandhi saying: 'You will come when you like and so will Symonds. But when you find anything to criticize you will do so frankly and fearlessly as Charlie Andrews used to do. Of course, your primary mission is ambulance work and if you find avoiding me and Sevagram necessary, you will unhesitatingly avoid me. I shall not misunderstand you in any way whatever'. Horace took him at his word. When the Congress Working Committee supported Gandhi's Quit India campaign, he wrote frankly to him to say that ordinary English people, like those whom Gandhi had met in East London and Lancashire in 1931, would see his action as a stab in the back.[3] Shortly afterwards, in August 1942, Gandhi and the members of the All India Congress Committee were arrested and jailed.

It was ironic that whilst Horace was writing in this fashion to Gandhi, the Viceroy was complaining bitterly to the Secretary of State, Amery, that whilst he had agreed to Symonds leading a purely humanitarian mission Alexander had been added to the mission without consulting him. He pointed out that immediately on arrival, after seeing Gandhi, Horace had mentioned the possibility of acting as a mediator between Gandhi and the world, just as Andrews had done. 'If Alexander wishes to be political in any way he had better be out of the country', he grumbled. A few weeks later the Viceroy cabled Amery to complain that Alexander had written to him that Amery had assured him it would be entirely in order for him to undertake conciliation work and that, in intercepted correspondence, had written that 'he had found Nehru's point of view conclusive'. Amery, in reply, admitted that he had told Horace that it was in

order for him to visit old friends in India provided he took no overt part in politics. He promised to get Agatha Harrison to tell Horace that he seemed to be exceeding the understanding and should confine his attention to the Unit's work or go home. Amery agreed that Horace had 'shown an excess of zeal and is a nuisance to us both' but his admission of some responsibility for a possible misapprehension on Horace's part probably prevented his expulsion from India. In any case the imprisonment of Gandhi and the Congress leaders largely settled the question.[4]

The arrest of the Congress leaders was followed by an uprising throughout much of northern India which took a violent form with the tearing up of railways and the burning of police stations and government property. One of the worst affected areas was the District of Midnapore in Bengal which had a long tradition of violence; three consecutive British District Magistrates had been assassinated. Troops had been brought in to arrest the insurgents when a vast cyclone swept a large part of the district killing thousands and leaving many more homeless. We were asked by the Government to help in organizing food distribution, provision of shelter, cholera inoculation, and other medical relief. Our presence helped to enable Indian voluntary organizations to operate, which they would have hesitated to do there on their own amidst the military operations. The government allowed BCPC doctors and other volunteers, accompanied by FAU staff, to undertake relief work in Midnapore on condition that they gave assurances not to engage in political activity. We also persuaded the military, when they were not chasing rebels, to cooperate in relief by providing transport for food and medical supplies.

Midnapore was normally an important rice producing area. Its devastation and the invasion of Calcutta by its destitute people helped to trigger the great Bengal Famine of 1943, the worst in forty years, in which probably some three million people died. As one went out to dine at Firpo's fashionable restaurant in Calcutta, one stumbled on the doorstep over corpses

throughout the province one would sometimes find no one left alive and would come upon a dog gnawing the head of a baby. The reasons for the famine were several. Bengal normally imported rice from Burma which was now occupied by the Japanese. In the rice producing riverine areas of East Bengal, where there were few roads, cultivators failed to deliver their crop because the army had confiscated their boats in order to deny them to the Japanese. There was a crop failure at the end of 1942. The Famine Enquiry Commission Report of 1945, whilst recognising the importance of these factors, severely criticized the Bengal Government for delays in procurement and distribution of food and in introducing relief measures. It declared that there had been a moral and social, as well as administrative failure, though it did not describe the latter in detail.[5]

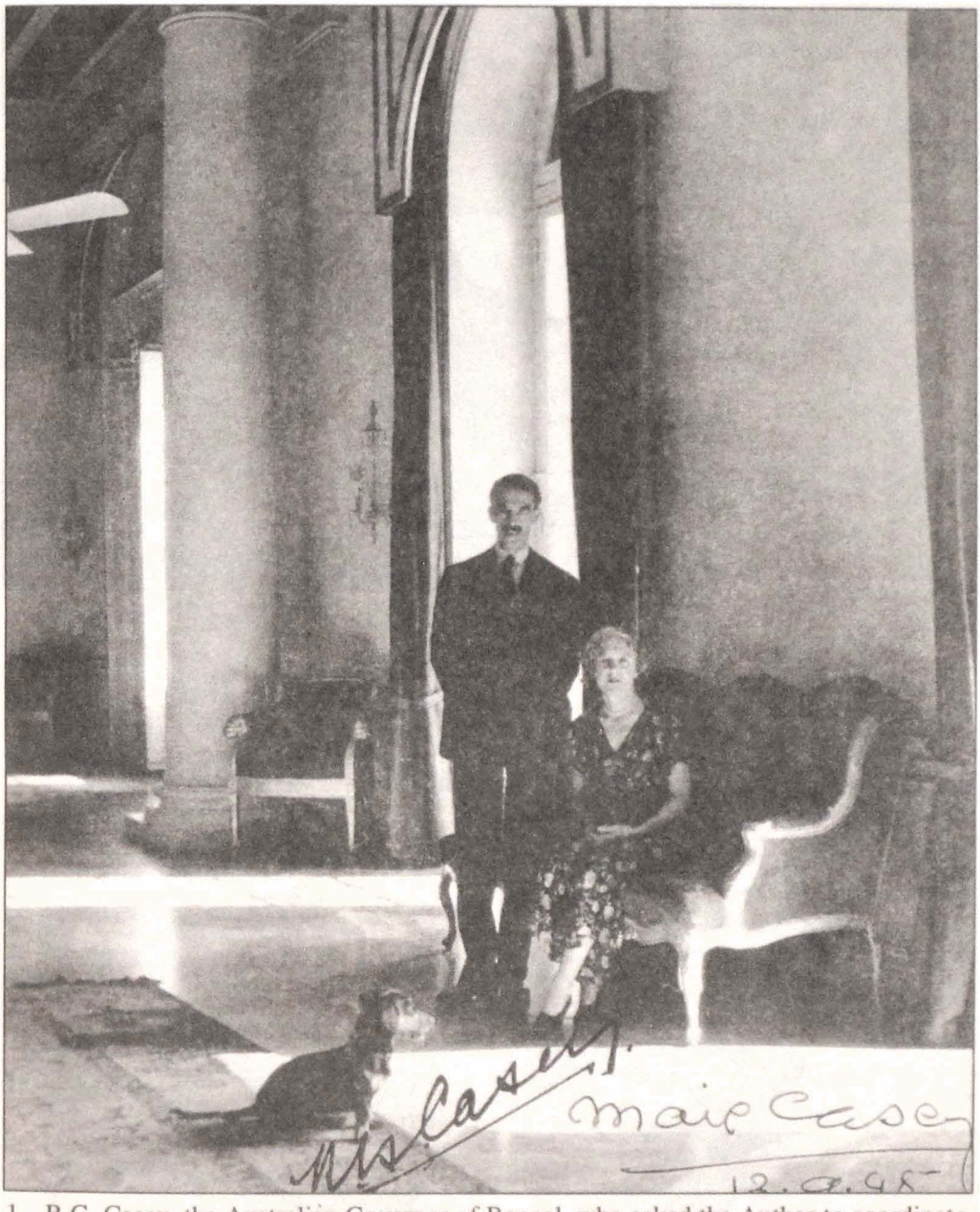
A new Muslim League government had been formed early in 1943 under Nazim-ud-Din with a few Hindu and Scheduled Caste ministers also. Apart from Suhrawardy, its members were not of high calibre. The senior officials were mostly British, and tired; it was years since they had home leave. They sometimes felt demoralised by being obliged by their ministers to accept transactions of doubtful propriety. The responsibility between politicians and civil servants for making decisions was blurred.

Yet none of these aspects seemed as disastrous in delaying the introduction of effective relief as the ponderous financial procedures of the Government which were aimed far more at preventing petty embezzlement and dishonesty than at facilitating action. Added to this was a system of files and correspondence which had become almost unmanageable with the expansion of government activities. A Subdivisional Officer at the level where urgent action had to be taken in order to save lives had no authority to purchase supplies, to rent storage space, to hire transport, or engage additional staff. He must write for sanction through the District Magistrate, who would sometimes refer the matter to the Divisional Commissioner. When the letter of request eventually reached the secretariat in Calcutta it was

opened in the registry and placed in a file. To this a series of clerks of ascending seniority would attach comments, which mainly took the form of quoting precedents, and would append files on these which might go back fifty years. Majestically the file would proceed up through Assistant Secretary, Deputy Secretary and perhaps Joint Secretary to the Secretary of the Department who might either give a decision or refer it to the Minister. On the other hand, he could consider that another department or departments needed to be consulted, in which case the file would be transferred to them and subjected to the same process, swollen to gigantic proportions as it progressed by the attachment of additional files with further precedents. Somewhere along the line it could get stuck indefinitely in the midst of a pile of files on the desk of an officer who was so overwhelmed that he never reached the bottom of it.

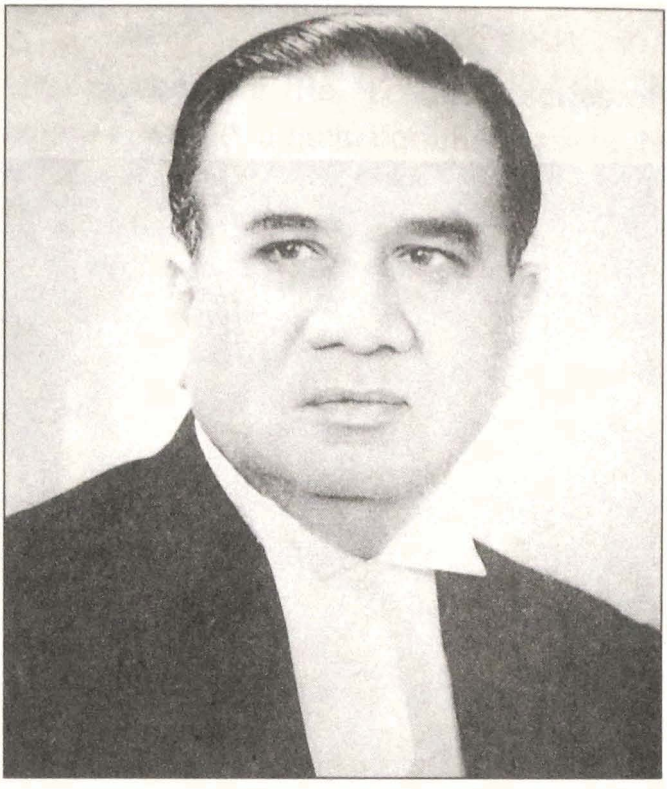
Now the links which we had established with Indian voluntary organizations in Civil Defence proved their value in enabling us to provide relief in situations in which the Government was unable to move rapidly.

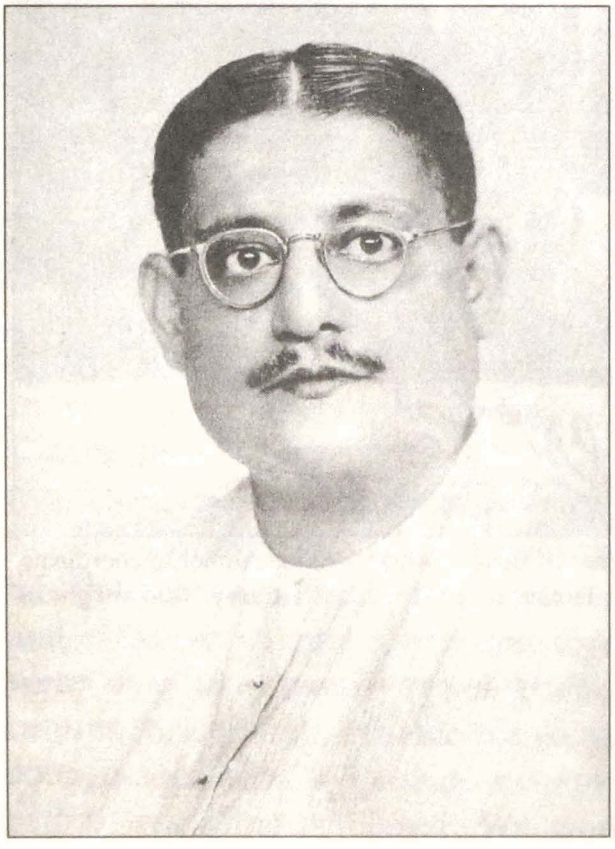
Horace was allowed to visit Gandhi when the latter engaged in a 21-day protest fast against the Government's refusal to produce proof of their allegations of his responsibility for the violence and loss of life in the Quit India Movement. After Gandhi survived the fast he was again forbidden to receive visitors or correspondence. With no scope for conciliation, Horace returned to his post in England. There he was invaluable in raising money for our work. The London daily *News Chronicle* set up a fund for the FAU relief action and its readers responded magnificently to its appeal. The American Friends Service Committee also sent considerable funds. With money which we were authorized to spend immediately and with trusted and effective voluntary agencies to operate relief projects, we were able to organize relief kitchens and milk distribution centres for children, provide blankets, and clothing and start up cottage industries to provide employment when governmental action was often paralysed. We worked in close consultation with the government District Magistrates and Subdivisional



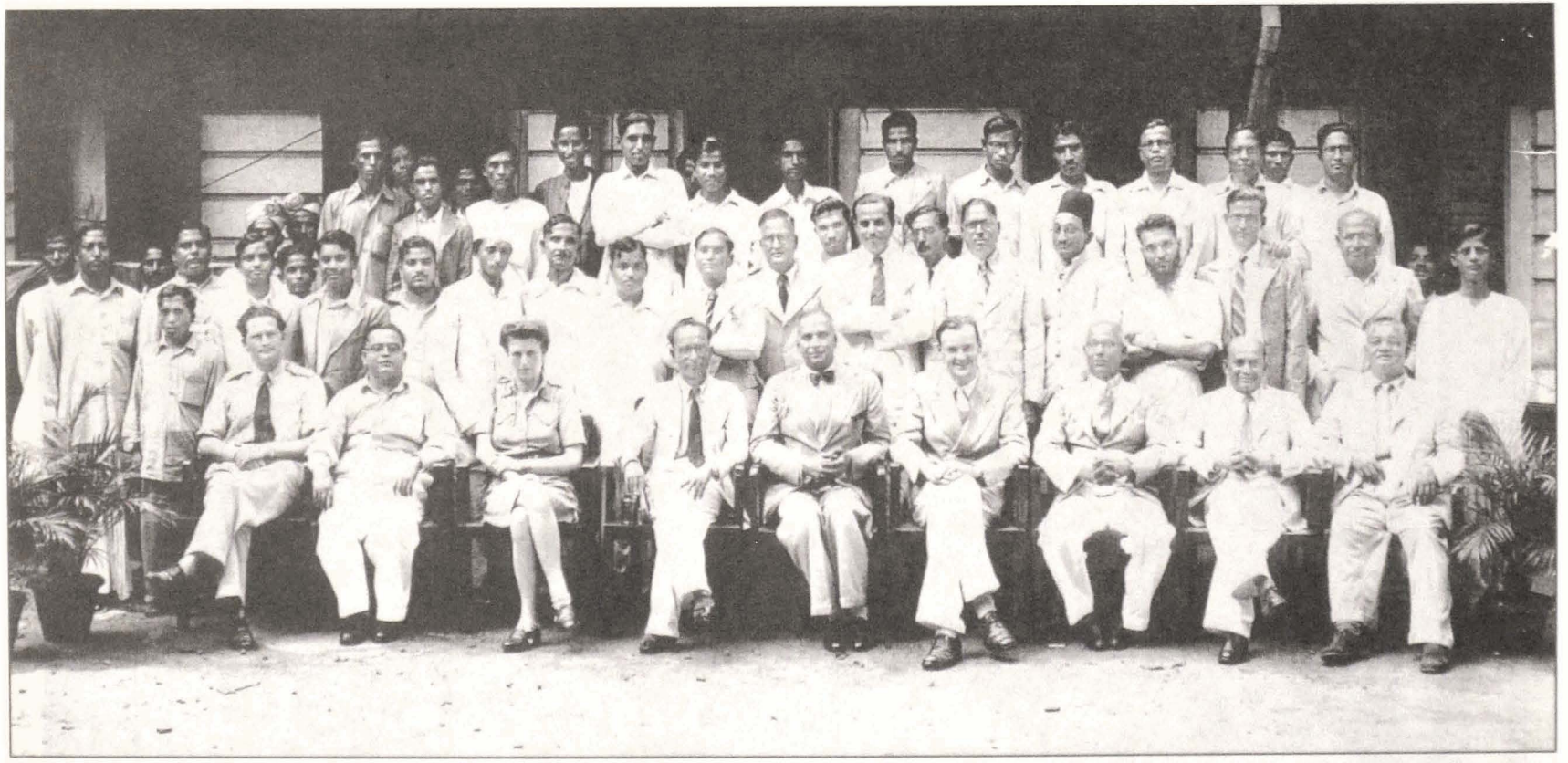
1. R.G. Casey, the Australian Governor of Bengal, who asked the Author to coordinate relief and rehabilitation after the famine of 1943, and Mrs Casey, who sought to democratize Government House.

2. H.S. Suhrawardy, Minister of Civil Supplies, the most active proponent in the Bengal Cabinet of rehabilitation measures after the Famine of 1943.



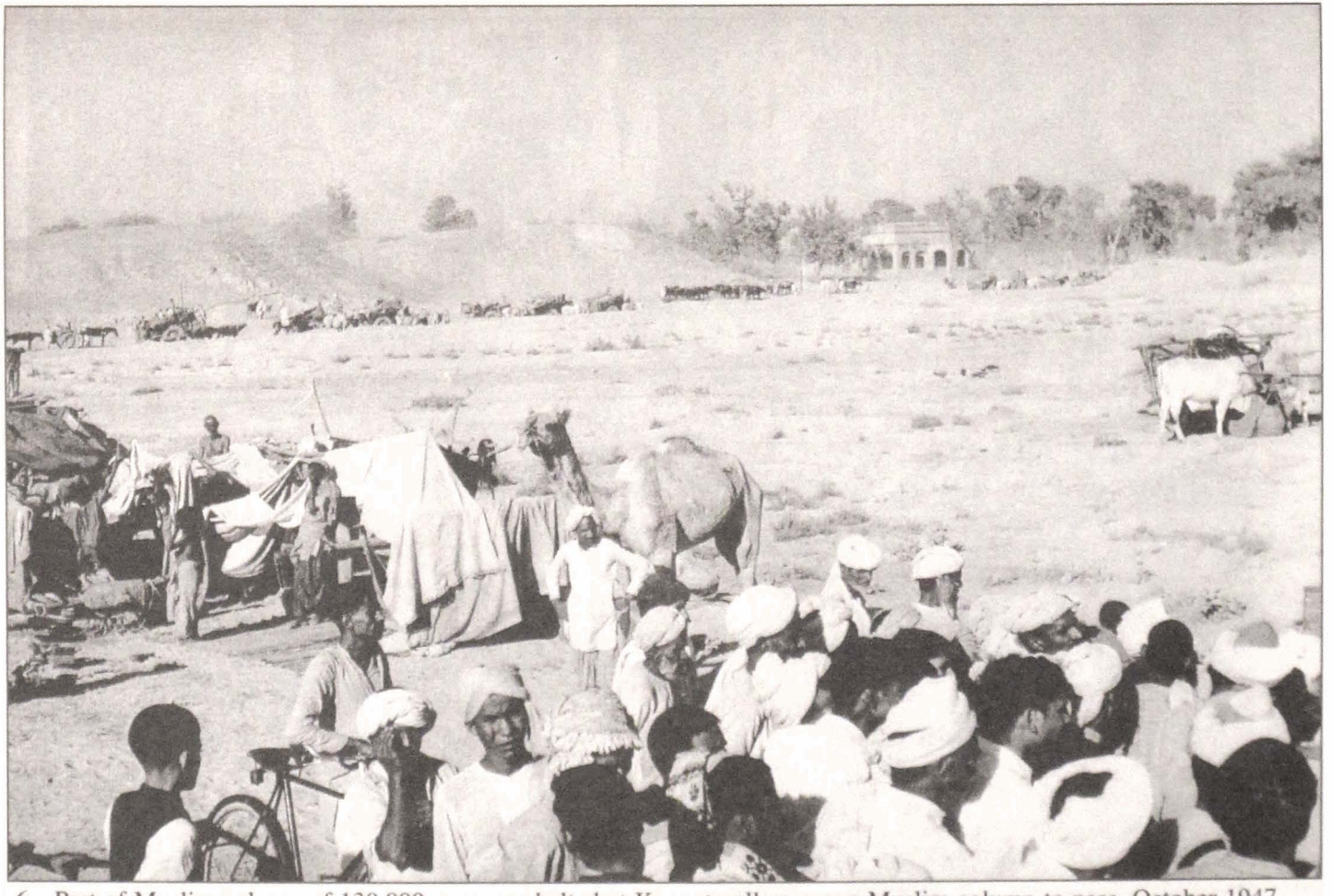


3. Tarak Nath Mukerjee as Revenue Minister was responsible for relief and rehabilitation in Bengal but carried little weight in a Muslim League Government.

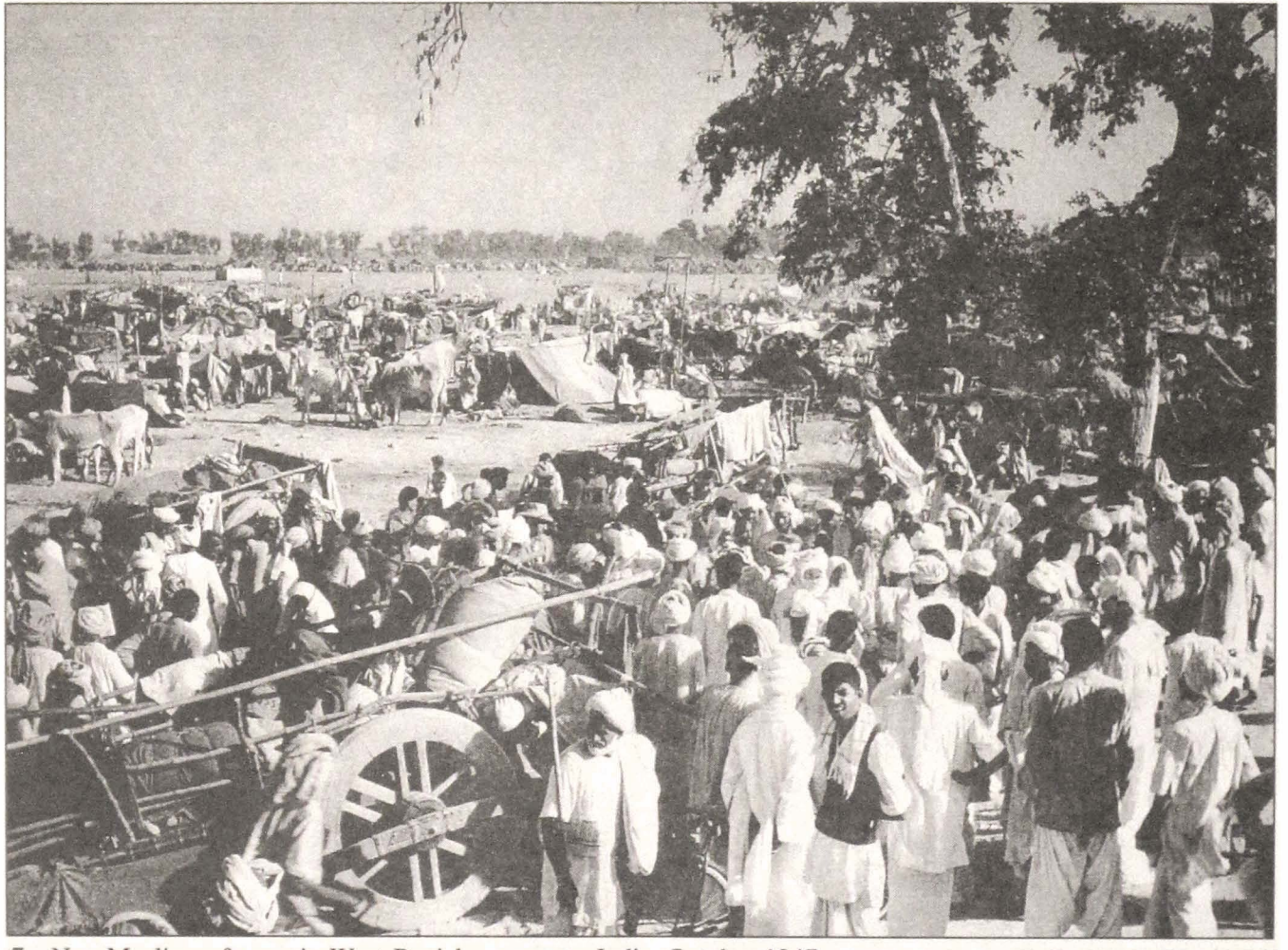


4. Bengal government Revenue Department on occasion of Author's departure. From L to R: T.G. Davies, A.B. Ganguly, Pamela Bankart, S.K. Dey, S. Bannerjee (Revenue Secretary), Author. Rear rows: the clerks whose diligence produced mountains of files to be overcome before action became possible.

5. Bengal Civil Protection Committee, 1942. Seated: Author, Dr Bose, Commandant, Dr K.S. Ray, Chairman K. Griffin (FAU).

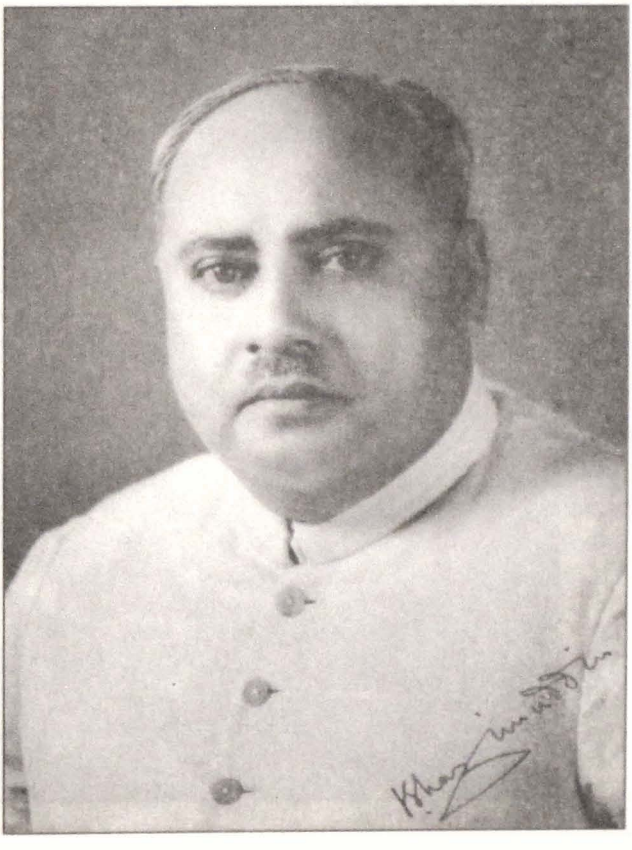


6. Part of Muslim column of 130,000 evacuees halted at Kasur to allow a non-Muslim column to pass, October 1947.



7. Non-Muslim refugees in West Punjab on way to India, October 1947.

8. Lady Mountbatten touring non-Muslim refugee camps in West Punjab, October 1947. Author is behind her. Mridula Sarabhai on left.

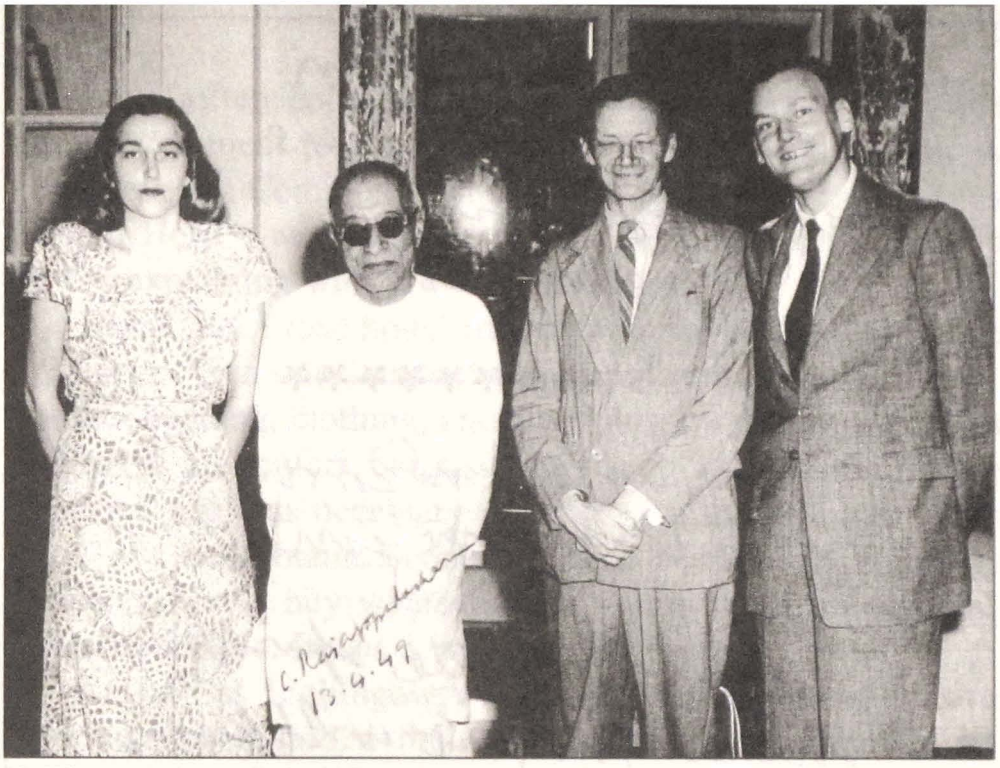


9. Khwaja Sir Nazim-ud-Din, Chief Minister of Bengal. Later, as Governor-General of Pakistan, he encouraged the Author in writing a book about its origins.

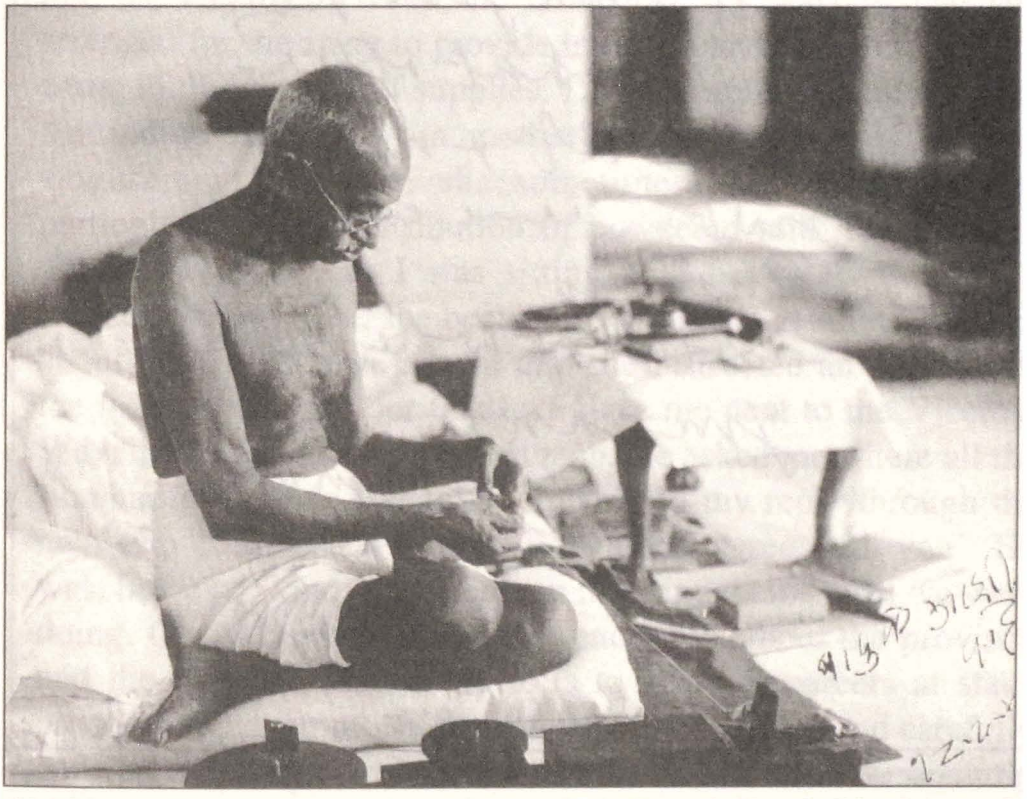
10. United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan (UNCIP), Srinagar, 1948. Front row: 3rd from left Ambassador Colban, Ambassador Korbel, Sheikh Abdullah. Second row middle, General Thimayya. To his right Juanita Symonds and Author.

11. Author with Sheikh Abdullah, Prime Minister of Kashmir, and Bakshi, Home Minister, 1948.

12. UNCIP Subcommittee in Azad Kashmir 1949. From left: Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas (President, Muslim Conference), Author, Ward Allen (USA), Harry Graeffe (Belgium), Aftab Ahmed Khan (Pakistan Government).



13. With C. Rajagopalachari, Governor-General of India, 1948. Left: Juanita Symonds. Right: Horace Alexander, Author.



14. Mahatma Gandhi, who took the Author into Birla House in New Delhi to be nursed when he contracted typhoid in refugee work in December 1947.

Sevagram

12-1-45

My dear Symonds,

Your good letter.

****

V never mind comments. I know you will act as the Spirit guides you & it will be well with you. You can do what others may not & must not.. I have explained this to you.

So come whenever you can.

Love to you both

Yours

M K Gandhi

15. Part of letter from Mahatma Gandhi to the Author, January 1945, when the latter was working in the Bengal Government. The part omitted refers to personal affairs of friends.

Officers, often doing things which they had in vain implored the government to enable them to do. When L.S. Amery told the House of Commons that money was not required for famine relief, Horace wrote a magisterial letter of contradiction to the press explaining what we were doing and why.

Years later I read how, similarly, Florence Nightingale in the Crimean War one hundred years earlier had been unable to obtain bedding, clothing, and other supplies in the vast military hospital at Scutari because the sanction of three different departments was necessary in order to authorize payment; and how she had obtained control of *The Times* relief fund which enabled her to buy whatever was necessary in the bazaars of Constantinople. It was a very familiar picture.

As long as Linlithgow was Viceroy he refused to intervene because he regarded the Governor, Sir John Herbert, as a political, semi-autonomous, appointee. When Wavell succeeded him as Viceroy in 1943, he immediately visited Bengal and arranged for the army to provide transport and to second staff to assist in distribution of supplies. Lady Wavell was Chairman of the Indian Red Cross; a motherly lady, but lost amidst the Government red tape, she sometimes asked for my help, particularly in the distribution of powdered milk for children. On one occasion, as I was sitting with her in the Viceroy's House in New Delhi, she became so indignant at what I told her about the situation in Bengal that she instructed an ADC to fit me in at lunch after our talk and place me next to the Viceroy. Wavell was a remarkably silent man. He asked me where all the rice had gone to in Bengal. He pondered my reply through the next two courses and only said: 'I don't agree with you'. He was, however, kind and sincere in thanking us for what we were doing. Our wide first-hand experience throughout the province and the fact that we had no axes to grind or careers at stake usually caused our recommendations to be received and carefully considered at high levels. One measure for which we were partly responsible was the establishment throughout the affected areas, of simple bamboo-constructed famine emergency hospitals which had no surgical departments but were capable of dealing

with the main diseases. They saved many lives, for as many people died of disease after the famine as from actual starvation.

Sir John Herbert, who had seemed out of his depth in the famine, died in office like his predecessor, in 1943. Churchill was less concerned by the huge loss of life in the famine than by the problems which it caused for the British and American forces at their base for the re-occupation of Burma and in the sending of supplies to China. He appointed the Australian R.G. Casey, a member of his War Cabinet and Resident Minister in the Middle-East, as the new Governor. Casey, in his manner, was more British than Australian and was sometimes mistaken for Anthony Eden. He had taken a degree in engineering at Cambridge before winning a DSO and MC in the First World War. After holding mining directorships he entered the Australian Parliament and rapidly rose to become Treasurer (Finance Minister) before going to Washington as Australian Minister. Impressed by him there, Churchill borrowed him to be his civil representative on the Middle-East front.

Much more widely experienced than most previous Governors, and having successfully introduced modern Organization and Method systems in the Middle-East, Casey was appalled by the antique inefficiency of the Bengal Government. He tried to reform it and speed it up by bringing in advisers from all over the Anglo-Saxon world. On the whole they had little impact on the tired, overworked officials who had little energy left to learn new tricks. Even the committee which he set up on the Bengal administration with one of the ablest Whitehall mandarins, Sir Archibald Rowlands, as Chairman and John Llewellyn, one of the few ICS District Magistrates to have enhanced his reputation in the Famine, as Secretary, achieved little at the time.

Casey deplored the exclusiveness of the British. He opened up Government House socially to Indians, held frequent press conferences, unheard of before, and often addressed the population on the radio. With far more prestige and energy than his predecessor, he was more successful in obtaining food and financial support for Bengal from the Government of India.

But, as his biographer says, he had 'an engineer's impatience with convoluted politics'. 'I am asked if I like Indians,' he wrote, 'The answer is yes, except those who succumb to politics or illicit money making.' He repeatedly urged Wavell to let him dismiss his incompetent ministry, and take over direct rule of the province.[6]

In the middle of 1944 Casey asked me to come into the administration with the somewhat vague designation of Special Officer for Relief and Rehabilitation. Though I would formally be answerable to the Revenue Department (which was responsible for relief because it had the authority to suspend taxes) I would have direct access to the Governor. I was well aware that such a post would be no bed of roses, compared with that of leading a voluntary organization with ample funds and highly motivated colleagues. The challenge was hard to resist however when he flatteringly added: 'I do not know where to turn if you refuse.'

I told the Governor that if I took the post I would see one of my main tasks as obtaining the cooperation of voluntary organizations with Government programmes and asked for time to consult Gandhi, who had recently been released from confinement. Gandhi received me kindly at Sevagram and said that I must follow my conscience but would not find it easy to be a government official. Fortunately, I was accompanied by my FAU colleague, Glan Davies, for a Welsh voice was needed when it was unexpectedly announced in the evening prayer meeting that our British friends would sing *Lead Kindly Light.* My FAU colleagues agreed that I must do what I felt best. I accepted the post. Gandhi was proved right. Sitting in a vast office in the Bengal Secretariat in Writers Buildings, which had been built as the East India Company's Indian headquarters in the eighteenth century, it seemed that the administrative system had not changed since it had baffled the most dynamic of viceroys, Lord Curzon, forty years earlier. He had described it as 'a gigantic quagmire or bog into which every question that comes along either sinks or is sucked down'.[7] Though the British and Indian permanent officials of the ICS and Provincial Service

were friendly, I had little authority. No firm decisions could be made by telephone. The notes which I sent requesting approval for action remained unanswered. The files I sent out seldom returned.

In a note which I sent to my minister and to Casey after my first four months, commenting on lack of progress, I suggested targets for a six months rehabilitation scheme. These included permanent accommodation for several thousand orphans; organization of non-residential work centres for village industries on a self-supporting basis; distribution of specified quantities of materials to various centres for artisans, of whom boat builders were among the most important; rehousing of seventy-five percent of the destitutes in residential workhouses; the upgrading of famine relief emergency hospitals and dispensaries on a permanent basis; and import and distribution of specified quantities of cattle and milk. To reach these targets, more staff was essential at the field level. I reported, however, that of thirty-five additional Subdivisional Officers sanctioned six months earlier, only nine had become available and of eighty Additional Circle Officers sanctioned at the same time, only two had joined. Such was the paralysis imposed by the need for appointments to be approved by the Public Service Commission in accordance with the Communal Ratio. In conclusion, I pointed out that in many rehabilitation programmes action was required by several Government Departments but that even in the severest emergency, no Department had a right to do more than suggest a line of action to another.

I persuaded Casey, and Casey persuaded the Cabinet, to establish a Directorate of Relief and Rehabilitation under a Joint Secretary as Director assisted by myself as Deputy Director. The ministers, however, could not agree upon who should be appointed to the new senior and influential post of Director. Meanwhile, for six months I acted as Director with the substantive rank of Deputy Secretary in the Revenue Department. Though this gave me status within the Department it did not accelerate decisions which required the approval of other Departments. Casey, whose enthusiasm in cutting red tape

was always encouraging, then had me gazetted as a Deputy Secretary in three other Departments. I was thus able to sign for their concurrence in our proposals if they failed to reply to them. This, alas, could not apply to the Finance Department whose rigid and unimaginative adherence to ossified regulations was a principal obstacle. A partial remedy was to get the Finance Department to station an official within our Department.

I spent as much time as possible on tour, often by launch, in the worst affected areas, which were mostly in East Bengal. I found that where thousands of lives had been saved it was often because exceptional District Magistrates, and still more boldly the Subdivisional Officers below them, had risked their careers and the wrath of Government by spending money without authorization. One of the latter was Aftab Ahmad Khan, an able young ICS officer in Chandpur, who was to turn up again in the Pakistan government when I became involved in the Kashmir question.

These visits threw light on why statistics which came up to the Secretariat were sometimes puzzling. When we sent out a circular to determine the number of famine orphans throughout the province, the replies sometimes had little correlation with the incidence of the famine. I discovered why as I moved around. At the very bottom of the Government pyramid, the circular would come to an officer who might be less concerned with accuracy than with the consequences for his career. One officer might consider that if he replied that there were few orphans it would appear that he had been zealous in saving the life of the parents. Another, however, might suppose that if a large number of orphans were reported he would be commended for rescuing them and that additional staff would be sanctioned to look after them, over whom he would preside and might even be promoted.

The severe stage of the famine was over. The main problems were now in rehabilitation. I brought my FAU colleague, Pamela Bankart, into the Secretariat to set up employment schemes for the large number of famine widows. The cultivators had often sent their wives and children into the towns to obtain relief whilst they stayed on to protect their lands and had died there.

At this time there was only one other woman in the whole secretariat, who was in the Education Department.

Often our projects extended into the vast 20-year post-war planning exercise which the Government of Bengal was carrying out in cooperation with the Government of India. I fought unsuccessfully to have the Famine Emergency hospitals made permanent. The medical authorities insisted that they should be scrapped in favour of additional but far fewer beds in the hospitals at district headquarters to which, in a province with such poor communications, it was difficult for the sick and poor to travel.

The Revenue Minister who headed my Department, Tarak Nath Mukerjee, was one of the very few Hindus who had been willing to join a Muslim League Government; his capacities would hardly have earned him office in any other circumstances. He carried very little weight. His office was open to all and was usually full of some twenty or thirty visitors and petitioners, few of whom obtained decisions because all were putting forward their individual cases simultaneously. Sometimes he referred them to me and if I pointed out that what they wanted did not come within our policies he would only say wistfully, 'I suppose you know he is a member of our party'. He was dismayed by my energy and desire for change and would suggest that perhaps my wife should be brought over from England to occupy me and make me less restless. He was not good at answering questions in the Legislative Assembly where we—his officials—sat behind hoping for a chance to brief him before he was bowled middle-stump. He treated me with great courtesy, persuading me to disappear from the scene briefly on holiday to his bungalow by the sea. I think that the perquisite which he enjoyed most was the ministerial private railway carriage in which we would sometimes travel round the province, attaching ourselves to various trains and picking up local dignitaries as we progressed.

Support for my proposals came more from H.S. Suhrawardy, the most forceful member of the Council of Ministers, in

detested and accused of corruption and mayhem by Hindus, he was accessible and imaginative, ready to talk with me for hours in evenings about rehabilitation schemes and the economic future of Bengal.

I frequently went to see Casey. This was apparent from the list of the Governor's daily appointments which was published in the press; perhaps partly because of this I was surprisingly well accepted by the permanent officials in the Secretariat and also indeed by the Ministers. The courteous Chief Minister, Nazim-ud-Din, asked me to go to the Burmese border to investigate when members of the Muslim League complained that Muslim refugees from Burma were not being kindly treated by local ICS officials.

The Australian side of Casey came out in his pleasant and gregarious social manner. He criticised the aloofness of both official and non-official Europeans saying: 'There is a lack of warmth and generosity in our dealings with Indians, both Hindus and Muslims'.[8] He invited them to dinners and receptions in his vast palace which had been the seat of the Viceroy when Calcutta had been the capital of India. The Caseys entertained widely and often. The Governor would preside at dinner in his plum-coloured velvet dinner jacket whilst servants brought in bottles of wine covered in napkins whose provenance he asked us to guess. Of course, in this game we suggested the names of famous French vintages and would show amazement when the bottles were unwrapped and revealed to have come from Casey's own Australian estates. Meanwhile, at the other end of the table Mrs Casey would say, 'I hope we are the last British people to occupy this house though I don't know if He agrees.' Maie Casey horrified the Security officials by opening up Government House to the public when she organized an exhibition of the works of neglected contemporary Bengali artists and of local handicrafts. She actively supported our work with women's organizations.

In 1945, the Muslim League government was defeated in the Legislative Assembly when some of its members (strongly rumoured to be heavily bribed) defected to the opposition.

Instead of trying to form another ministry, Casey happily took over direct administration of the government as he was entitled to do, with the Viceroy's consent, under Section 93 of the Constitution when an elected government could not be formed. He was constitutionally required to appoint Advisers, who virtually had the functions of ministers. He chose as such five senior ICS officials, all British.

Shortly after this the Governor sent for me to complain that he had received a report (for the Government intelligence net was widely spread) that 'your friend Gandhi' had been saying that the Bengal Government was importing large quantities of powdered milk from Australia for distribution to children who had survived the famine instead of purchasing it from local Indian merchants at a lower price. The implication was that he, as an Australian now heading the administration, had a finger in this pie.

I wrote to Gandhi to explain that the Governor had nothing to do with the matter, that no milk came from Australia and that milk imported from elsewhere cost only half the price of that available locally. I said that if he had the slightest suspicion of impropriety I should feel bound to resign. He replied:

> Dear Symonds, you are unnecessarily agitated. I did not know that you had anything to do with the thing. I understood the whole thing from Sudhir (Ghose). I think I told you that we were living in an artificial and unnatural atmosphere and therefore we had to have thick skins if we were to do our duty. I expect to see you in Bengal if I succeed in getting there.[9]

A little later he wrote kindly: 'Never mind comments. I know you will act as the spirit guides you. You can do what others may not and must not. I have explained this to you. Do come whenever you can.'[10]

Sometimes I found it more difficult to obtain action under the Section 93 regime, in which the Governor's chosen British Advisers carried considerable authority, than I had done under my easygoing Minister. The Adviser whose portfolio included

obtain a launch for an energetic Subdivisional Officer in a badly affected riverine area with few roads he refused to support the request, saying that the young man should be content to use a sailing boat as he himself had done when a junior officer. When I tried to include in the post-war plan a programme for family planning, to be implemented through voluntary organizations, he chided me and told me to remember the Indian Mutiny as a lesson for avoiding governmental interference in social practices.

For a professional politician there was a surprising *naiveté* about Casey. He once asked me whether I preferred the Hindus or the Muslims, which seemed an improper question to put even to a temporary government official. Shortly after he left Bengal to return to Australia, he wrote a book *An Australian in India.* Published a few months before Independence, it said:

> It will not be possible for many years ahead for India to do without a large number of British individuals in Government service in a wide range of administrative, legal, medical, police and other professional and technical appointments.[11]

This was an astonishingly obtuse prediction of the attitude of Congress leaders towards the continuing employment of British officials. It also showed a surprising lack of awareness of the availability of qualified Indians to staff the government services.

As our programmes of relief and rehabilitation merged into the 20-year post war development plan, the absurdity of this being conducted by an Australian with almost dictatorial powers aided by five British ICS officials, became increasingly apparent. There was an extraordinary lack of consciousness of the implications of the fact that the British were about to leave the scene. Also, there was a poor rice crop in 1945 and a danger that prices would again rise disastrously, as they had in 1943, unless the Government obtained the cooperation of political leaders and others who influenced public opinion in the measures it was taking to control the situation.

I felt myself to be one of those who should be superseded. In an address to the Rotary Club of Calcutta in 1945 outlining a

possible post-war social development policy, I concluded by saying:

> It is for the people of this province and not for any outsider to say whether these things are to be achieved under a capitalist or socialist economy, in one Bengal or two, under this system of land tenure or another. And for all the warm hospitality and support which my colleagues of the Friends Ambulance Unit and myself have received in the country, we remain neither mercenaries nor missionaries and look forward gladly to the day when we are free to drive our now somewhat rusty ambulances back down Piccadilly.

A Director of Relief and Rehabilitation had at last been appointed. It was a choice which I had suggested to the Governor, S.K. Dey, with whom I had worked in civil defence and who was a graduate of the London School of Economics with a broad vision of the future of Bengal. Later, he was to become Deputy Director of the United Nations World Food Programme. After serving congenially for a time as his deputy I declined to renew my contract when invited, informing Casey that I could not conscientiously continue at this time under a Section 93 administration. With a joyous sense of freedom I then wrote an article, which the *Statesman* published on its front page, outlining what I thought should be done to prevent another famine. In this I made three main suggestions. Firstly, the government must take the public into its confidence to prevent food prices again rising astronomically as a result of rumours. Secondly, it should be prepared to remove incompetent officers from key posts. Thirdly, politicians must show responsibility in refraining from exaggerating food shortages for their political purposes. More broadly, I suggested that now that the war was over, rapid progress to Indian (and perhaps Pakistan) independence must be expected and that it was inappropriate for the administration and its economic and social planning to be in the hands of British officials at this stage.

I received surprisingly sympathetic letters from a number of government officials, both British and Indian, and K.S. Roy, the

India officials on the other hand, indicated that I had been spreading alarm and despondency.

Before leaving India I went to say goodbye to Gandhi. He charitably refrained from reminding me of his warning that I would find it difficult to be a government official in present circumstances. He asked me many questions about the situation in Bengal, which he was about to visit. He said he hoped to persuade Casey that there were practical remedies both for the food and cloth shortages. He believed that Casey's experts could achieve little of lasting value and that the renaissance of Bengal could only be inspired by the Bengalis themselves.

When I asked if he had messages for friends in England he appeared doubtful whether the professed good intentions of the newly elected British Labour government would be pursued, though he retained a friendly recollection of Pethick Lawrence, the new Secretary of State for India. He was favourably disposed towards a suggestion by Nehru and Patel that to facilitate a political settlement the British Government should ask the United Nations to appoint a panel of jurists to arbitrate between the political parties if agreement could not be reached by a certain date.

Shortly after my departure Gandhi arrived in Bengal and had long conversations with Casey. Having listened to both of them, I was fascinated to read of the confrontation of the Mahatma and the Engineer in their wide ranging discussions of the solution to Bengal's problems.

Casey, now in complete charge of the administration, was able to take immediate action to remedy some small grievances which Gandhi raised. He immediately caused an employee of the Electric Supply Company who had been unfairly dismissed to be reinstated. Another man was allowed to obtain permission to buy seed potatoes which had been withheld.

On his side Gandhi was able to stop unruly elements in Midnapore from terrorising other Indians in the name of Congress. Yet, while these gestures created a friendly atmosphere, on the basic issues there was no meeting of minds. Casey sent Gandhi the text of a major radio address which he

made to the province depicting a future Bengal rendered prosperous through a grand irrigation system. Gandhi replied severely:

> You say 'the answer to my mind lies not in our politics, our religion or our individual ambition but in the abiding factors of our environment, i.e. the land and water of Bengal'. This is a gross error of thought and consequent action, handed down from generation to generation by the British element. Your gigantic project will come to nothing until the whole mass of the people of Bengal is interested in the Government of the Province.

In another letter he wrote, 'The question is one of utilising waste labour, as under your scheme it is one of waste water'. Casey on the other hand had little sympathy with Gandhi's panacea of cottage industries to give employment to cultivators when there was no work on the land.[12]

Casey would have been a splendid Governor in Kipling's time. I admired his quick apprehension of problems and readiness to consider unorthodox solutions. But efficiency was no longer enough. He was not interested in the constitutional question whose solution was fundamental to progress in all fields. He had a low opinion of the capacity of Indians (or at least of Bengalis). He accepted the inevitability of Indian (and perhaps Pakistani) Home Rule only because if it were not granted Britain's relations with the USA, which he considered much more important, would be imperilled.[13]

On the long sea voyage home, I occupied myself with writing a note about the condition and prospects of Bengal which I gave to Paul Patrick at the India Office. He passed it on to the Secretary of State for India, Lord Pethick Lawrence, a veteran of many socialist and feminist struggles. Pethick liked it because it was different from the official accounts which he was receiving and asked me in future if I had anything interesting to tell him to write to him at his home, not his office. He sent my note to Sir Frederick Burrows, the railway trade union organizer who had just been appointed to succeed Casey as Governor of

his appointment by saying that a post usually held by an aristocrat skilled in hunting and shooting was being given to a specialist in shunting and hooting). Burrows invited me to come out as his private secretary. I told him that I did not think this would please his Advisers and suggested that he reflect on the question after his arrival, He wrote a friendly letter from Calcutta to say that I was right. Agatha sent me to see Cripps who asked me what the prospects of Congress and the Muslim League were in the forthcoming elections. When I said that it was generally supposed that Congress would obtain most non-Muslim and the Muslim League would gain the majority of Muslim seats, he told me that this was not what he heard from elsewhere and that the Muslim League had little support. As his most trusted informants were leading members of Congress this was not surprising.

I spent the next eighteen months working with the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) in Austria, first in the American occupied zone and then in the Russian occupied zone. The different approach required in negotiations with officials of these two powers was a fascinating contrast. The bafflingly casual style of the American administrators left me with a strong desire to learn more about the history of America's handling of its colonial responsibilities. Returning to Oxford when UNRRA's operations ended in Europe, I arranged to visit New York with the hope of continuing to the Philippines which had been the USA's largest colony.

Meanwhile Horace's standing with the British Government greatly improved after the Labour victory in the general election of 1945. Pethick Lawrence was delighted to facilitate his return to India with Agatha Harrison, telling them that they were just the people whom he needed in India to help him. When the British Government sent the Cabinet Mission of Pethick Lawrence, Cripps and A.V. Alexander to India in 1946 to try and reach a constitutional settlement, Gandhi asked Horace and Agatha to stay in his house in Simla and look at the drafts of his letters before he sent them to the Mission. Later, Horace accompanied him as he walked round Noakhali in East Bengal,

pacifying villages where there had been communal riots. There was an even closer relationship on Independence Day in 1947 which Horace spent in a house in a riot-torn Calcutta area together with Gandhi and Suhrawardy, the outgoing Premier of Bengal. The episode brought about what came to be called 'The Miracle of Calcutta' which remained peaceful when the Punjab burst into flames.

In our next partnership in India, Horace's reputation and influence with those in power was thus very different from what it had been in 1942–43 when the Viceroy had contemplated his expulsion. Well known and respected as an old friend of Indian Independence and of India's new leaders, he had entrée everywhere in Government circles.

NOTES

1. For more on Horace's Indian connection see Richard Symonds, 'Recollections of Horace Alexander and Gandhi,' *Indo British Review*, Madras, vol. 14, no. 2, 1988.
2. *Harijan*, Sevagram, India, 5 July 1942.
3. H. Alexander, *Gandhi Through Western Eyes*. Philadelphia, 1984, p. 203–206.
4. *The Transfer of Power* (Ed. N. Mansergh), London, 1970, vol. 2, documents 355, 408, 498, 509; vol. 3 documents 86, 515, 516, 530, 536, 542.
5. *Famine Enquiry Commission, Report on Bengal*, New Delhi, 1945. See also Report of the Bengal Administration Enquiry Committee, Alipore, 1945.
6. W.J. Hudson, *Casey*. Melbourne, 1986, pp. 167,178,163 and the author's recollection.
7. Lord Ronaldshay, *Life of Lord Curzon*, 1928, vol. 2, p. 64.
8. Hudson, op. cit., p. 177.
9. Letter in possession of the author.
10. *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* (CWMG), vol. 89, 12 January 1945.
11. R.G. Casey, *An Australian in India*, London, 1947, p. 114.
12. CWMG, vol. 87, p. 182 R.G. Casey, *Personal Experience*, London, 1962, pp. 217–220.
13. For Casey's Governorship of Bengal see R.G. Casey *An Australian in India*, London, 1947; R.G. Casey, *Personal Experience*, London, 1962; W.J. Hudson, *Casey*, Melbourne, 1986; Maie Casey, *Tales and Eddies*, London, 1966.

3

Crisis in Delhi
September 1947

In August 1947, when India and Pakistan became independent, I was about to leave London for New York and then onwards to the Philippines to do some research on American colonial policy. Learning of the massacres and vast expulsion of minorities in the Punjab and elsewhere, it seemed however that if my experience could be found useful on the spot, academic research could be postponed, and indeed should be, for undivided India had been a kind host to me. So I offered my services as a volunteer through the Friends Service Committee in London to either government, and very shortly found myself joining Horace Alexander once more in Delhi.

The Delhi in which I arrived on 11 September appeared physically and nervously shattered. Stabbing and looting had spread from the narrow streets of Old Delhi to the broad boulevards of Lutyens' New Delhi. Those shops which had not been plundered in the commercial centre of Connaught Circus were boarded up. There was a rigid curfew after 6 p.m. There was no bread for ten days in the Imperial Hotel where we lived off tinned food.

The Government of India at this point was more concerned with restoring order in its capital than with the wider refugee problems of the Punjab. Nehru, now Prime Minister, threw himself vigorously into the task. Driving through the streets one day he saw a Hindu pushing a hand-cart full of possessions looted from a Muslim neighbour. Leaping from his official car, he ordered the man to take them back, which he refused to do, provocatively adding, 'They have their Pakistan, we will have our Hindustan'. This was too much for Nehru who seized him

by the throat and shook him, whilst his victim croaked, 'If I must die it is an honour to do so at your hands, Panditji', at which Nehru dropped him and drove on to his office.

The Muslim population of Delhi of all classes—civil servants, businessmen, artisans, tongawallas, bearers—had fled to a few natural strongholds, including the Purana Qila, (an almost impregnable Mogul fort), Hamayun's Tomb and the quarries on the Ridge. At the time of my arrival, the Indian government regarded these camps as the responsibility of the Pakistan High Commissioner who was, however, hardly in a position to move out of his house. There was scarcely any communication between the camps and the outside world except through Europeans, who were able to move safely in both directions. I joined Horace in the largest camp, the Purana Qila, which was sheltering 60,000 refugees in tents, in corners of battlements and in the open, together with their camels and tongas and ponies, battered old taxis and luxury limousines. There were orderly rows of tents which organized bodies of college students had put up. You might meet anyone from a nawab to a professor. Rich men offered thousands of rupees if we could hire them an aeroplane to Karachi. It seemed possible to buy anything, from a taxi to the hawkers' boxes of matches, which were now the only ones available in Delhi. From time to time Europeans hurried through looking for their bearers who had fled from their houses. Though it was four weeks since Independence Day, it was British troops who were manning the narrow gate and directing traffic through the lanes and tracks. Three tents were occupied by harassed Pakistan officials, making lists of other officials for evacuation, though the risks of being massacred on the special trains to Pakistan were so great that most of those who were not officials preferred to wait and see how things turned out.

With us were a number of Britons and Americans who had come in to help informally under the loose auspices of Friends. There was Arthur Moore, the Irish former editor of the Calcutta *Statesman* who had been dismissed a few years earlier at the request of the Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow, for persistently

criticizing the government. There was an itinerant baronet, Sir Ffulke Agnew, who had previously worked with Quakers and whom Horace had encountered in the Imperial Hotel. An American banker and his wife, Kendall and Louise Kimberland came whilst on holiday from Bombay. We had two obvious roles. One was to help to make known the needs of the camp to the Government and enable supplies to be brought in. The other was to assist the refugees to communicate with their friends and relatives outside, who often did not know where they were.

About this time the Government set up the Delhi Emergency Committee, chaired by Bhaba, the Minister of Commerce, and with H.M. Patel, the able Cabinet Secretary, as its Secretary. The Cabinet itself met daily, rather remarkably under the chairmanship of the Governor-General, Lord Mountbatten. Dr Jivraj Mehta, a Bombay Congressman, combined the posts formerly held by the Director General of Medical Services, the Secretary of the Health Department and Commissioner of Public Health. When Horace and I approached him he acknowledged the urgent need for medical supplies in the Purana Qila, but all the Muslims of the Health Service had fled and the non-Muslims dared not go into the Muslim camps to take in the supplies. So medicines were loaded into our old hired Ford. It broke down outside the Irwin Hospital from which emerged Lady Mountbatten who, in her element as former head of the British St John Ambulance, was delighted to have the supplies transferred to her car and take them to the camp.

How different she was to previous Vicereines who had automatically become head of the Indian Red Cross, which had been managed by a committee mainly composed of British businessmen and officials. On her arrival in India she had visited leading Indian women non-officials, mostly members of the Congress Party, who had never previously co-operated with the Government and invited them to join the Red Cross Committee, saying that she did not want to be chairman, but would be glad to serve as an ordinary member if her experience were considered to be useful. Few of them felt able to refuse an invitation made in these terms.

In her capacity as Chairman of the Relief and Welfare Committee, which co-ordinated all voluntary relief agencies, I was to meet her frequently and came to admire the way in which, tall, vigorous, and direct, she combined administrative ability with tact, humour, and political flair. Beside her often was my old friend from Bengal famine days, Sardar Bahadur Balwant Singh Puri, Secretary of the Indian Red Cross, invigorated, but sometimes cut short by her. Lady Mountbatten appeared to be providing valuable assurance to Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, a former worker in Gandhi's entourage, who though devoted, appeared inclined to despair in her task as Health Minister.

Back in the Purana Qila, we found the professors and students of the Islamia College, who had come into the camp *en bloc*, delighted to be asked to co-operate with us in organizing an information and welfare centre. The principal of the College arranged a rota of volunteers. I found that the deputy Camp Commander was the son-in-law of one of the Muslim staff officers who had been responsible to me in the Calcutta Air Raid Protection Services and his good offices provided us with a table and chairs.

In the middle of September, the Government of India acknowledged responsibility for the camps through the Chief Commissioner of Delhi who appointed Muslim officers to run them. Horace and I could now consider how we might be useful in relation to the problems outside the capital. The Punjab, the favourite province of the British, of whose administration and canal system they were so proud and which had furnished the bulk of the recruits to their army, had been divided between India and Pakistan by a Commission whose chairman, was the British lawyer, Sir Cyril Radcliffe. He had the casting vote in the Award on its boundaries. These, some of which were unexpectedly drawn, were only announced after Independence. A massive transfer of officials, including the police, between the new states of West and East Punjab took place in the days and weeks following the Award. Many were killed on their way. The consequent administrative weakness greatly hampered

the ability of the two Governments to control the massacre of Muslims in the East and of Hindus and Sikhs in the West which now broke out. Whilst Pakistan retained the former provincial capital Lahore, East Punjab inherited no administrative centre and its provincial offices were scattered between several towns.

Gandhi had come to Delhi at the request of the Government and with his entourage was occupying Birla House, the New Delhi residence of G.D. Birla, the multimillionaire Marwari industrialist, who was his friend and financial supporter. Here, throughout the day, not only came ministers, discussing the many problems of the new Government, but also individuals, some quite humble, who streamed in each day to share their worries. Gandhi sent me a word of welcome and encouragement and on the day of my arrival, Horace and I went to see him. The Health Minister, Raj Kumari Amrit Kaur, showed us in for what could only be a brief greeting as Nehru was sitting by his couch seeking advice. Nehru and Amrit Kaur came to see him every evening and on other occasions we also met with Maulana Azad, the Muslim Minister of Education in the Indian government, and H.S. Suhrawardy, who until recently had been Chief Minister of the Muslim League Government in Bengal. Every evening, in the garden of Birla House, a prayer meeting, incorporating Muslim and Christian as well as Hindu prayers and music, was held at which Gandhi would deliver a speech or sermon usually calling for communal harmony; these often provided a topic for leading articles in the following morning's newspapers.

Nehru, as well as Gandhi, spoke out firmly and frequently urging that there be no retaliation against Muslims and that those who had fled should be restored to their homes. Horace, as an old friend of the Congress leaders, had the entrée everywhere to the new ministers and to the Governor-General's house. We strolled into Nehru's bungalow one evening without being stopped by anyone and were invited to chat with him over his dinner. Within his cabinet, Sardar Patel, who was Home Minister as well as Deputy Prime Minister, and Dr S.P. Mookerjee took a much more belligerent attitude towards Pakistan.

There were those who said that whilst Nehru provided the intellect, Patel's drive was the motive power of the Government. My first meeting with Patel was unhappy. Horace and I planned to visit the Pakistan capital, Karachi, to investigate the relief needs of Pakistan. Major Bill Shortt, a great authority on the Sikhs who had been involved in intelligence and in constitutional discussions preceding Independence, dropped in to see us at the Imperial Hotel. When he heard our plans, he said that once I got to Karachi I would be snapped up to work for Pakistan by Sir Archibald Rowlands, adviser to Jinnah, who knew me and that I would not return to India. He disappeared abruptly and returned at 7 a.m. to say that he had talked to Patel and Amrit Kaur about our movements and that both wanted to see us. We went round to Patel's house where Amrit Kaur was tearful about the general situation and the prospect of losing us. Patel's daughter, Maniben, was chilly. Patel was blunt and sardonic. He recalled that the Government of India had paid my fare (which I had not known) but said that we could go to Pakistan—or even Afghanistan, for all he cared—but that we must all be on one side or the other. We subsequently dropped in on Gandhi, who said that as Quakers of course we should work on both sides. He promised to mollify Patel and meanwhile advised us to remain in India. So we cancelled our visit to Pakistan.

The Government of India had established a Relief and Rehabilitation Ministry whose minister, K.C. Neogy, was a Bengali of charm and assurance who had for many years been a member of the Central Legislative Assembly. Both he and his officials seemed a little unsure of their authority in this crisis in relation to that of the East Punjab Government. The secretary of the Ministry, S.K. Kirpalani, an ICS officer from the Punjab, asked me to serve as Relief Adviser to the Chief Commissioner of Delhi but it seemed that the situation there was coming under control and that I might be more useful in East Punjab. Communications with Jullundur, where the Governor, Sir C.T. Trevedi had his temporary headquarters, were broken for ten days by disturbances and floods. He turned up in Delhi however where, whilst visiting Lady Mountbatten in the Governor-

General's house, we encountered him in the corridor with Mountbatten, who shoved us into his own office for a one minute conversation. Trivedi had more important things on his mind than an offer of the services of a strange Englishman and murmured, 'Splendid, I'll consult my ministers and let you know'. Bill Shortt seized on this to telephone Jullundur and obtain a vague acceptance of my services on behalf of the Prime Minister, Dr Gopi Chand Bhargava, and on 21 September a plane flying to Rawalpindi dropped me off in Jullundur.

The Deputy Relief Commissioner, Haxar, showing the characteristic displeasure of civil servants whose ministers take decisions without consulting them, disclaimed responsibility for me and advised me to see the Prime Minister. The latter, a medical doctor and old Congressman, had been unexpectedly chosen by Patel to lead the new Government after the partition of the Punjab and had not yet been confirmed by the non-Muslim rump of the Punjab Legislative Assembly. He spent an hour outlining evacuation movements and arrangement for reception of refugees. and then referred me to P.N. Thapar, Financial Commissioner for Refugees, to discuss how I could best help.

The Secretariat was temporarily installed in a college which would have to be vacated at the beginning of term. Here, at 9.30 p.m., I saw Thapar, a Punjabi ICS officer, formerly Secretary for Civil Supplies. He outlined his organization and asked me, to go next day with five Indian Administrative Service probationers, temporarily assigned to the province, to Kurukshetra, 100 miles north of Delhi. There we were asked to help organize the largest camp in the province for up to 500,000 refugees, in fact receiving all those arriving from Pakistan who could not immediately be settled on the land.

The 200-mile drive along the Grand Trunk Road took us through the state of Patiala, passing some recent Muslim corpses with their throats cut. At one railway station some 1000 Sikhs, with swords and spears, were waiting to attack the Pakistan Express. We stopped briefly at Ambala to warn the station master.

I spent twelve days at Kurukshetra, carrying a letter appointing me 'to supplement but not replace' the Camp Commander. The camp had accommodation for 10,000 refugees in tents and requisitioned buildings; over 20,000 had already arrived. There was a precarious food supply, no clothing, blankets or lighting. Rain and record floods cut us off for several days from provincial headquarters, by road, rail, or air. The situation was reminiscent of that in the Bengal Famine. The Deputy Commissioner of Karnal, twenty-two miles away, was a Provincial Service Officer unable or unwilling to requisition transport or make any considerable payments on our behalf without prior sanction of the government. With money and transport we could have gone out and purchased tents, building materials, blankets, lamps, and medical supplies. Without them we could do little. Medical supplies were indeed being flown from Delhi to Jullundur but they then needed to be transported back to Kurukshetra. We had a 500-bed hospital on paper but not a bed in operation, and an isolation cholera camp where there was no treatment. The Deputy Commissioner was persuaded with difficulty to radio Jullundur that he would buy blankets locally if there was no reply to his request for sanction by a certain date.

I visited Delhi, often walking in front of the station wagon through severe floods, to persuade Kirpalani to send 15,000 tents direct to Kurukshetra and to urge that the camp be taken over by the Government of India and supplied direct from Delhi, which was so much closer to it than Jullundur. On my return to Kurukshetra, Horace, with Gandhi's impressively capable young personal physician, Dr Sushila Nayar, visited the camp with twenty St. John Ambulance volunteers sent by Lady Mountbatten, and they strengthened my case. Shortly afterwards, the Government of India took over the camp from the East Punjab Government. Meanwhile, I went back to Delhi with Horace, hoping to fly from there to Jullundur and report on urgent needs to the East Punjab Government.

4

Establishing a Neutral Role
October 1947

Whilst I was in Delhi awaiting a flight to Jullundur, I shared two impressions with Horace: firstly, a mile down the road from Kurukshetra, under a Rajput guard, was a camp of Muslim refugees, who had been expelled from their villages for possessing arms. They were no one's responsibility. If Kurukshetra's facilities of shelter and sanitation were primitive, theirs were so much worse that they would soon be dying rapidly. Secondly, from talks with both officials and non-officials, it appeared that local opinion was becoming fiercely opposed to the Government of India's policy of encouraging Muslims to remain in the East Punjab. There were many Muslims still in this historic region of Hindu-Muslim battles in Panipat and Sonipat; local pressure was mounting to expel them and give their lands to Hindu and Sikh immigrants. Some local officers and provincial ministers appeared, even if silently, to acquiesce in this.

As the government machinery began to adjust to dealing with the refugee problems, it seemed that there would soon be little which foreigners could do to help in the care of immigrants which could not be better done by local people. Over our beer at the Imperial Hotel, I threw out the idea that Horace and I could be of far more use as accredited volunteer observers or liaison officers in reporting on the situation of the minorities on each side, Hindus and Sikhs in West Punjab and Muslims in the East, and in helping to protect them. Horace enthusiastically grasped the idea, which he felt fitted with the Quaker tradition

of positive mediation and reconciliation. The massacres were often taking place as a result of greatly exaggerated rumours of atrocities on the other side; authentic reports from trusted neutral observers might have a calming effect. Our presence on both sides might also encourage the local authorities to give fair treatment to the minorities, which would be known to and might be reciprocated by, the other side.

From 3 to 10 October, we conducted patient negotiations with four governments to obtain acceptance of us in such a role. Horace's instinct was sound in starting with Gandhi with whom we talked at his breakfast. He blessed the proposal as exactly what he thought Quakers should be doing and he promised to commend it to Nehru and Sardar Patel. Whatever we could do to improve the situation of the minorities would largely depend on our influence with the central, provincial and local authorities of the countries in which they were. It thus seemed sensible for Horace, with his excellent relationships with Indian ministers and with Gandhi, to work in India on behalf of the Muslim minority whilst I would go to Pakistan to try to protect the interests of Hindus and Sikhs.

In light of Gandhi's advocacy, Nehru reacted positively and Patel did not object. The Refugee Minister, Neogy, received the proposal enthusiastically and we now put it in writing. In its final form it read:

PROPOSAL TO GOVERNMENTS OF INDIA AND PAKISTAN FOR ASSISTING REFUGEES OF MINORITY COMMUNITIES

The Society of Friends has undertaken relief work during periods of war or other disturbance in many parts of the world. As it is a small society and therefore cannot mobilize large numbers of workers, it tends to look for secondary spheres of action which, either by reason of their unpopularity or for some other reason, have received inadequate attention from public authorities. It seems reasonable to assume that, in the present Punjab troubles, when it is impossible for the respective Governments, under existing circumstances, to provide adequate assistance even to the majority community in each territory, the minority communities (i.e. Muslim

in India, Non-Muslim in Pakistan) may be largely neglected. Under these circumstances we believe that it would be the wish of the Society of Friends in general that some of those who are acting on its behalf as relief workers in the disturbed Punjab area should give special attention to the needs of the minority refugees, seeing that they get adequate care, as far as possible, until they reach the frontier or until they return home, and expediting their movement to their destination.

Accordingly, the following suggestions are submitted to the appropriate Ministers in India and Pakistan.

1. The services of Mr. H.G. Alexander and Mr. J.R. Symonds of the Friends Service Unit are to be placed at the disposal of the Government of W. Punjab and E. Punjab respectively to observe, report on and endeavour to maintain the standards of food, shelter, and medical aid of Muslim refugees in India and of non-Muslim in Pakistan.
2. No salary or honorarium will be paid, but a car and driver and office facilities will be provided in each case.
3. Mr. Alexander and Mr. Symonds will be officially gazetted as officers of the W. Punjab and E. Punjab Governments respectively. Their reports to their Governments will be confidential.
4. Free access to all refugee camps and centres in W. Punjab and E. Punjab shall be allowed by the respective Governments.
5. Mr. Alexander and Mr. Symonds shall tour for an initial period of 15 days, commencing on a date to be decided subsequently. At the end of this period the plan is to be reviewed by both Governments.
6. Neither Mr. Alexander nor Mr. Symonds shall start on their duties until the proposal has been accepted by both Governments.

signed H.C. Alexander Friends Service Unit
J.R. Symonds

I accept this offer, M. Iftikhar ud-din, Minister,
W. Punjab Government
8/11/47

So do I - Swaran Singh, Minister, E. Punjab Government
12/11/47

In its original form it had included at the end of paragraph 3 the words 'copies will also be sent to the Governments of the areas in which they operate, as well as to the Governments of India and Pakistan'.

We showed the draft agreement to the Pakistan High Commissioner in Delhi who reacted favourably. I went on to Jullundur, first to report on Kurukshetra and then to present a letter from Nehru to Prime Minister Gopi Chand, commending the proposal. In his temporary headquarters, he sat in a room marked 'Physical Instructor' but did not seem very alert. He glanced at the letter, raised no objection, and gave me introductions to India's High Commissioner and to the East Punjab's Chief Liaison Officer in Lahore, where I was to rendezvous with Horace and explain our proposal to the Pakistan and west Punjab governments.

I slept on the floor of the Divisional Commissioner's house as there were a number of visiting officers already staying there. One of them, Manghat Rai, ICS, the young Director General of Civil Supplies and an Oxford graduate, who was a Christian, told me, 'your analysis of our weakness as due to administrative factors such as the dispersal of our government departments between four cities and loss of key Muslim personnel in the police, does not go far enough. Deeper is the lie in the soul. We see what we should do to protect the remaining Muslims but we fail to do it'.

I started out on 6 October from Jullundur to Lahore in a convoy of six Indian Army trucks carrying petrol to Amritsar. The convoy split up during a detour through Kapurthala State. My truck capsized on a metalled road undermined by floods. After two hours helping to lift it out, I transferred to a convoy of six trucks which was taking the families of Muslim troops all the way to Lahore under the command of a British lieutenant, who had formerly been a planter in Ceylon. Every mile or so we had to unload the trucks and push them through the mud where the bridges had been breached. For miles around the River Beas were corpses, not only of drowned local people but of travellers in convoys which had been attacked on the road.

We spent the night in a railway inspection bungalow on a plateau above the river where the Indian army found a room for the lieutenant, together with a British businessman travelling to Lahore in search of a job, and myself. The lieutenant seemed to think it prudent for us to keep awake by swapping limericks, guarding the ammunition boxes in order to prevent trouble between our Pakistan escort and the Indian army.

We reached Lahore at 2 p.m. where Horace had found a suite for us in the comfortable old-fashioned Faletti's Hotel. We put our proposal to Liaquat Ali, Prime Minister of Pakistan, who had moved from Karachi to Lahore to deal with the refugee situation. He went through it carefully, point by point, but said it would have to be discussed with the West Punjab ministers; so we went on to have two talks with Iftikhar-ud-din, Minister for Refugees and Rehabilitation in the West Punjab Government. Only thirty-five years old and a graduate of Balliol College, Oxford, we were told that he had in turn been a member of Congress and a Communist before joining the Muslim League. In our first interview he agreed that each of us should send copies of our reports to both the provincial Governments as well as to the Governments of India and Pakistan. He suggested that after fifteen days Horace and I should change sides. Next day, however, he told us that the Governor, Sir Francis Mudie and the Prime Minister, the Khan of Mamdot, had asked that Horace should report only to the Government of West Punjab, that I should report only to the Government of East Punjab, and that the agreement should be signed by the provincial, not the central Governments. We accepted the changes as inevitable. But they meant that the existing approval of the East Punjab Government was not sufficient and that its signature to the revised agreement would be required.

Whilst in Lahore, we had drinks with Feroze Khan Noon, India's former High Commissioner in London and former Member of the Viceroy's Council, and his European wife. He was very bitter about the partition line in the Punjab and considered that Radcliffe should never have been given the sole independent vote on the Boundary Commission. Mountbatten,

he said, had completely outwitted Jinnah in the arrangements for partition and even now Pakistan had received virtually nothing of its share of the defence equipment.

We lunched with the Brijlal Nehrus in their enormous and gloomy house. They had been asked to stay on and look after the non-Muslims by Gandhi, who had jokingly told them: 'I do not care if you are both killed'. Brijlal Nehru was caustic about the incapacity of the East Punjab Government. In both Punjabs, he said, there was inefficiency, communalism and an unreliable police. We also met with missionaries who, under the National Christian Council, were working hard to bring relief to people of all communities.

Of the Indian representatives in Lahore, the Deputy High Commissioner, Sampuran Singh, with his long thin beard and yellow night-shirt seemed to come straight out of a Mogul miniature. It was not always clear whether he was awake or asleep.

On 9 October, we set out for Jullundur to obtain the East Punjab's signature to our terms of reference, travelling in a convoy of seventy Indian army trucks which took eleven hours to cover the seventy miles to Amritsar. At the Amritsar Hotel, we encountered Lady Mountbatten, who gave us a good dinner and made us participate in a conference with local officials which lasted until 12.30 a.m. At 5.30 a.m., we hitched a lift in the viceregal plane which dropped me off at Jullundur whilst Horace continued to Delhi.

It took me four days to obtain the East Punjab Government's signature. Tarlok Singh, a young Sikh ICS official and writer, who had considerable influence with the Minister for Refugees, protested that the Society of Friends should not agree to the West Punjab Government's request that our reports should be seen by one side only. However, the Home Minister, Swaran Singh, the most determined and intellectual of the ministers eventually signed, accepting the new clause. Stopping in Amritsar on my way back to Lahore, I found the hotel there requisitioned for relief workers, and queened over, after Lady Mountbatten's departure, by Mridula Sarabhai, Nehru's personal

representative and one of the most formidable women in India. Like Tarlok Singh, she pounded me because we had not insisted that our reports should go to both sides. The East Punjab Refugee Commissioner Thapar, however, who was also being hammered by Mridula, read the agreement and commented, 'My only criticism is that there are not six of you on each side. What is the Red Cross doing? What you are doing may save a war!'

Horace had shown the final text of the agreement to the Governor of the West Punjab, Sir Francis Mudie with whom he had travelled back from Lahore to Delhi and he raised no objection. We could now each start work.

5

Hindus and Sikhs in Pakistan
October–November 1947

On 14 October I acquired an office in the Residency in Lahore, a dignified old building which was temporarily accommodating the Prime Minister of Pakistan as well as the West Punjab Refugee Department. I recruited Mr Dean, an Indian Presbyterian clergyman, as my personal assistant.

The method of work on which Horace and I had agreed was to visit camps and concentrations of refugee minorities, myself in Pakistan and Horace in India, to find out about their condition. We would then immediately suggest to local authorities, the Provincial Government, and the Army, any measures required so that we could, if possible, include a note on action taken or promised in our reports back to the other side. The key official in each district was the Deputy Commissioner, an ICS or Provincial Service Officer, who worked closely with the police and the Pakistan Army. In each district in the West Punjab, the East Punjab Government had stationed a District Liaison Officer (DLO), usually a political appointee. The DLOs were responsible to a Chief Liaison Officer based in Lahore, Rai Bahadur Naturam, a retired Provincial Service Officer with whom I co-operated very closely, and increasingly came to admire.

Throughout the West Punjab were stationed Indian Army troops, who provided escorts when Hindus and Sikhs were moved from their homes into camps, and who later travelled with them by road or rail on to India.

I commenced by making a visit to the only non-Muslim refugee camp in Lahore at the DAV College, (which was a transit camp), together with Brigadier Keenan of the Indian army and Rai Bahadur Naturam; next day I came for longer on my own. The premises were spacious but the water system was out of order. The camp was the responsibility of the Government of India which paid the superintendent; the West Pakistan Government, however, was responsible for food supplies, which were irregular and inadequate. Doctors visited from the Gungaram Hospital but there were no maternity or isolation arrangements. There were complaints of frequent looting. It seemed that it might be better if a sympathetic West Punjab Government officer were put in overall charge with a single line of command. I went on to the Gungaram Hospital most of whose beds were empty because the mainly Hindu staff had fled. It was so closely guarded by the police, to prevent Pakistan's limited medical supplies being smuggled out, that on the previous day, it had taken four hours to get an ambulance out to a case.

On 16 October Lady Mountbatten came to Lahore with Mountbatten, who was presiding over a meeting of the Joint Defence Council of the two Governments. I joined her party to visit the DAV camp, Gungaram Hospital, the Red Cross office and a Muslim widows' and orphans' home. Colonel Craster, the Military Secretary to the Governor, invited me to tea at Government House where Lady Mountbatten put me on the sofa with the Governor, Sir Francis Mudie. The latter was charming and consciously indiscreet in the presence of Lady Mountbatten who, if not quite a representative of an enemy, was at least by now that of the 'Other Side'. He favoured complete evacuation of non-Muslims and hoped that the Pakistan Government Minister, Ghazanfar Ali, would fail in his current attempts to persuade them to remain. He said that his predecessor, Sir Evan Jenkins, had been a failure as Governor because he would not meet people, and that this, rather than administration, should be a Governor's function. Similarly, he maintained that when Jenkins had previously been Secretary to

the Viceroy, he had not done enough to encourage Wavell to meet people. Sarah MacQueen, the Governor's somewhat boisterous cousin—who ran the Red Cross and the Quaid-e-Azam's appeal—had a somewhat fencing conversation with Lady Mountbatten.

At Government House I met E. de V. Moss who had stayed on from the ICS to become Pakistan's Refugee Commissioner. A round, surprised little man, he was amused at my title of honorary liaison officer of the East Punjab Government. 'Here at last are the U.N. observers', he cried: 'We have nothing to conceal. Go everywhere and you'll find the fault is fifty to one on the other side'.

On 14 October, I had a drink with Dewan Bahadur S.P. Singha, Speaker of the West Punjab Legislative Assembly and the most prominent Christian in politics in Pakistan. Criticized by Punjabi fellow Christians for identifying with Pakistan, he had replied that as a Pakistan national he was rendering unto Caesar the things that were Caesar's. He said that when urged to counsel moderation in response to Nehru's efforts to protect the minorities, he had felt this useless because Nehru was an admirable but weak idealist who would be supplanted by Patel. The Sikhs were at the bottom of the trouble in the Punjab, aiming to control six districts as a Sikh state and he quoted Swaran Singh as saying to him, 'Though our people are butchered on the other side, we are prepared to lose a million and we are doing God's work'. Like Noon, he was disgusted with Radcliffe's boundary award and thought Mountbatten had been too slick for Jinnah. Though Mountbatten had threatened Baldev Singh that the Sikhs would be bombed if they misbehaved, he had done nothing to protect the Muslims from them.

On 18 October, I set out with Brigadier Keenan and Rai Bahadur Naturam to visit camps, in a station wagon escorted by Gurkhas in two jeeps. The first stop was at Sucha Sonda Camp near Churkhana. 50,000 refugees, nearly all Sikhs, were in the camp and another 20,000 in the town. These were people who had been evacuated from Sheikupura and Lyallpur but had no

bullock-carts in which to continue their journey to Nankana Sahib and Balloki Head. Cholera was killing between fifty and hundred a day; bodies were being thrown into the canal. The Sikhs had been living off their own foodstocks which were now running out. There seemed a strong need for early evacuation.

On to Sarghoda, 100 miles from Lahore, where the DC, Khan Bahadur Sardar Leghari, occupied a magnificent bungalow built by Lord Hailey. Hindus who came to see us spoke warmly of his help and said that Sarghoda was probably the only district town in West Punjab in which they could move about freely. Their main grievance was that the camp, which was outside town, was guarded by Pakistani, not Indian troops.

The difficulty of getting at the truth was illustrated in the discrepancies in accounts of recent incidents:

Hindu Account

a) On the 12th a truck carrying Hindus was attacked and two were killed. The Pakistan Army escort did not protect them.
b) Hindus were told on 12th that no more trucks could be provided to evacuate them from isolated pockets.
c) There had been an attempted rape by Pakistan soldiers in camp.

Pakistan Army Brigadier's Account

a) Troops fired 101 rounds and a soldier was wounded by the mob.
b) Shortage of troops. The Pakistan army had brought in 150,000 non-Muslims. Others who had been converted would not come.
c) Court of inquiry was being held under a British officer.

We obtained assurances from the Pakistani Brigadier that Indian troops when available, would be posted at the camp and that the search for abducted women would be intensified. A great advantage of the camp under those conditions was that it was close to Sargodha, where the refugees could move freely. It was pleasing to observe how strong was the provincial service

bond between Rai Bahadur Naturam and the DC of Sarghoda as well as the DC of Jhang, who was with him. In general conversation, we were told that before Independence there had been a breakdown of administration amidst accusations by the Muslim League that the Unionists were victimising DCs who did not help their party. Surprisingly, some Hindus told us that in the recent troubles the Unionists had been crueller to them than the Muslim Leaguers.

On the 19th we went on to Mianwali, where the refugee camp was on the edge of the town. 5000 had been evacuated on the 18th and 7000 remained. The camp was guarded by Indian troops, who were liked by the refugees and had been effective in imposing sanitation. Mianwali district had for long been troubled by lawless Pathans. A police party had been ambushed twelve miles outside town on the previous day. The Superintendent of Police said he lacked the jeeps with which to control the brigands. An attack on Mianwali town on 28 September had probably been inspired by frontiersmen but local people joined in the killing and plundering. Estimates of the number of Hindus killed varied between 400 and 2000. The survivors had been moved into the camp.

A matter of controversy was the evacuation of Hindus from neighbouring villages. The Pakistan army officers told us that for example, in Issakehl, west of the Indus, all who wished to leave had been evacuated; Hindus in the camp, however, maintained that some 650–700 remained there who wanted to leave but would not trust themselves to a Muslim escort. Some of these had converted to Islam and were keenly aware that the Quranic penalty for a lapsed convert was death.

We discussed the situation with senior officers from the Pakistan Rawalpindi division, Major-General Lovett, Brigadier Wright and Colonel Dougall. As Issakhel was officially in the Waziristan military area, Brigadier Keenan persuaded the latter officers somewhat reluctantly to provide transport and to permit an Indian escort to accompany it to Issakhel. On 20th October, the convoy left with forty Indian troops of the 2nd Punjabis and

ten Pakistani troops of the 16th Punjabis. Our party followed in two jeeps, together with the DC and our Gurkha guards.

When we arrived, the situation in Issakehl was delicate. Each house was a fort, with no outside windows and with a flat roof behind whose parapet there was often a National Guard with a rifle. The Pakistani major in charge of the military station did not want to allow our escort in. Fortunately his superior, a British Pakistan army battalion commander, Colonel Harrison, arrived who, though maintaining that there were no Hindus who wished to leave and somewhat peevish, was an old colleague of Brig. Keenan and eventually allowed in a mixed force which took up strong positions at the main cross roads in the bazaar and on the roof of the police station. A curfew was imposed. The Brigadier and the Rai Bahadur supervised a search for their friends and relatives, conducted by twelve Hindus whom we had brought from Sarghoda. I looked after the loading into the trucks, which came up to the police station, three at a time, of some 600 Hindus who emerged with a mountain of baggage. Our departure was delayed by an old moneylender, who dug all over his floor for jewelry and who was pursued by his clients all the way out of town when we left.

The Pakistan army officers felt some chagrin at the number of Hindus who wanted to leave as well as alarm for our safety. Colonel Harrison arranged for an extra platoon to accompany us as far as the Indus and himself travelled with us in the station wagon. The anticipated ambush turned out to be a small affair. Indian troops of the rearguard came under rifle fire and replied with Bren guns, causing some casualties; but there was an unexpected twist. The Pakistani escort accused the Indians of firing at them. Both parties pulled up when we reached the river and a nasty scene was smoothed down by the intervention of Brigadier Keenan and Colonel Harrison. The former was particularly winning with the Pakistani havildar, reminding him of battles in which they had fought together in the war.

When we arrived back at Mianwali we learnt that 4000 Hindus had been evacuated that day. The departure of their train had been held up by the local Secretary of the Muslim

League who complained that twelve persons on it were Muslims and he appeared to have complete control over the engine driver. Eventually three men—whether Muslims or not—were removed from the train on warrants from the obliging Additional District Magistrate, who charged them with murder.

I ended that day with respect for the diplomacy of Brigadier Keenan and the pertinacity of the Rai Bahadur.

On the 21st, we stopped for lunch at Sarghoda on the way back to Lahore. We asked the DC if he could guarantee the safety of the non-Muslims who were still living in the town. 'Yes', he said, 'if, and only if, you can guarantee that we don't hear on the radio of more massacres in East Punjab'.

Passing through Jhang District, we visited dismal camps at Lalian and Chiniot. At Lalian, hundreds of emaciated women threw themselves at our feet or held up skinny babies. At Chiniot, the ration was a *chittack* (two ounces) of flour a day, enough to make one *chappati*, and nothing else. The affable DC assured us he had passed orders to increase the ration.

Back in Lahore on the 22nd, I again visited the DAV refugee camp with Colonel Craster, the Military Secretary to the Governor, who had a good heart and had shown a personal interest in the conditions. There was some comic backchat with a Congress volunteer, who was unofficially supervising the camp, and who invited the Colonel to come and live in it and inspire the inmates with his example. Colonel Craster had been made responsible for obtaining Pakistan's present for the forthcoming wedding of Princess Elizabeth and Lieutenant Philip Mountbatten. He fancied an ivory model of the Taj Mahal and a tiger skin. (When I met him after his return from the wedding, he told me that the only way of getting there had been to hitch a ride in Lord Mountbatten's personal plane and that Mountbatten had been scathing about the Pakistan government's presents, remarking that the Taj Mahal and most of the tigers on the subcontinent were in India). It seemed that Liaquat Ali, Prime Minister of Pakistan, would attend if Nehru went. These possible absences seemed remarkable in the present crisis, with the tense relations between the dominions.

On the 23rd, I visited the British assistant editor of the *Civil and Military Gazette* of Lahore, which had unfortunately described Horace and myself as agents of Nehru and had not indicated that we had been appointed jointly by both sides. He was apologetic and said that there were no impartial Indian or Pakistani journalists.

On 24 October, I visited Gujranwala in an old yellow taxi which I had managed to hire. The camp was in a cordoned off part of the town, protected by Gurkhas. A train bound for India, waiting for an escort, had been loaded for three days with patient refugees. As usual, camp conditions were better at district headquarters than outside. I persuaded the East Punjab District Liaison Officer to accompany me to a camp at Hafizabad, thirty miles away, which he had not previously visited. We found the inhabitants were on half rations because the DLO had only asked for 5000 rations to be provided though 11,000 refugees were now present. The camp was guarded by Gurkhas.

I went on to Jhelum on 25 October. Here and in Rawalpindi, Raja Ghazanfar Ali, the Pakistani Minister for Food and Health, had for the past fortnight been appealing for communal harmony throughout the Rawalpindi Division and for Hindus to be induced to remain in their homes. Gandhi's personal envoy, Pandit Sundralal, who had visited Jhelum the previous day, had also called for a fortnight's suspension of evacuation through the local press.

The Jhelum Hindus seemed perturbed by all this. They wanted to leave, not to be pawns in a political game. True, they told me, we are fairly secure in our cage, but would you, or Raja Sahib, want to live in a cage?

I had a lengthy talk with Ghazanfar, a tall, friendly, enthusiastic man, who had previously been a minister in the ill-fated Congress-Muslim League Indian cabinet established under Wavell. He stressed that the Indian Government had made no acknowledgement of his efforts, which had not been reciprocated in the Ambala Division on the other side of the frontier. He believed Gandhi and Nehru to be trying to restrain communal bitterness but they were being prevented by Patel, who had

been responsible for the disastrous division of the Government services in the Punjab which had, destroyed all confidence among the minorities. His own campaign to persuade them to stay was failing, he said, because wherever he went, the East Punjab Government afterwards sent trains to evacuate the minorities.

I listened respectfully, but from what I had seen so far wondered whether his campaign would succeed, for it seemed that a virtually complete transfer of the Hindus and Sikhs from the West and Muslims from the East was becoming inevitable. At some future date, if border incidents were controlled, the economics of supply and demand might eventually bring Hindu small capitalists and traders back to the West and Muslim artisans to the East. It seemed unrealistic, however, to suppose that agriculturalists whose lands had been reoccupied would ever return.

The DC and Superintendent of Police under Ghazanfar's influence seemed to be treating the Hindus kindly and the latter's grievances did not seem as substantial as those elsewhere. The attitude to the Sikhs was very different. Muslims I spoke to frequently quoted Tara Singh drawing his sword on the steps of the Legislative Assembly at the fall of Khizr's ministry and crying: 'This means war!' A bold Sikh army officer tried to dine at Faletti's in Lahore a few days earlier but the English manager had to ask him to leave when other guests threatened to shoot him.

On Sunday, 26th October, the Eid holiday, I spent much of the day in the Chief Liaison Officer's office. There had been a bad incident in Sialkot District. Floods had caused a four-mile breach of the railway between Sialkot and Amritsar on the Pakistan side of the border. The East Punjab District Liaison Officer implored the DC not to send off the train evacuating non-Muslims to India, as they would have to disembark and walk through the gap in the railway line. The train, however, left. When the passengers disembarked, they were ambushed. According to the DLO 1500 were killed; the Pakistan account said only thirty. The Sikh Indian Army escort was reported to

have killed fifty of the attackers. The Pakistan Government had apologized to the Government of India and ordered an immediate enquiry. The incident was particularly unfortunate, because Sikhs were among the victims and the survivors would go on to Amritsar to demand reprisals; also because the district authorities were suspected of complicity. It was the first major massacre for some time and occurred when more refugees were on the move than ever before. All evacuation of refugees from the Rawalpindi Division had since been suspended, whether in response to Ghazanfar's campaign or for reasons of security.

From now on our work in the Punjab was greatly affected by events in the neighbouring princely state of Jammu and Kashmir. On 24 October, tribesmen from Pakistan's North West Frontier, invaded the Kashmir valley. In face of the invasion and having lost control of much of his state, the Hindu Maharaja, three quarters of whose subjects were Muslims, acceded to India, whose government flew in troops on 26 October to repel the tribesmen. The accession caused great indignation in Pakistan, the 'K' in whose name stood for Kashmir. A consequence of this was an intensification of massacres, fighting and refugee movements across the borders of the two Punjabs with Jammu and Kashmir. There was much talk in Pakistan of war with India, coupled with a sense of desperation because Pakistan had as yet received little of the defence supplies and equipment to which it was entitled under the agreement for the allocation of undivided India's assets. On 27 October, at the height of this crisis, Lady Mountbatten arrived in Lahore by air for a tour of non-Muslim camps in the West Punjab on which she asked me to accompany her. In her party were her PA, Muriel Watson, Mridula Sarabhai, Nehru's representative, Dr Arthur Dera, a Government of India doctor, Lt. Colonel Hodgkinson of GHQ India, who took magnificent aerial photographs of the huge refugee convoys, Lt. Col. Howes (ADC), and five servants.

From Lahore we flew in the plane of the Governor General of India to Lyallpur where there was a camp of 30,000 Hindus and another of 40,000 Sikhs; the latter appeared better cared for by the DLO who was himself a Sikh. Mridula told me that the

DLO's bias had caused him to be dismissed by the East Punjab Government but that he had been reinstated at the insistence of Swaran Singh who needed his co-operation in the plan to concentrate the Sikhs in five districts on their arrival in East Punjab. The Sikhs of Lyallpur were the most prosperous farmers in the Punjab. The DC, Hamid, ICS, had protected the non-Muslims so keenly that his life had been threatened by Muslims.

We went on to Multan, where we were met by the Commissioner, two Brigadiers and other officials and then motored direct to Muzzafargarh. Here Hindus and Sikhs were moving about the streets freely, but 2000 of them had been waiting patiently at the station for a train for three days. We continued over the Indus to Dera Ghazi Khan along a sandy road flanked by couch grass 6-feet high; the DC mounted his escorts on camels to spot attackers of refugee convoys. Crossing the Indus, Lady Mountbatten pulled up for five minutes to watch the fishermen in the sunset, the only time she knocked off on our three day tour.

The DC of Dera Ghazi Khan, John Biggs Davidson, turned out to be a contemporary of mine at Oxford where I remembered him debating on the Conservative side in the Union. Lady Mountbatten vigorously defended the Labour government against his attacks over dinner. Later he was to be for many years a Conservative Member of Parliament and a critic of the rapid pace of decolonisation. After dinner we talked with local people. Fifty refugees had been killed in an attack on a convoy on the 25th. The DLO alleged lack of resolute protection on the part of the escort. The British Pakistan Army major commented that the naik in charge had showed bad judgement in halting the convoy at a road block and parleying with the mob: Pakistani troops were now being replaced by Indians whose lives everyone expected to be made hell by the tribesmen.

The DLO appeared to have more courage than discretion and his excited radio telegrams were being intercepted by the police. This seemed a particularly difficult district, with still 80,000 non-Muslims wanting to leave.

On the 28th, after visiting the camps in Dera Ghazi Khan we returned to the old, and formerly prosperous, city of Multan. Here we were struck by the fact that conditions in the non-Muslim camps and those of Muslims who had arrived from India were similar. Much of this fairness appeared to be due to Lt. Colonel Stroud of the Pakistan army and his beautiful, blonde, blue-eyed Austrian wife, whom Lady Mountbatten's ADC described as 'like a peach blossom'. Whilst the non-Muslims were well treated, the DLO, a pleasant old retired judge, told me that there was no likelihood of their remaining. 'What we fear most,' he said, 'is the ravishing of our women. For once they have been ravished they cannot get married and if they do not get married it is a sin both for them and their parents'. 130,000 non-Muslims were waiting to be moved.

We flew on to Wah in Campbellpur District and visited a camp in a desert amidst rocky hills. It had been started in March for refugees from the Rawalpindi riots and was now a clearing house for evacuees from the NWFP. It seemed a dreary place whose isolated inhabitants had little to do but bicker. The head of Sikander Khan's family entertained us to tea in a Mogul rest house where a stream with enormous fish flowed through the garden. There I met Col. O'Brien, IMS, whom I had known in the Bengal Famine. Despite his experience in Bengal and in the Wah Camp, he was being retired because he had indicated that as a doctor he was equally willing to serve either in India or Pakistan.

We slept in the sumptuous rest house in Rawalpindi. Lady Mountbatten was taken away by General Gracey, acting Commander-in-Chief of the Pakistan army, who told her that war between India and Pakistan had appeared imminent the previous night and that though he might be instructed to arrest her he would like to entertain her to dinner meanwhile. When she returned, we worked until midnight on a scheme for supplying doctors and medical stores direct from India to the camps in Pakistan. Mridula, though a devoted worker and very free from communal bias, seemed to have little idea of how

bureaucracies function and I had to bring Dr Dera down in his pyjamas to explain.

Lady Mountbatten's informality, energy and keen sense of the ludicrous made her a splendid leader of our disparate team. She had a far better understanding of how to obtain results from the Government machinery than had dear, motherly Lady Wavell, who used to tie the Red Cross into a tangle during the Bengal Famine relief operations.

On 29 October, we flew from Rawalpindi to Sialkot, which is close to the Kashmir border. In the previous week, a convoy had been ambushed at Jassar on the way to Amritsar; a court of enquiry was still being held. Brigadier Collyer, Pakistan army, told us that thirty-seven were killed; the DLO, a Sikh, estimated the number at 1500. He was rather openly vocal, in the delicate circumstances, about Pathans and Pakistani troops in civilian dress going into Kashmir. The camp held 1150 non-Muslims waiting to be evacuated. A greater problem appeared to be the need to clear pockets of some 30,000 non-Muslims in an area which was receiving wounded Muslims back from the fighting in Kashmir and would shortly be likely to receive very bitter refugees from massacres which were being reported in Hindu majority areas of Jammu.

Landing at Lahore afterwards, we picked up Brigadier Mohite, Head of the Indian Military Evacuation Organization in Lahore, and Panjabi, the Additional Indian Deputy High Commissioner. Lady Mountbatten wanted to talk to them before finalizing our recommendations, so Mohite drove her with Punjabi, Mridula and myself to our next stop, Kasur, leaving the rest of the staff and the lunch in the other cars. Our car broke down and we sat on a canal bank discussing Kashmir as well as the supply of medicines. Lady M teased me about my concern for the lost lunch, though I explained that my anxiety was for the comfort of a Governess-General.

We acquired another car and reached Kasur on the border. A convoy of 70,000 Sikhs from Lyallpur in bullock-carts was moving east along the road whilst a very large convoy of Muslims from Ludhiana was halted to let them pass. The contrast

was striking. The Sikh bullocks were large and in good condition, their carts well built, their clothes respectable. They were marshalled by former Viceroy's Commissioned Officers (VCOs) on horseback and wearing their medals. The Muslims were ragged, their beasts few and thin, and their carts ramshackle. It was not, of course, that the non-Muslims in East Punjab had necessarily taken their cattle and possessions. The Muslims came from a poorer class than the Lyallpur Sikhs; but one could understand the Pakistanis' dismay at seeing the Sikhs' cattle go out.

Lady Mountbatten and her party crossed the border to Ferozepur where her plane would pick them up. I returned to Lahore by car, or rather in five cars, preceded by a motor cycle. On 30th October, having written my reports on the camps to the East Punjab Government, I gave a verbal account of the tour to Moss, the Pakistan Refugee Commissioner in Lahore. He was emotionally upset about the events in Kashmir and asked me how, if India were allowed to send doctors to the camps, it could be known that they did not carry bombs. He complained that the Sikhs had carried off most of the cattle from the Province. Col. Mullick, Inspector General of Hospitals, though a Pakistani, was milder and promised co-operation to the Indian doctors, though he would much prefer to have missionaries.

In the evening, I had a long talk with Faiz Ahmed Faiz, editor of the *Pakistan Times*, which seemed to be the most influential newspaper in Pakistan. He repeated that Pakistan would survive if it were left alone, but though it had few arms it would resist forcible reunion with India. The final appeal against superior forces and for arms would have to be to the Soviet Union. Faiz, a socialist, believed that the influx of refugees into Pakistan would lead to the breakup of the great estates and a considerable opportunity for co-operatives.

Under the terms of our agreement, Horace and I felt that now, after our first fifteen days, it was time to report in person to the two Punjab governments and also to talk with Indian and Pakistan Government ministers. All civil planes in India had been requisitioned by the Government to take troops and

supplies to Kashmir. It was thus difficult to obtain a flight to Delhi but I attached myself to the representative of Phipsons, the liquor importers, who had entrée everywhere with his sample bags, and who shared two bottles of champagne before 11 a.m. at Government House during our finally successful effort to obtain tickets. He told me how much less effective the British Trade Commissioner and his office were than their American counterparts.

The main question which Horace and I needed to explore with the Indian Government while in Delhi, where we were from 2 to 5 November, and then with the East Punjab Government, was their attitude to those non-Muslims in the West Punjab who had not yet decided whether or not to depart and of whom there were considerable numbers in the Rawalpindi Division, just as there were undecided Muslims in East Punjab in the area of Karnal, Panipat, Rohtak and Gurgaon. Horace and I first discussed this with Gandhi. He said that no one trusted Ghazanfar but that every effort must be made to keep the Muslims in the Ambala Division of East Punjab. I asked whether he would consider going there himself. He replied that it would have greater effect if he went to Rawalpindi on the other side and added slyly that he was prepared to suggest this publicly at his evening prayers. I reflected that it might not be wise. 'Exactly', he answered, 'and that is why I do not do it'.

We caught Nehru at breakfast with his confident daughter and-huge eyed four-year old grandchild. He insisted on cutting up apples for us with a new patent slicer. His irritation with the tool and with the apples, which came from Kashmir, seemed symbolic. The situation of the remaining minorities in the Punjab was linked in his mind with Kashmir. For the first time, he said, a Muslim majority state had come into the Indian Union and India must now be particularly tender with its Muslims. Those who wished to remain should be protected and the rest evacuated as rapidly as possible. I took the opportunity to suggest that better East Punjab liaison officers, perhaps ex-army officers, were needed in some districts in West Punjab and that Indian

troops should not be withdrawn until evacuation of those non-Muslims who wanted to leave was completed.

K.C. Neogy, Minister of Relief and Rehabilitation, had become noticeably better informed and more decisive in the past month. He told us that the governments of the two Punjabs were soon likely to agree in principle on a complete exchange of the minority populations. His information, including my own reports, suggested that an infinitesimal number of Hindus and Sikhs wished to remain in the West and it was thus inevitable that no Muslims should remain in the East. We discussed detailed problems, including the priority which should be given to evacuation from Dera Ghazi Khan.

I called on Dr Jivraj Mehta, Director General of Medical Services, and found that action had already been taken in light of the reports of Lady Mountbatten and myself to send medical supplies to the camps in West Punjab. Dr Mehta had not only been a prominent Congressman but Dean of a medical college and his energy and thoroughness were impressive.

Horace was taking a prominent part in the planning of a World Pacifist Congress, centred round Gandhi. Ranjit Chetsingh, a leading Indian Quaker, said to me, 'Really, I can have nothing to do with it on a day when that great pacifist Gandhi is exhorting the Indian troops in Kashmir to be prepared to die for their country'.

Bill Shortt was in his element, making an aerial reconnaissance of Kashmir with Patel and exhorting the Indian ministers 'to quit or conquer'. Neither he nor anyone we met seemed to be aware of the slaughter of Muslims in Jammu by Dogra Kashmir State troops and by Sikhs crossing the border from East Punjab.

The charming Rajani Nehru, wife of R.K. Nehru, ICS, who was a social worker, asked me how she could arrange to go to Pakistan to rescue abducted Hindu women. In their house I met a Bombay film director, who said that all Muslims had been squeezed out of the industry. This was easily done as they were dependent on Hindu capitalists.

Horace and I dined with Gandhi's son Devadas, Editor of *The Hindustan Times*. Faiz had asked me to explore the possibility of an exchange between *The Hindustan Times* and *The Pakistan Times* by which each should give the other a page. Devadas was courteous and gentle as always, but not encouraging on this.

Lady Mountbatten was in her usual form, quick to grasp problems, decisive, and ingenious in finding routes through the bureaucratic jungle to solve them.

It was announced that the Friends Service Council, under whose auspices Horace and I were working, and the American Friends Service Committee had jointly been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

Delhi was now quiet. The great camps, including the Purana Qila, were cleared and many Muslims were back in their houses again. We found that the Pakistan High Commissioner had gained considerably in self-confidence. He stressed the need on both sides for punishment of minor officials who had treated the minorities with brutality and asked us to investigate the condition of Muslims near Delhi.

Hiring a Chevrolet in reasonable condition, Horace and I left on 5 November to see East Punjab ministers in Simla and Jullundur and those of the West Punjab Government in Lahore. In Kurukshetra, where we stopped to pick up my laundry, we found 175,000 refugees. Tents and blankets had arrived in large quantities; and conditions in general had greatly improved, though there was still no system of registration. The Indian major-general in charge had a crisp manner and shovelled up dung with exemplary zeal.

In Simla on 6 November we found the East Punjab ministers installed in the former Viceregal Lodge. The Legislative Assembly was in session in the Durbar hall. The Prime Minister, Gopi Chand Bhargava, came out to meet us. He was emphatic that no non-Muslims would remain in West Punjab. When I suggested that in some cases better liaison officers were required and that former army or provincial service officers were particularly suitable, he replied that he thought Congress workers

On the 6th, medical questions were cleared with Colonel Nutt, Inspector General of Civil Hospitals. We also had a drink with Swaran Singh, the Home Minister, a tall, young looking, bright and attractive lawyer, said to be the best speaker in the Assembly. He told us that their holy places meant as much to the Sikhs as their land and asked us to urge the Prime Minister of West Punjab to allow them to make a pilgrimage to Nankana Sahib on the anniversary of Guru Nanak's death.

No one, except the Governor-General and one or two Maharajas, is allowed a car in Simla. The sudden altitude and climbing were exhausting and we did not see the Chief Secretary which was unfortunate as he received all reports from the East Punjab Liaison Officers in the West. Passing through Patiala on our return, there were now no bands of Sikhs to be seen waiting to attack trains. A bullock-cart convoy of 100,000 Muslims was due to leave Ambala on the following day. We spent the night in the Commissioner's House in Jullundur. Thapar, who was there, told us that the Sikhs, who were previously dispersed throughout the Punjab, now had a majority in several East Punjab districts. Swaran Singh was their most effective minister, Giani Kartar Singh was the party leader and Tara Singh their Guru, who had wept when General Rees proved that Sikhs had stripped Muslim women. He said that more refugees had died in the floods than in the massacres and that Sikh boastfulness had exaggerated the numbers murdered. Thapar still had friends in Lahore, including Liaquat Ali Khan, the Prime Minister of Pakistan, but it was still unsafe for Hindus to return; his nephew had lost two fingers there in an attack a week earlier.

On 8 November, between Jullundur and Amritsar, we passed a convoy nine miles long. On arriving in Lahore, we met Mridula Sarabhai in Brigadier Mohite's house. She asked us not what Gandhi and Nehru had said to us in Delhi but whether they were in a good temper. She was busy restoring abducted women to their families, always returning a Muslim at the same time as she took back a Hindu. She wanted me to go to Sialkot as soon as possible because she was aware of the danger to non-Muslims

there in view of the arrival of embittered Muslims fleeing from Jammu.

On 9 November, we found that Wilfred Grigson, ICS, Secretary of the Pakistan Refugee Ministry and an old friend of my family, had moved his office from Karachi to Lahore. When we chatted with him, Moss, and Robertson, the Deputy Refugee Commissioner, they all thought that both Punjab governments would function better if Section 93 of the old constitution could be invoked, under which the Governor would take over the administration from the ministers.

From 10 to 12 November, we had talks in Lahore with Pakistan and West Punjab ministers and officials. Iftikhar-ud-din, Refugee Minister, West Punjab, said he would be glad for us to continue our work. He appeared under great strain, harassed day and night by refugees. As a former socialist and Congressman, his ideas on resettlement differed from those of most of his colleagues, many of whom were big landlords. Pakistan, he told us, needed peace above everything but was not making efforts to maintain it, and that he would probably resign.

Suhrawardy had given me an introduction to Daultana, the West Punjab Finance Minister, a graduate of my Oxford college, Corpus, who wore a sports jacket and smoked a pipe. Though he was civil, he had little to say about the questions which concerned us.

The Kashmir situation dominated all our conversations. Daily communiqués appeared in the Pakistani press from the Azad (free) Kashmir government, which had rebelled against the Maharaja's government in the west of the state. There were also vivid accounts of Muslims being slaughtered and driven out of Jammu, where 40 per cent of the population were Hindus.,

Ghazanfar Ali had dropped his peace campaign. Reviewing the Pakistan army in Rawalpindi on the 9th, he was reported as saying in a fiery speech that if it came to war, Pakistan would fight even with its bare fists. Horace and I dined with him on the 12th in a large party, that included some West Pakistan ministers and a journalist. Ghazanfar openly referred to the possibility of war and asked whether British officers could be

trusted to fight against India. We supposed that they would be withdrawn but could not, of course, answer his question.

Horace and I were coming to the conclusion that our main usefulness in the Punjab was complete. We had presented our report and talked to ministers and officials on both sides. Hopefully we had contributed to improvements of the condition of the minorities and to better co-operation between the two Punjabs, and between India and Pakistan, in protecting them. The danger now was of repercussions from Kashmir leading to new attacks on them. We asked Ghazanfar whether he felt that it might be useful for our role as observers to be extended to Kashmir so that we could report on the situation of Muslims, who were in danger in Jammu, and of non-Muslims in the West of the State, and for us to see what might be done to protect the minorities on both sides. He, Amin, Jinnah's secretary, and Panjabi all encouraged us to investigate the possibility of such a role.

We had an interview with the Governor, Sir Francis Mudie. After questioning us briefly, he quoted statistics indicating that West Punjab was receiving far more refugees than East Punjab. He was against any attempt to keep Hindus in West Punjab and said that Iftikhar-ud-din could not make up his mind whether to resign. He seemed to carry his considerable burdens easily.

Grigson dined with us one night and talked interestingly about the tribal Gonds of the Central Provinces, on whom he had written a book. On India-Pakistan issues he was of course partisan but did not express himself as fiercely as Moss.

On the 13th, Horace and I visited Sialkot where we were kindly received by the DC, M.M. Ahmad ICS, my contemporary at Corpus, Oxford. The Hindu camp at Sialkot was one of the best in the province, in army barracks with running water and electricity. However, there were still some 8000 Hindus in outlying pockets wanting to be moved and they were in considerable danger as Muslim refugees from Jammu poured over the border.

We received horrifying accounts of the events in Jammu from about 200 wounded Muslim refugees in hospitals. They were

mostly old people and children, the younger men having been finished off and the younger women abducted. Noses, arms and breasts had been cut off and children and babies stabbed. From the stories we heard, the following picture emerged.

From about 17 October, Muslims in villages near Jammu were rounded up, told that Pakistan had asked them to leave, and sent on foot towards the Pakistan border. On the way they were slaughtered by civilian Sikhs and by Dogra Kashmir troops, sometimes assisted by some Rajputs and depressed classes. On 5 November, the Muslims of Jammu town and those from outside who had taken refuge there were put in trucks which, they were told, would take them to the border but instead turned into the interior and halted whilst the occupants were machine gunned and cut to pieces. 120 truck-loads, carrying some 5000 people, were said to have been attacked, among them being the most prominent Muslims of Jammu. A few hundred escaped by hiding in standing crops or jumping into canals.

We talked to the British Brigadier Collyer, Pakistan Army, in Sialkot who told us that though war with India would be folly for Pakistan, his troops were becoming more and more belligerent. He was keeping them a mile back from the border, across which most of the retaliatory raids into Jammu were carried out by the Home Guards and the sweepings of the bazaars, but over whom he had no control. The frontier tribes, he thought, had been let into the Kashmir Valley by the Pakistanis as a bribe, a substitute for the subsidy which the British used to pay them.

On our return to Lahore, we sent a coded cable to Nehru about the Jammu massacres in view of the concern which he had expressed to us about the need for fair treatment of Muslims in India in light of Kashmir's accession. We asked his approval for Horace to visit Jammu and, correspondingly, for me to visit the area controlled by the Azad Kashmir government in Poonch.

Horace left for Delhi on 15 November with our written reports. Pending agreement that I visit Azad Kashmir, I acceded to the Rai Bahadur's request to join him in a somewhat delicate operation, the evacuation of about 1200 forced converts from

Lillah; this was being pressed for by the Government of India. The Rai Bahadur and I, together with the DLO, Dr Lena Singh, a member of the Provincial Legislative Assembly, left by car ahead of a convoy of twenty-two buses, two trucks and a breakdown car. There was an Indian army escort of twenty-five Mahrattas under a lieutenant. We spent the night in Sarghoda, where the amiable and intelligent DC, Khan Bahadur Leghari, put us up. He was perturbed by the war talk which had led to stabbings in the town, hitherto one of the most peaceful in the province. Armed Pathans had come in from Mianwali and ambushed a train, killing thirteen people.

Visiting Pakistan Army headquarters to ask for and obtain an escort to accompany the twenty-five Indian army Mahrattas who were with us, we found that the British officer in charge was to his embarrassment still officially a member of the Indian army.

On the 16th, whilst the convoy went slowly ahead, we looked in at the Sarghoda camp, which now contained 46,000 Hindus and Sikhs, who mobbed us begging to be evacuated in light of the news from Kashmir.

Lillah is about seventy miles from Sarghoda, in sandy country with scrub and trees, a few miles from the Salt Range. We easily moved the Hindus out of their quarter with the aid of the police. An old Muslim retired soldier gave us tea in the main square in a usefully conspicuous gesture of fraternisation. Rather than start back in the dark on bad roads in wild country, we moved the convoy overnight into the police station compound. The police subinspector was helpful. He knew of the Rai Bahadur's fame in the district and on our departure on 17 November made the gesture of taking dust from his feet. We evacuated Hindus from two other villages on the way back. In one of them we were held up by a goldsmith who did not want to leave, though his wife and children wept and pleaded to go and his twelve year old son cried that he did not want to be circumcised. After the Rai Bahadur had given him a shaking, (which seemed rather excessive pressure), the goldsmith agreed to leave provided we would bring his brother from the next village to join him, which we did. All this transpired under the

eyes of most of the villagers who were fascinated but remarkably good humoured.

Passing through Sarghoda on the way back, we had tea with the DC, who was entertaining notables and drew me in saying: 'You move in Delhi and Lahore, tell us if there is to be war and when'. We learnt that Iftikhar-ud-din had finally resigned as Minister of Refugees because the West Punjab Government was unwilling to split up large estates among incoming refugees and because he resented the encroachment on his authority by the Pakistan Government. In Lahore, Grigson, whose wife was not with him, invited me to move in with him to a bungalow which he had just acquired.

By the end of that year, what was perhaps the greatest recorded transfer of populations in history, involving some ten to twelve million people, had been completed. After the terrible massacres in August-September, it had been carried out with fewer casualties than many expected, thanks largely to the co-operation between the Indian and Pakistan armies whose officers seemed the least belligerent element on the scene. The head of the Indian Military Evacuation Office Brigadier Mohite, was a cheerful, fearless, thirty-nine year old Mahratta, whose first action on his appointment was to move his office from Amritsar in India to Lahore, where he sat in the same building with his Pakistani counterpart. Their joint planning produced immediate results. Trains and trucks never crossed the border without returning with a full load of refugees. The trains always carried an escort from both armies on flat, sand-bagged wagons which gave them a maximum field of fire. Foot convoys were so diverted at the border that a Muslim and non-Muslim convoy never met. Motor convoys evacuating minorities from the villages came, as has been seen, to carry a mixed escort

Though some of the civil District Liaison Officers of the East Punjab Government could be exasperating in their wayward attitude to administration, one could not but admire the way in which those in Jhelum and Sarghoda, both members of the Punjab Legislative Assembly, were determined to remain in their constituencies until the last non-Muslims who wished to leave

had been evacuated. The Chief Liaison Officer, Rai Bahadur Naturam, I had come to appreciate as one of the most effective characters on the scene. He was courageous and diplomatic, always expecting the cooperation of the Pakistani officials, many of whom had been his colleagues; and he was patiently ingenious in devising a strategy when things went wrong.

Some accounts of Horace's work in East Punjab, parallel to mine in the West, survive in his letters. He obtained the assistance of two women trainees from the YWCA in Delhi. One was a South Indian Christian and one a Sindhi. They visited twenty Muslim refugee camps, mostly in Amritsar, Jullunder and Ludhiana Districts, travelling by car, often through floods in which thousands of refugees had drowned.

From the Indian side of the border, Horace investigated the incident in the Sialkot District, which I had looked into on 26 October. Similarly to my impression, whereas 1500 were said to have been killed, he estimated the number as about forty.

He was struck by the unpopularity of the posts of the East Punjab District Liaison Officers who had to operate in the hostile environment of the West. He wrote:

> 'In general', whenever I drew attention of a Deputy Commissioner or of the Refugees Department in Jullundur to unsatisfactory conditions they immediately sat up and began to take action. So I was able to say in my reports to Lahore as a rule 'this matter is receiving or has received, attention'. Whatever we were trying to do was to help the refugees, not to give either government fresh sticks to beat their opponents with. At the beginning of November Richard and I met to compare notes. There was a definite improvement in the relationship between the governments, but a storm cloud over Kashmir.

Based in Delhi, Horace kept Gandhi informed of what he saw. 'Gandhi', he wrote in a circular letter in December 1947, 'was a very sick man in October, with little will to live but some deep faith within him which lifted him out again'. Horace would drop in on him at breakfast time or after his evening

prayers to discuss Punjab and Kashmir affairs and other things. 'Always he brings laughter into the talk and wisdom and sanity'.

Horace acknowledged the support given to him by Lady Mountbatten and her boundless energy, and how her tact, humour, vitality, and wisdom 'makes her as perfect a chairman of a commitetee as I hope to see'.[2]

NOTES

1. Horace Alexander, Journal Letter December 1947, Friends House Library, London.
2. Ibid.

6

Insurgents in Kashmir
November 1947

The events in the State of Jammu and Kashmir in 1947 have been considerably disputed. When the question came before the UN Security Council in 1948, the conflicting accounts in the speeches of the representatives of India and Pakistan lasted for some six hours each. In the months before Independence the Viceroy, Lord Mountbatten, in his capacity as the Crown Representative, had urged all the Indian native Princes either to accede to India or to Pakistan. In the state of Jammu and Kashmir, the Maharaja was a Hindu but three quarters of his subjects were Muslims and the main route along which supplies came into the Kashmir Valley went into Pakistan. The Maharaja was apprehensive as to what his position would be if he opted for Pakistan; his prospects, however, appeared little better if he were to opt for India. Sheikh Abdullah, the leader of the National Conference Party, which was strong in the Kashmir Valley, was in jail for advocating the deposition of the ruler; and the Sheikh was a close friend of Nehru, who was a Kashmiri by descent and cared passionately about its future. The Maharaja thus did not agree to accede to either Dominion before Independence. Shortly after Independence there was a revolt in Poonch, in the west of the State. How far this was spontaneous and how far instigated from Pakistan has been disputed. Tribesmen from Pakistan's North West Frontier, whether in search of loot or to help their co-religionists or both, invaded the Kashmir Valley almost reaching the capital, Srinagar. In Jammu, in the south of the State, where Hindus were more numerous than in the north

or west, Muslims were slaughtered and many survivors fled into West Punjab. Across the borders, both Muslims from West Punjab and Sikhs from East Punjab raided into Jammu. The Maharaja now asked to accede to India. The Indian government accepted the accession with the proviso that the wishes of the population should be ascertained later and that Sheikh Abdullah would be asked to form a Government. Indian troops were sent to Srinagar to repel the tribesmen.

Such was the situation when Horace and I sought to find out what was happening to the minorities in Jammu and Kashmir and what could be done to help them.

In Delhi, Horace had little difficulty in obtaining Nehru's approval that we should extend our work to Jammu and Kashmir and, with Nehru behind him, he could expect to obtain serious attention from whoever the authorities then were in control in Jammu. Arranging my entry into Poonch was more difficult, for neither the Pakistan nor West Punjab Government, whatever assistance they might complicitly be giving, could admit to any control over the Azad Kashmir government. When I saw Ghazanfar in his office in Lahore on 18 November, he regretted that he could not help me in the matter. However, I met him again, with Suhrawardy and Dewan Bahadur S.P. Singha, at lunch at Faletti's hotel in Lahore. Suhrawardy was attacking with characteristic vigour. He said that Jinnah had failed to answer a proposal, which he had carried from Gandhi and Nehru a month earlier, that coalition Muslim and non-Muslim ministries should be established in both Punjabs. He also said that Pakistan had been criminally negligent in failing to send trucks to evacuate convoys of Muslims from Ambala. He sneered at Ghazanfar for his bellicose Rawalpindi speech during his 'Peace Campaign' and attacked the Pakistan government for refusing to discuss exchange of refugee property.

Ghazanfar put up a rather weak defence. He said that trucks could not be sent to Ambala for the refugees because they were needed for defence on the border. I put in a word on the property question, pointing out that many governments at the time did

he would try to find me a way into Poonch. I asked the Indian Deputy High Commissioner's office to telephone Nehru's secretary, Iyengar, who confirmed that the Prime Minister had promised Horace facilities to visit Jammu and had given his blessings to my visit to Poonch.

Grigson later told Ghazanfar that his duty as an old friend of my father would not allow him to let me go into Poonch except under safe auspices. Faiz, as an influential editor, also put in a word to the effect that it would be useful to Horace in trying to improve the condition of Muslims in Jammu to be able to say that I was on a corresponding mission to help the non-Muslims in Poonch. So eventually Ghazanfar put me in the hands of the Commissioner of the Rawalpindi Division, who not only arranged for me to have a seat in the Commander-in-Chief's plane which was going to Rawalpindi on the 21st but also to be introduced there to representatives of the Azad Kashmir government.

The great event meanwhile was the celebration of Princess Elizabeth's wedding on the 20th. There was no public holiday or free distribution of cloth and sweets, such as there would have been in the old days. But Grigson took me to an entirely European dinner at the Punjab Club where the Governor and the Commander-in-Chief presided over 100 guests sitting under crossed Union Jacks. The proposer of the toast to the King told us proudly that the Punjab Club was one of the last exclusively European Clubs still existing on the Indian Subcontinent.

Faiz gave me a letter of commendation to the Azad Kashmir government and a splendid lunch at the Volga Restaurant. I discovered that Agate, secretary to the Indian Deputy High Commissioner in Lahore, had been studying at Rugby School when I briefly taught there. On Ghazanfar's introduction, I had a talk with Nur Ahmed, Director of Public Relations, West Punjab, about Pakistan's future. The British, he said, were becoming unpopular because although Pakistan had wheat, jute and cotton to be exported and copper, mica and antimony to be worked, the Americans were more interested than the British in trade and investment. He voiced the general belief that

Mountbatten had influenced Radcliffe over the boundary award which had not only opened a possible route between India and Kashmir but had deprived Lahore of its source of electricity. The closure of the Headquarters of Auckinleck as Supreme Commander of the Indian and Pakistan Armies had been a betrayal of Pakistan.

On 19 November, I drove to Jhelum and Gujrat to obtain what information I could about Hindus in Mirpur, across the border in Azad Kashmir. I found some Muslims who had fled from Mirpur when it was bombed by the Indian Air Force. They believed that there were many Hindus still in the area. On the Pakistan side, only fifteen Hindus remained in Jhelum and twenty in Chakwal, a complete failure of Ghazanfar's Peace Campaign. The DLO in Jhelum, a member of the East Punjab Legislative Assembly, was a dignified old man who walked round in a Gandhi cap, chatting with the Muslims. Rather strangely, the Indian National Congress Working Committee had chosen this moment to urge both Muslims and non-Muslims to stay on or to return to their homes.

On 20 November, the Divisional Commissioner took me on to Rawalpindi in the Commander-in-Chief's plane; on arrival he introduced me to Professor Zahir, Professor of Arabic at the Islamia College, Lahore, who was acting as Secretary to Sirdar Ibrahim, the President of the Azad Kashmir government, and to Miss Mumtaz Shah Nawaz, Director of Public Relations of the movement. I explained to them how Horace and I had been working in parallel in the two Punjabs to try and improve the situation of the minorities and had been encouraged to extend our work into Kashmir. They told me that I was welcome to visit the area controlled by Azad Kashmir, whose officers would look after me and give full co-operation in my mission. As background, they explained that Poonch was a very poor region with a population of 400,000 of whom 70,000 had served in the Indian Army during the war. Considerable hardship had resulted from rapid demobilisation and then from the action taken by Pakistan after Independence to cut off the supplies which normally went into Kashmir, in order to increase pressure on

the State to accede to Pakistan. The revolt had followed the stationing in Poonch of Dogra State troops, the arrest of local leaders involved in the 'Quit Kashmir' movement against the Maharaja, and the invasion of Jammu by Sikhs. They said I would find out about these events in more detail from the military leaders whom I would meet within Azad Kashmir and they arranged for me to be driven, together with three Urdu journalists and a cameraman, from Rawalpindi to Kohala on the Kashmir border. Before I left Rawalpindi, I met with Douglas Brown, correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*, and Sydney Smith of the *Daily Express* who had been captured by tribesmen at Baramula and liberated by an Azad Kashmir officer.

Kohala, where I arrived on 21st November, is on the Pakistan side of the river Jhelum, across which a narrow iron bridge, about 70-yards long, connected West Punjab with Kashmir. The Indian Air Force had been dropping small bombs from fighter planes to try and damage the bridge and stop supplies coming in from Pakistan. Half the *dak* bungalow, where we all slept head to tail, was occupied by the Pakistan Army and half by Azad Kashmir people, headed by a former VCO.

At 8 a.m. on 22 November, there appeared Abdul Qayyum, who had commanded the brigade of the Azad Kashmir army in Bagh, an area roughly equivalent to a *tahsil*. We started across the bridge on foot with twenty men, all wearing former Indian Army uniforms and variously carrying army Lee Enfield or country made rifles and a couple of Sten guns. During the night we had been joined by a colourful recruit, Slim Haight of Denver, Colorado. He was twenty-six and had served in the Canadian Army during the War, winning a Military Medal, and then in the US army. Returning to Denver as a highway engineer, he had found life dull and took a job in Afghanistan. On the way back to the United States from Kabul, he heard from Sydney Smith of the *Daily Express* about the Azad Kashmir army which he immediately joined, with only ten dollars and six rupees in his pocket; he was promptly commissioned as a lieutenant.

As we scrambled briskly over huge boulders along a narrow track, an Indian fighter, bombing the bridge behind us and

machine-gunning us, provided a welcome rest in a ditch. Climbing to 7000 feet, we stopped after eight miles at Chaunyat. Here Qayyum held court under a plane tree, settling minor disputes between villagers and discussing military and civil questions for the rest of the day.

I was comfortably accommodated in the house of Naseem, formerly a recruiting officer for the Indian Army. Surprisingly, portraits of the Maharaja and Mountbatten still looked down on us in the discussions which I had with him and his cousin, formerly *Tahsildar* of Pulandri.

These quite substantial men stressed two themes which were often repeated in the next few days. Firstly, though the revolt in Poonch was sparked by the repressive measures taken by State Dogra troops following public meetings in favour of union with Pakistan, it was also a consequence of resentment against increased taxes. Secondly, when Qayyum and three friends came out openly against the Maharaja's regime on 27 August, they had little backing until the Dogra State troops started to arrest, plunder, and burn houses indiscriminately.

On 23 November, we continued to Ghirkur. Each march started with prayers led by an old, bearded, former Havildar. Then off we went with a great war cry. At Ghirkur there was a small hospital with very few supplies. In it were half a dozen wounded soldiers as well as some sick or wounded Sikh women and children who were uneasy. When I mentioned this to Qayyum he undertook to remove them immediately to the non-Muslim refugee camp at Mang. I checked later that this had been done.

A few miles further on we lunched at Tirhut, in a large house on stilts with a multi-coloured roof. I talked at length with the former *numberdar* about the taxes which, he said, were particularly resented because until 1941 Poonch had its own Raja to whom few taxes were paid. After he died, during the minority of his successor, the Maharaja's government took over the administration and imposed new taxes, some of which, he said, applied to Muslims only. He instanced:

- The Tirni Tax, on Muslims only, of Rupees 1.4 on every cow and Rupees 1 on every buffalo;
- The Bakri Tax of 10 annas per sheep and 4 annas per goat;
- The Chula Tax, introduced in 1947, of 8 annas on every hearth;
- A Wife Tax of 8 annas on every wife over and above the first.
- Zaildari Tax, introduced in 1947, of one and a half paisa per rupee of Revenue Tax to support the *Zaildar*, a minor tax collector.
- A Widow Tax of 4 annas per widow.
- A Forest Tax
- Import and Export Taxes e.g. 75 per cent on toilet soap, and silk.

In addition, the Poonchis were said to be grievously distressed by requisitioning of supplies by the State Dogra troops who paid with worthless chits.

A few miles further, we came to Nila But. Here, on a high plateau surrounded by mountains, Qayyum explained how the revolt started when State Dogra troops fired at and dispersed a meeting held in favour of union with Pakistan. Qayyum, with three companions, fled to the mountains with a price on his head. The State troops called in the arms of all Muslims. Qayyum and his friends, however, raided the State army's barracks and carried away the confiscated rifles; later, the State forces had been driven out of the area along the ridge. At Nila But I found very undernourished Hindu and Sikh children. Qayyum said there was little food in the village and promised to have them moved to the camp at Mang, and then evacuated.

The descent from Nila But over slippery boulders was harsher than climbing. Hardly a house had not been burnt down; I was told this had been done by retreating State troops. To the north, Qayyum pointed out the place where the garrison of Muzaffarabad in flight, 2000 strong, and including Sikhs enrolled as auxiliaries, had been intercepted by 300 Poonchis. He added: 'Their bodies are probably still there, if you don't

believe me'. We slept in a damaged house where the only light was a brand held up by a small, sleepy boy.

On 24 November, some horses were found of which I was offered one, but along the track, on the edge of a cliff, I preferred to walk rather than ride without saddle or stirrups. Again most of the houses and a mosque had been burnt, as I was told, by State troops on their retreat to Bagh.

At Mang, there was a camp of 500 Hindus and Sikhs, living in houses on the side of a hill. Most were women and children but there were some men who had been taken prisoner, both Dogras and Sikhs. Rations and general conditions did not seem bad in the circumstances. Qayyum addressed the inmates and told them that all women and children who so wished might leave for India. About half asked to do so; of the others, some wished to remain with their men and some were unwilling to abandon their property. Qayyum welcomed these, saying that Poonch would need Hindus and Sikhs as well as Muslims when the fighting ended.

A few miles further we came to the Azad Kashmir battalion headquarters at Arighat. A company was in training, making a mock attack on a hill top and using standing crops as cover. Qayyum leapt among them, pushing their heads down and generally frisking up the tempo until they routed the cows with wild battle-cries. As we came through the bazaar, troops lined up to greet us with cries of Allah-o-Akbar! Pakistan Zindabad! Azad Kashmir Zindabad! We lunched mostly on rice. I then pushed on to Bagh whilst the others remained at Arighat. Two well mounted lieutenants escorted, or rather preceded me, and I was provided with a small skinny horse, with a saddle indeed but the naked steel of which removed part of my thigh as we skidded down rock surfaces.

Fording a wide shallow river, we came to Bagh, a burnt out *tahsil* headquarter, overshadowed by an ancient castle. The officer in charge of the garrison greeted me cordially. There were 200 Hindus and Sikhs in the refugee camp. The rice they were eating that day seemed adequate and of fair quality but rations arrived irregularly. About 50 per cent of the women and

children wished to leave. The hospital was primitive, in the charge of a compounder; there were Dogra soldiers in it, surgical cases, who seemed reasonably well treated.

I was taken to visit the police force, among whom were boys, almost tearful because they were not allowed to go to the front. The show piece was the castle, with its 100 steep steps, its small cells in the keep, and high walls falling steeply into a dry moat. Here, the officers told me, sixty-five political prisoners were slaughtered by the Dogra garrison on 9 November before they retreated to Poonch town; the bodies were cut into pieces and thrown in the ditch. Forty female captives were also killed but not mutilated. The window was pointed out through which the sole survivor leapt, and various bloodstains.

I slept in comfort in what had probably once been the *tahsildar's* bungalow. Half a dozen officers chatted, telling me that Muzzafarabad had been taken by tribesmen, and that three Poonchi battalions were fighting in Jammu. They declared that Poonch town would be taken in a week—then on to Srinagar and Patiala! The Indian Army, they admitted, was making desperate efforts to save Poonch, and, though forty Indian trucks had been destroyed on the previous day on the Uri—Poonch road, supplies were reaching the garrison by air. A major who had been sent up to Chitral to buy arms described the zest with which the tribesmen scented the prospect of combining loot with a Holy War.

Qayyum wanted me to continue to the Poonch front and discuss the evacuation of what he described as 20,000 non-combatants. This seemed to me probably to exceed whatever vague terms of reference I had been given, and I had a bad blister which made long marches difficult. So on 25 November I started back to Pakistan, dragging the abominable horse. Outside Arighat, Qayyum met me and confirmed arrangements for evacuation of minorities if and when transport became available at the border. At battalion headquarters, Slim Haight was happily nursing a Sten gun, having been given a company all of whose platoon commanders spoke English. I took a letter to post to his wife.

At Arighat, I left the unsatisfactory horse in its stable and with a succession of various policemen and soldiers as escort, hobbled over the mountains to Kohala, which I reached on the evening of 26 November. My total baggage had been carried in raincoat pockets and I was glad to be reunited with my suitcase in the Kohala bungalow. Here, the Pakistan Army VCO told me he had orders to fire at any aircraft flying at less than 1000 feet with apparent hostile intent. He had his men well dug in but armed only with Bren guns. He agreed unofficially to feed any refugees coming over the bridge pending authorization from his company commander at Murree.

On 27 November, I left for Murree by car with the Azad Kashmir base officer. The Pakistan Army company commander there confirmed the arrangements made for feeding refugees at Kohala. When I explained that I was simply working as a volunteer, he said, 'God will reward you', but meanwhile gave me six cans of beer. I went on to Rawalpindi by bus.

On the same day, I had an amiable meeting in Rawalpindi with Sirdar Ibrahim, the President of Azad Kashmir, a 34-year old barrister of one of the London Inns of Court. In principle, he approved of the arrangements which were being made for evacuation of non-Muslims but wanted to know what advantage there might be in this for his government. I pointed out that there could be reciprocal benefits for Muslims in Jammu whose situation was being investigated by Horace. The evacuation could also be the subject of favourable comment from those foreign journalists in Rawalpindi who had become interested in the Azad Kashmir movement since their captivity and were aware of the Islamic tradition to spare the women and children of enemies. When this did not quite seem sufficient, I added that after I had completed my mission I would write an article about my experiences in Azad Kashmir, relating what those I met had told me about the revolt. Passing to a more general discussion, Ibrahim hoped that Pakistan would bring the Kashmir question before the United Nations.

I visited Brigadier Wright of the Pakistan Army, whom I had previously met in Sarghoda and who somewhat reluctantly

promised to co-operate in the evacuation from Kohala if his Divisional General had no objection. He praised the work which we were doing. I then returned by the Frontier Mail train to Lahore.

In Lahore from 29 November to 4 December, I immediately sent two written reports to Nehru. One concerned the condition of non-Muslims in Poonch and arrangements for the evacuation of those who wished to leave. The other summarized what I had been told about the reasons for the revolt. It seemed doubtful whether the evacuation, though agreed in principle, would take place without an impetus from outside. Qayyum and Ibrahim had not objected to my suggestion that a British or American voluntary organization might be able to send a unit to the area, both to give medical aid and to assist in evacuation. I telegraphed Dr Pittinger and Norman Penn of the Friends Service Unit at Ambala, and just as I was leaving, they arrived in Lahore, prepared to take on the job with the co-operation of the American Presbyterian Mission at Rawalpindi. Through the Indian Deputy High Commissioner in Lahore, I arranged for a cable to be sent by the Prime Minister of India to the Prime Minister of Pakistan asking for transport to be arranged for non-Muslim evacuees from the Pakistan-Kashmir border to the India-Pakistan border and this was agreed. The evacuation had to be postponed, however, because of illness in the FSU team.

Meanwhile Horace had been active on the other side. He had a long talk with Nehru, who was horrified by the account of massacres of Muslims in Jammu. This struck at the root of his determination, coming as he did from a Kashmiri family, that the people of Jammu and Kashmir, in which the Muslims were in a considerable majority in the population as a whole, should feel a loyalty to India rather than to Pakistan. He sent Horace off to Jammu to investigate with a warm commendation to Sheikh Abdullah and his ministers. Horace toured Jammu with Bakshi, the Home Minister in Abdullah's Government, who was himself a Muslim. What he learnt fully confirmed what we had heard from the refugees from Jammu, whom we had met in Sialkot in Pakistan, that they had been the victims of a large

scale organized massacre by Hindus and Sikhs. Bakshi and his officials now ensured security and appealed to Muslims, who had taken refuge across the border in Pakistan or in the countryside around, to return to their homes. Their houses in Jammu were sealed so that they could not be taken over by non-Muslims.

Horace's letters also reported seeing burning villages and other evidence of raids in revenge into Jammu from across the Pakistan border.[1]

I was due to leave the Indian Subcontinent for England and the USA in December and Horace joined me for final talks in Lahore before we laid down our commissions. The most important of these was on 3 December with Liaquat Ali Khan, Prime Minister of Pakistan, together with the Secretary-General of the government, Muhammad Ali. Liaquat was immobile with thrombosis. After we had told them about our relief work in Kashmir, they passed on to discuss political aspects. Liaquat suggested that:

a. All non-Kashmiri forces should be withdrawn from Kashmir
b. A neutral interim government should be established under ministers appointed by the United Nations
c. A plebiscite should be held under United Nations supervision.

Liaquat was emphatic that without a neutral administration, and not mere observers, a plebiscite would be useless. We commented that a complete withdrawal of non-Kashmiri forces could leave the country chaotically in the hands of lawless elements. We asked whether alternatively some kind of joint military occupation might be open to consideration, with India holding its actual position and Pakistan, subject to inspection, sending out the tribesmen and taking over insurgent positions. Liaquat said that this could indeed be a possibility. He was unemotional and open to argument and ended by thanking us warmly for what we had been doing. From the way he spoke, it seemed that, aware of Horace's long friendship with Congress

leaders, he hoped that his proposals would be passed on to the other side and in particular to Nehru. Horace and I each also had separate interviews with the West Punjab Governor, Mudie, who wanted a picture of developments both in Poonch and in Jammu.

Ghazanfar Ali invited me to tea with a number of prominent Muslims from the United Provinces, now part of India, who were pressing for better relations between India and Pakistan. My final impression of him was not as unfavourable as that held by Gandhi and Nehru. Though vacillating under pressure of public opinion, he seemed fundamentally kind and in favour of Hindu-Muslim harmony.

Punjabi and Sardar Swaran Singh, the East Punjab and Indian representatives in Lahore, and Rai Bahadur Naturam, were appreciative in their farewells, though, I think, a little puzzled that on this assignment I had been on holiday from other work to which I was now obliged to return.

On 5 December, feeling very ill, I flew back to Delhi with Horace and went to bed, but was roused because the Prime Minister wanted to see us. Nehru was in the worst of moods when we went to see him in his office in the Legislative Assembly. Glaring at me, and with my two reports in front of him, he banged on the table, saying: 'There is nothing new in this to me. I don't care a damn what happens to Poonch. I am not going to send my troops into their country. They can go to Pakistan or Hell for all I care.'

When we told him of our conversation with Liaquat and his suggestions for a settlement, he interrupted, 'There is nothing to be said. These people do not deserve to be listened to. They have behaved disgustingly and *I will not have* (with three bangs on the table) a single Pakistani soldier in Kashmir.' Horace, as a friend of Nehru for many years, managed to lower the temperature a little.

On 6 December, feeling even worse, I went with Horace to round off our mission with visits to Gandhi and Lady Mountbatten. Gandhi was sitting in the sun in the large straw hat which he had acquired on his journey through Bengal

villages in 1946. He listened to and seemed to accept my impressions of Poonch but insisted that Kashmir must not be partitioned, even though the whole of it were to go to Pakistan. I remembered little of my talk with Lady Mountbatten, being close to collapse. I then went to bed. Horace fetched Sushila Nayar, the personal physician of Gandhi. She told him about my condition and Gandhi, who had a poor opinion of conventional medicine, said, 'Richard has been doing good work. We cannot let him be handed over to a government hospital. Bring him here and we will nurse him'.

So on 6 December, I was taken to Birla House in an ambulance.[2]

NOTES

1. Friends House London, FSC Files 4801, 2, 3, 6, 11, and 4710.
2. P.S. Jha in his book *Kashmir, 1947* (OUP, Delhi, 1996, pp. 14, 20) questions the accuracy of my article in the Calcutta and Delhi *Statesman* of 4 February 1948 regarding the revolt in Poonch. What I wrote then was drawn from my journal and was explained to be an account of what I was told by the insurgents. Whether what I was told correctly reflected what had happened in all particulars, I had no way of knowing. In the same book (p. 126) Jha suggests that Nehru was content for Azad Kashmir to become part of Pakistan rather than to be an unreconciled element in a Kashmir which was part of India.

7

Gandhi's Patient
December 1947

Having come into Birla House with influenza and being expected to stay there for a few days, typhoid was diagnosed and I remained for a month. Dr Sushila Nayar, whose first British patient I was, looked after me devotedly and would sometimes retreat into my room to write letters as it was the quietest place in the crowded and busy house. She was the younger sister of Pyarelal, Gandhi's principal secretary, and she told me how her mother had implored her not to follow him into the *Ashram.* She was not only Gandhi's doctor; he would also use her as a secretary and social worker. In 1946, she had been sent by him to pacify a group of villages during Hindu-Muslim conflict in Noakhali in Bengal; similarly, earlier in 1947, she was sent for three months to Rawalpindi to reassure the minorities. She had written a charming little account of the last years of Gandhi's wife, Kasturba.

I was also fortunate in having a nurse. Dorothy Schlick from California arrived in India with the American Friends' Service Committee and was diverted from refugee work to look after me, which she did with competence and gaiety, though she had to sleep in the corridor.

In the month which I spent in Birla house just before Gandhi was assassinated, it was possible to obtain an impression of the extraordinary range of his preoccupations as well as of his seemingly unlimited capacity for sympathy with the problems of whoever came to see him, however humble. His influence was exercised at several levels. One was that on India's cabinet ministers and political leaders, several of whom, including Nehru and Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, came in every day to consult him.

A second was through his addresses to his public prayer meetings, which were broadcast to the nation each evening. A third was in his talks with the individuals from all kinds of background, who came in to seek his advice and help about their particular concerns.

Passing by my room on their way to see Gandhi, all sorts of people would look in on me, particularly at the beginning, when I was a novelty, though the ebullient former Chief Minister of Bengal, Suhrawardy, was barred from the sick room as likely to be disturbing and so spread the word that I was 'sinking'. Nehru, always wearing a red rose, came in muttering, 'I am very distressed, very!' Sardar Patel, the man of iron, put a hand on my fevered brow, whispering, 'Poor boy'. The Pakistan High Commissioner with an entourage wanted to discuss Kashmir. The eminent educationist, Zakir Hussein, brought roses from his garden. Dr B.C. Roy, Premier of West Bengal, with whom I had collaborated there in medical relief, brought capsules of strange medicine. One day, Suhrawardy at last burst through to hold my hand, saying, 'You do not know how many friends you have'.

Every morning Gandhi would come in, usually leaning on the shoulders of two young women. 'Now', I said to him, 'is surely the appropriate time for me to expire, like that American journalist who died in the first flush of the Russian Revolution which he praised, and who is buried beside Lenin's Mausoleum outside the Kremlin. For I shall never be so well regarded again.' This reminded Gandhi of his own momentary popularity with the British when, whilst studying to become a barrister in London, he had been obliged to eat dinners in the Middle Temple. One bottle of wine was shared between each four students and, as Gandhi had promised his mother not to drink alcohol, all his fellow students wanted him to sit with them.

At this time Gandhi was faced with burdens which could have been crushing. Cabinet ministers and other eminent people came in continuing to seek his advice on the refugee question, on relations with Pakistan and on the growing problem of Kashmir. General Cariappa, who was to become the first Indian

Commander-in-Chief, arrived to talk about non-violent principles in relation to the army. But the pressure was not all at this high level. Refugees from Pakistan came, heatedly demanding to be given the property of Muslims in India. Teachers and social workers wanted to discuss nutrition and handicrafts. Colleagues from the Sevagram *Ashram* brought news of what was happening there in his absence. Many letters needed to be written, often in his own hand, to individuals who asked for advice on their personal problems.

Every evening at Prayers in the garden, which were broadcast, the nation expected his guidance.

His broad public message was that in the new India, all communities had equal rights. In his sermons he declared that it was the duty of every man and woman to move towards God, who could be called by any name and could be reached through a Hindu becoming a better Hindu, a Muslim a better Muslim, and a Sikh a better Sikh. As such it became their duty to cherish their neighbours of all communities. To this he added that Indians should treat those Europeans who stayed on with the same regard as themselves.[1] He had a message for all sorts of people. He warned the new cabinet ministers: 'Beware of Power. Do not let yourselves be entrapped by pomp and pageantry'.[2] When Indian Christians bemoaned the loss of their income from abroad after Independence, he told them: 'A church does not need a building. If they but persevere in the sacrifice shown by Christ no one could take their religion away'.[3]

He had a magisterial rebuke for socialites who dabbled in relief because it was fashionable to do so, saying: 'After doing full justice to your overloaded breakfast tables in your spacious bungalows, you alight from posh cars dangling your stylish vanity bags, whilst those who you are supposed to serve can't afford the luxury of a bath for lack of a change of clothes'.[4] He continually urged that women who had been abducted should be received back as blameless. But he was also preoccupied with economic questions. Compost, he said, should be used instead of imported fertilisers. Controls should be relaxed on sugar, cereals, petrol, and other commodities because they encouraged corruption.[5]

He was fascinated by experiments in health, diet and education, explaining that yields of milk per cow in New Zealand and Holland were five times those in India and that the index figure for health went up in a country in proportion to the yield of milk.[6] He corresponded at this time with vegetarians abroad to try and find a satisfactory substitute for animal fat.[7]

Somtimes he seemed to be opposing inevitable technological progress, as when he demanded that children should be taught to write with pens made locally from reeds instead of with manufactured pencils and pens.[8] And, of course, he devoted considerable time to fostering home spinning, a losing cause amongst Delhi's upper classes. His moods seemed to vary. At one time he said that he felt old and no longer of use; at another he said, 'I am in Ram's hands. I dance as he pulls the strings. I am in his hands, so I experience ineffable peace.'[9] He almost seemed to know that he would become a martyr in his struggle for Hindu-Muslim unity. All of us were perturbed at the lack of security, but how could he allow armed guards to search those who came to prayers?

When he came into my room each day he would firmly refuse to discuss any of the great events and issues which were surging round him. He would discourage me from asking about refugees and Kashmir, saying that I would not get well quickly unless I relaxed. He would divert me with reminiscences of his life as a student in London and of the few vegetarian restaurants which then existed there. Sometimes his recollections were of South Africa and of his own experiences there as an ambulance worker. But he liked to engage me in a dialogue which was not too exhausting and hit on prohibition as a subject. In this I fought a defensive action for exemption of some alcohols for medical purposes from the prohibition laws which several of the provincial governments of India were proposing to introduce.

Brandy received consideration, for Gandhi admitted that he had treated patients with it for snake bite in South Africa; and one day he came in and asked, 'Do you think that you ought to take stout? My landlady in London once made me drink some because she said I was skinny. It tasted so horrible that perhaps

it could be classified as medicine'. But for whisky there was no sympathy. When I told him that two planters had dropped dead in Assam when the whisky supply line was cut by the Japanese army, he said that this perhaps was the Will of God. The subject was so endless that he asked me with a twinkle in his eye, 'as an expert' to write a paper on it, for him but not to exert myself because, he added, 'I can always wait for the genuine evidence of a man who is sincere'.

Though he would not enter into serious discussion of the refugee situation, he liked to hear my accounts of individual acts of kindness by Muslims to Hindus and Sikhs that I had observed in Pakistan and Kashmir. On this too, he asked me to write an article during my convalescence for his paper, *Harijan*.

Other people were less considerate about exhausting me. When the Kashmir question was raised at the United Nations, I was remembered as one of the very few people in Delhi to have visited the area which was under Azad Kashmir control. Visitors came in to discuss political aspects as well as evacuation schemes. Someone from Gilgit talked for two hours without stopping and when I lay flat and groaned, he just raised his voice to make his points clearer. We sometimes countered with a classic device. Dorothy had been invited to a reception to celebrate Burmese independence but had no evening dress. The tailors of Delhi, who were Muslims, had fled so she bought materials and constructed an elegant creation from fashion plates. When a visitor began to exhaust me, we involved him in the dress making, the ultimate sanction being to put pins in his mouth.

Gandhi was determined that we should celebrate Christmas, even giving permission for Horace to bring in sherry. He called in three or four Indian Christian girls on Christmas Eve. They were brought into my room by Pyrelal like an impresario, to cover everything with flowers and with streamers, suspended misguidedly from the electric fan, which the Pakistan High Commissioner accidentally turned on. When Gandhi came in to find us with Horace, drinking our sherry, he said benignly, 'What would be wrong for me may be right for you', and enquired

from Dorothy about her Burmese party: 'Have you been having High Jinks?'

Amrit Kaur, who appeared very dependent on Gandhi after years as his disciple, continued to look in on me kindly. She told me that she was scandalized by the cocktail parties of New Delhi and wanted the magnificent Imperial Museum in Calcutta to be turned into a hospital. Gandhi himself surprised me when I deplored the pompous buildings of Lutyens and Baker in New Delhi by saying that they were a useful inheritance although an independent Government could never have designed them. Once in the garden, while I was convalescing, I had a little chat with Sardar Patel and there was a smile on the face of the tiger. Just as he was explaining to me that Churchill was responsible for the partition of India, he was called in to see Gandhi, so I never learnt how.

When I felt well enough to travel and spend a week with friends in Calcutta before leaving India, Gandhi did not want me to go. I protested that Bengal was my second home. 'Exactly,' he replied, 'You and your fellow Bengalis will weep over each other, and you will eat too much and have a relapse'. His concern for my health was kind but I sometimes thought, as did Horace, that he quite enjoyed his frank and teasing exchanges with British friends as a change from the reverential attitude of his disciples

Sushila had been sent off on a mission. Dr Jivraj Mehta, Director General of Medical Services, who happened to come in, agreed with Gandhi that I ought to stay two weeks longer. But the Civil Surgeon, Colonel Bhargava, who was nominally in charge of me, sensed a breach of etiquette. 'We all admire Dr Jivraj as an administrator', he said, 'but perhaps he has not seen many patients recently and may not be aware that nowadays even serious cases are flown from place to place'. Horace's pleadings also helped and on 5 January Dorothy and I flew to Calcutta on one of Mr Birla's planes.

Gandhi did not forget me. At the house of Glan and Sujata Davies, where I was staying in Calcutta, there arrived, unannounced, the Governor of Bengal, C. Rajagopalachari, an

old friend whom Gandhi had asked to come and see that I was behaving sensibly. When I wrote to thank Gandhi for all his kindness, he replied, 'Duty becomes merit when debt becomes a donation. Did I not regale you with this quotation?' Referring to the article which he had asked me to write on prohibition, he added, 'Take your time over the liquor thing. It must not drive me into a liquor den!'[10]

Shortly afterwards, he embarked on a fast as a protest against the continuing ill-treatment of Muslims in Delhi by their Hindu and Sikh neighbours. This was highly effective, and many of those to whom he appealed streamed into Birla House to lay down their arms. I wrote a letter, of which I have not retained a copy, expressing concern for his health and admiration for his action. In it I seem to have refrained from addressing him as 'Bapu' (Father) which is how he signed himself to me and liked to be called by close friends. I suspect that in this I was a little afraid of the possibility of being drawn into the circle of disciples round him. He replied at the end of his fast, saying:

> It is now 4.23 a.m. I am sitting whilst I am sipping my first meal of hot water, tasting like poison but with the certainty of a nectar-like effect. Your letter makes you out to be a literalist which no man sincere like you can really be. But that is the limitation which Protestant England labours under. I have not been able, in spite of years of hard thinking to fathom this mystery!

He ended by strongly urging me to return to Birla House to convalesce, 'for the sake of your body, and perhaps your mind'.[11]

I did not return, for I valued my independence. On 24 January, Gandhi told his prayer meeting: 'If I have been sincere in my pursuit of truth I shall certainly be granted the death I seek... That should someone kill me I may have no anger against the killer, that I may die with the name of Ram on my lips.'[12] A few days later, his wish was fulfilled. On 30 January, as he walked out to his prayer meeting in the garden of Birla House, he was shot dead by a Hindu fanatic who resented his protection of the Muslims; his last words were to call on the name of Ram.

Shortly afterwards, I resumed my interrupted journey to New York, hoping to continue to the Philippines.

NOTES

1. *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* (CWMG), vol. 89, p. 354.
2. Ibid., vol. 89, p. 45.
3. Ibid., vol. 90, p. 294.
4. Ibid., vol. 90, p. 233.
5. Ibid., vol. 89, p. 467.
6. Ibid., vol. 89, p. 79.
7. Ibid., vol. 90, p. 3.
8. Ibid., vol. 90, p. 354.
9. Ibid., vol. 90, p. 273.
10. Letter in possession of the writer.
11. Ibid.
12. CWMG, vol. 90, p. 489.

8

The United Nations Kashmir Commission (1948–1949)

I never reached the Philippines. When I arrived in New York in the spring of 1948, the complaint of India against Pakistan over Kashmir, together with the counter-complaint of Pakistan against India which broadened the issues, were being discussed at great length in the United Nations Security Council. The Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, Philip Noel Baker, had come from London to represent the United Kingdom on the Council during these debates. He was accompanied by Sir Paul Patrick, who had been in charge of the department in the former India Office which dealt with relations with the Princely States, and as a family friend, had taken a paternal interest in my activities in India. Philip had been at school and at Cambridge with Horace Alexander and was the Commandant of the Friends Ambulance Unit in the First World War. At Paul's suggestion, he invited me to stay with the British delegation at the Roosevelt Hotel in New York, to be informally available for advice. I accepted the free accommodation with alacrity, being short of dollars of which very limited quantities were allowed to be purchased in Britain at that time.

Philip had played an important part in the League of Nations and in the creation of the United Nations. He was in his element in the diplomatic manoeuvres at Lake Success. He equally enjoyed New York social life, especially dancing. Consequently, he was not an early riser but in eighteenth century style, presided over meetings of his advisers each morning in bed in a gorgeous dressing gown, to discuss the day's business. From this agreeable

life, he was brutally recalled to London by Prime Minister Attlee, who had been told by Nehru that he was being unsympathetic to the Indian case in Kashmir; not long afterwards, he was dropped from the Cabinet. Years later, when he was over eighty and a recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize, he told me on Oxford station, 'I am going to write the story of the Kashmir affair even if they put me in jail for revealing official secrets'. I do not know whether he ever did so.

Eventually, in the spring of 1948, the Security Council established a Commission for India and Pakistan to go out to the subcontinent and place its good offices at the disposal of the Indian and Pakistani governments in respect of the restoring of peace and order and the holding of a plebiscite to determine the future of the State of Jammu and Kashmir. The Commission was composed of ambassadors from Argentina, Belgium, Chile, Czechoslovakia and the USA. Each ambassador was accompanied by an Alternate. The Americans also brought a military adviser. The United Nations Secretariat provided supporting professional and secretarial staff, none of whom were acquainted with India. I was, therefore, invited at the last moment to join the staff of the Commission as adviser to Erik Colban, the representative of the Secretary-General, who had been a senior official in the League of Nations and Norwegian Ambassador in London during the war. My appointment had been suggested to Trygve Lie, the first Secretary-General of UN, by Mrs Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, the Indian Ambassador to the USA and Nehru's sister.

I was recruited and sent off in such haste, with no contract but a wad of dollars as a token of commitment, that UN headquarters neglected to inform the Principal Secretary of the Commission, which was assembling in Geneva, of my appointment. I thus failed to get into the conference room for the Commission's first meeting which I had so briskly been despatched to attend. This hardly mattered, as the Commission unhurriedly studied its documents and drew up its rules of procedure, under which the chairmanship was to rotate every three weeks. Proceedings were greatly facilitated by agreement

to use English as the working language. As the Indian and Pakistani governments did the same, no interpretation or translation was required. Argentina and Chile could have insisted on the use of Spanish, and Belgium on the use of French, which were official languages in UN. Their waiving of this right created a generous spirit in the Commission from the beginning.

When I presented myself to Colban as his adviser, he said, 'I don't need an adviser but would rather have an assistant from Britain than any other country'. He proved a receptive and intelligent chief, respected and listened to by the delegates, both for his long international experience and as a senior fellow diplomat. As a Norwegian, he also had a direct line to Trygve Lie, with whom he corresponded in Norwegian as he did with the King of Norway. The delegates were less influenced by the Principal Secretary, and Deputy Principal Secretary of the Commission, whom they sometimes felt to have an over formalistic attitude to the Secretariat's role.

The work of the Commission has been well described from the inside by Josef Korbel, the representative of Czechoslovakia. There is a vast subsequent literature on the Kashmir question. I have no wish to add to this and kept no journal at the time. There are, however, a few recollections which may be of interest.

The Commission's first stop on the subcontinent was in Karachi, which had become the temporary capital of Pakistan. It was immediately informed by Sir Zafrullah Khan, the Foreign Minister, that three brigades of Pakistan troops had moved into Kashmir to protect its borders against the Indian army and to stem the flow of refugees into Pakistan. Though the UK government demanded that British officers, of whom several hundred were serving in both armies, should not take part in operations in Kashmir, the latter still directed their forces from outside the borders. The Commanders-in-Chief on both sides were British and were in frequent telephone contact with each other in a kind of chess game, implying 'if you bomb this, we shall shell that'. Under a recent UK act, the nationality of Britons born overseas depended upon the place of birth of their paternal grandfather. British officers whose forebears had served in India

for generations could thus suddenly find themselves arbitrarily classified as Indians or Pakistanis. The commander of one Pakistan division woke up to find himself an Indian citizen.

An undeclared war between the Dominions was a much more serious affair than the previous accusations of tribal invasions and cross-border incursions. So, to and fro, members and staff of the Commission went between the capitals of Karachi and Delhi and the military headquarters of Rawalpindi and Srinagar, with our secretaries typing amended proposals for a cease-fire as we bumped along in our DC3.

The United Nations was only a few years old and the Governments of India and Pakistan even younger. There were thus no precedents as to how we should be received. The Indian Government, having all the facilities of British India's imperial capital of New Delhi at its disposal, provided us with the palace of a Sikh Maharaja for our office. We paid each of his numerous servants a small monthly honorarium. When our accounts were received by UN headquarters in New York, they noted with displeasure all these payments to various Mr Singhs and rebuked us for employing members of the same family. We had to explain that there were several million Sikhs in India, all called Singh.

Prime Minister Nehru went to great trouble to further the Indian case. Each member of the Commission with his Alternate was invited separately to a meal for a private discussion with him; as was Colban with me. There was a fascination about the transitional arrangements from the imperial style. The Governor-General, Rajagopalachari (until recently Governor of Bengal), a man of great simplicity and charm, gave a banquet for us in the former Viceroy's House, where we ate off gold plate and there were half a dozen wine glasses beside one's place, each filled with a different fruit juice. Inheriting the imperial files and traditions, India's protocol was impeccable. Thus when a tiger shoot was organized for the Commission, its officiating chairman was duly credited with the kill despite the need to take into calculation the three-weekly rotation of the chairmanship.

In the formal meetings of the Commission with the Indian Government in Delhi, the latter's representative was Sir Girja Shankar Bajpai, Secretary-General of the Ministry of External Affairs, who carried considerable delegated responsibility, because his minister, Nehru, simultaneously held the office of prime minister. Bajpai was an Oxford graduate who spoke French and had been India's diplomatic representative in Washington. He was an urbane professional with whom the Commission could feel at home in the diplomatic game, in which, with a slight change of expression, he could express displeasure or affability when fresh proposals were hinted at.

Kashmir presented a vital issue for Pakistan but, with the flood of refugees pouring over its borders and the urgent need to set up a capital and all the offices of a new state whose very survival was at stake, those who dealt with the Commission could not dispose of the time and resources available in India. Jinnah, the Governor-General and Father of the Nation, was dying of tuberculosis. In his absence in a sanatorium in the hills the Commissioners were invited to stay in his guest house in Karachi. Their consequent separation from their Alternates and staff, who were in a hotel, caused some minor difficulties. The Prime Minister, Liaquat Ali Khan, another Oxford graduate, made an excellent impression with his reasonable and imperturbable manner but had not the time, like Nehru, to dine and brief each ambassador in turn. Pakistan's negotiators were Sir Zafrullah Khan, the Foreign Minister and Chaudhri Muhammad Ali, the Secretary-General of the government. Zafrullah was an eminent lawyer who had been a member of the Viceroy's Council. He had been effective in arguing Pakistan's case on Kashmir in New York in the Security Council, whose members were able to digest his exhaustive exposition afterwards from the verbatim record, and summarise it and take instructions from their capitals. His lengthy delivery seemed less suited to the more informal atmosphere of the Commission, though his erudition impressed them. Muhammad Ali was a very able civil servant who did not seem to feel it appropriate to intervene much when accompanying a minister. In private discussions with members

of the Commission, he may have proved more persuasive than Zafrullah.

In the negotiations, the Indians were adamant that the plebiscite to which they had agreed should not take place whilst a single Pakistani soldier remained in Kashmir. The Pakistanis were equally reluctant for the plebiscite to be organized under the eyes of the Indian Army. Eventually, the Commission stuck closely to the resolutions already passed by the Security Council which they amplified in two further resolutions. These called for a cease-fire to be followed, on the one side, by complete withdrawal of Pakistan forces and tribesmen, and on the other, by that of the bulk of the Indian forces. A plebiscite would then be conducted by a United Nations Plebiscite Administrator. Meanwhile, the territory vacated by Pakistan would be administered by 'the Local Authorities' under the surveillance of the Commission. The rest of the State, by implication, would continue to be governed by Sheikh Abdullah's Government.

After discussions in Delhi and Karachi, the Commission settled down happily in the capital of Kashmir, Srinagar, the loveliest of India's hill stations, with its lake, its mountains, and its Mughal gardens. The Maharaja had disappeared from the scene and we were installed in one of his palaces. We could hardly turn around without a silent barefooted servant appearing with gins and tonics on a silver tray. The Kashmir Government did not conduct its diplomacy along conventional lines. One day Sheikh Abdullah dropped by our palace genially and said, 'We are not going to allow you to escape without spending some money here. We'll open up the Kashmir Emporium tomorrow evening and have a party, and *every* member of your staff must come, for we are a democratic government, unlike those stuffy people in Delhi'.

Amongst the coloured lights in the garden of the Emporium there turned out to be a cabinet minister behind each stall displaying the famous Kashmir handicrafts, woollen shawls, gems, furs and delicately painted papier maché boxes. The Prime Minister himself presided over the most expensive stall with the carpets, successfully pressing a costly one on me and on my

American colleague in the Commission Secretariat, Juanita, and myself, who had just become engaged and who, he urged, would need to furnish a home. Next day the Sheikh's officials boasted to us that whilst this reception had been in progress they had raided our office and copied the more interesting papers. It was naive of them to suppose that they would discover important secrets, for neither side was likely to trust us with accurate confidential information. Such break-ins may not be uncommon in diplomatic life but to force them to the attention of one's guests seemed an unusual embarrassment.

This was one of several surprises. The only time when I saw our ambassadors lose their *savoir-faire* was when an enormous bill for drinks and entertainment was transmitted to us from the Sheikh's Government after we arrived back in Delhi. In the following year, after I had left the Commission, there was a more public incident. Either because they supposed him to be insufficiently sympathetic or because they wanted to discredit the Commission's final report, the Kashmir Government leaked a story to the press that the Commission's military adviser, a Belgian Lieutenant-General, who had joined its staff after the cease-fire, had been caught illegally smuggling jewelry out of Kashmir into Pakistan in his private plane on behalf of a lady who was *persona non grata*. The Indian government appeared embarrassed by the publicity but the General was withdrawn by the United Nations for consultations and did not return after his annual contract expired.[1]

Sometimes our professional diplomats were puzzled at the unawareness by the military of the delicacies of protocol. One morning, the jovial Indian Commander in Kashmir, General Thimayya, was strolling down the main street of Srinagar when he encountered one of our ambassadors and invited him to dinner. As he progressed, he happened to meet three more and quite spontaneously invited them too. When the guests assembled downstairs in our palace to proceed to the General's house, they discovered that only the American Ambassador had received no invitation. In solidarity they decided that none of them would go. I was despatched to explain this to General

Thimayya, who was horrified. 'I have insulted the United States', he moaned, 'Pandit Nehru will have my guts for garters'. I suggested that the situation could be retrieved if it were explained that he had indeed sent a written invitation to the American ambassador through the lieutenant-colonel who was his aide and myself, and that between us we had mislaid it. So over to the Maharaja's guest house the three of us went, where the American ambassador was brought down to receive profuse apologies from the General whilst the Colonel and I hung our heads in shame. Nobody, of course, believed in this farce but all went happily off to dinner. Afterwards, I was rebuked by the Principal Secretary of the Commission for damaging the reputation of the UN Secretariat by taking the blame. He could only excuse this, he said, because as a temporary UN official I knew no better. The goodwill of the Indian army, however, which this little affair helped to cement, was to prove invaluable after the cease-fire when UN military observers, some from tropical countries, arrived ill-equipped to work in the mountains in winter and were very grateful for material help from the Indian Army until the UN supply line was adequately organized.

Some members of the Commission also visited the Azad Kashmir authorities on the other side. What these had in common with Sheikh Abdullah's Government was a feeling that their future was being negotiated above their heads with the Indian and Pakistan Governments.

Korbel in his book *Danger in Kashmir*, which he wrote after leaving the Czechoslovak diplomatic service to take up an academic post in the USA, describes the Commission glowingly:

> unhampered by the burden of power politics, an atmosphere of complete mutual confidence developed among the delegates. Living and eating together in the same hotels, they became emotionally attached to the cause of Kashmir as if it were their own cause. I had attended many international conferences, but had never witnessed anything like it.[2]

The spirit described by Korbel was indeed apparent. The Commission were amiable masters, partly because two of the

delegations were Latin Americans, whose representatives I generally found particularly courteous and appreciative in their relations with the UN Secretariat. Yet I felt at the time, and still feel, that the Commission was over prudent in insisting that their mandate only allowed them to discuss officially a plebiscite which would award the population of the whole state to one side or the other. It was clear from what we saw and learnt in Gilgit which, though technically part of Kashmir had been administered directly by the British, and in our talks with the rulers of Hunza and Nagar, that in these remote northern territories there was a solid determination to be part of Pakistan and that it would be very difficult to change the position. The same was true in the western part of Jammu, where we met the Azad Kashmir *de facto* administration. On the other side, the Buddhist population of the vast area of Ladakh were firmly determined to stay within India as were the Hindu majority in eastern Jammu, the heartland of the Maharajas's dynasty. Some sort of partition, therefore, seemed the most appropriate solution. Neither the Indian nor Pakistan representatives would openly depart from an all-or-nothing attitude to the plebiscite. From Korbel's account and from American archives,[3] it appears, however, that individual members of the Commission discussed partition privately with representatives of India and Pakistan and sometimes received a little encouragement, depending upon whom they spoke to and on the fluctuations of military operations. The possibility might profitably have been raised openly in the Commission's reports.

The attachment of Nehru to the Vale of Kashmir as the land of his ancestors and the equally emotional feeling in Pakistan that this area represented the 'K' in Pakistan would, however, have made a plebiscite in the Valley itself almost inevitable, though at different times and for different reasons, each side feared it might lose it.

Another solution, that Kashmir should have some sort of autonomous status as, what he called, 'The Switzerland of Asia', linked both with India and Pakistan, was not very secretly and somewhat vaguely hinted at by Sheikh Abdullah in private talks

with members of the Commission, although he had told the Security Council in New York that Kashmir was firmly a part of India. There was one secondary school in Srinagar, known as the 'Biscoe School' after its founder, Canon Tyndall Biscoe, where for many years most of the elite in the Kashmir valley had been educated. Here the Sheikh would drop by in the evening to be briefed by the Principal on such technical questions as condominium and the constitutional arrangements in Liechtenstein and Andorra.

The Commission was very reluctant to consider autonomy. Despite Korbel's description of the absence of power politics, it is likely that this was due to apprehensions, particularly on the part of the USA and of the British behind the scenes, that this would lead to instability or worse on the borders with China and in the neighbourhood of the USSR.

The Commission retired to Geneva in September 1948 to write its report to the Security Council and then proceeded to Paris, where the UN General Assembly was in session. In the informal atmosphere of Paris, further talks with Indian and Pakistani representatives led to the adoption of a cease-fire. The Commission then went on, somewhat unnecessarily it seemed, to New York to report again to the Security Council, thus enabling its members to go home for the Christmas holidays. By the time it returned in February to India and Pakistan, where only Colban and I were present, something of the impetus of the cease-fire had been lost. Korbel had retired. His successor from Czechoslovakia was a new style Communist official and a cold-war spirit affected the Commission's hitherto harmonious atmosphere. For a short time there was plenty to do. And a new principal secretary and deputy secretary arrived from New York to organize the work effectively. An economic and social subcommittee, of which I served as secretary, visited Azad Kashmir to collect the information which would be required when, after the troop withdrawals, the Commission was due to become responsible for the supervision of the local authorities pending the plebiscite. A military mission, of which I was also secretary, visited both sides. No British officers were of course

in evidence, but their successors entertained us, maintaining all the traditional toasts and ceremonies in the officers' mess to the sound of bagpipes. On both sides the military, as it had been in the Punjab, seemed the least bellicose element. They often knew exactly who the officers were against whom they had been fighting and bore them no malice, recollecting congenial memories of training and service together in the former Indian Army under British rule.

UN military observers from several nations arrived rapidly and were stationed on both sides of the cease-fire line, which was defined by the Commission's military adviser in consultation with the Indian and Pakistan armies.

After many eminent names had been pulled out of *The International Who's Who*, agreement of the two Governments was obtained on the selection of the American war hero, Admiral Nimitz, as the plebiscite administrator. It soon became clear, however, that in light of the different interpretations by India and Pakistan of the Commission's resolutions, no plebiscite was going to take place in the foreseeable future. The Commission remained in being until the end of 1949. Its functions were taken over, on its own suggestion, by a series of individual UN mediators who made no further progress over the years despite the remarkable pertinacity of Erik Colban, who accompanied them well on through his seventies.

I had already left the Commission's staff in May 1949, when it became apparent that nothing more could be achieved. To return to study American colonial rule in the Philippines seemed somewhat remote when right under my nose was a subject clamouring to be turned into a book. No adequate study had been published of how and why Pakistan, the fifth largest state in the world, consisting of two wings separated by 1000 miles, had come into existence. So I spent a few months travelling around the country gathering more information before returning to Oxford to write *The Making of Pakistan*. Published in 1950 as the first book on the subject, it rapidly went through several editions. It aimed at objectivity but when I returned to the permanent service of the United Nations in 1950, the book

became something of an embarrassment in view of the continuing sensitivity of Indo-Pakistan relationships and I asked the publisher, Sir Geoffrey Faber, to let it go out of print, which he did with reluctance but understanding.

NOTES

1. This incident is described in P. Dawson, *Peacemakers of Kashmir*, Bombay, 1995, pp. 118 ff.
2. J. Korbel, *Danger in Kashmir*, Princeton, 1954, p. 133.
3. A. Lamb, *Incomplete Partition*, Hertingbury, 1997, p. 272–84 quotes these.

9

The Best of Times and the Worst of Times

Pakistan 1947–1949

This chapter is based on notes made when I was travelling around Pakistan in the spring of 1949, collecting information for my book *The Making of Pakistan*. By that time the crisis of the survival of the state appeared to have been heroically overcome, but the longer term problems were now presenting themselves, to be faced without the charismatic and decisive direction of the Father of the Nation.

In the Autumn of 1947, as the long columns of refugees from East Punjab trudged over the border and survivors from trains, which had been ambushed, reached Lahore, even the poorest inhabitants welcomed them and shared food and clothing and shelter. Ghulam Mohammad, Pakistan's first Finance Minister, told me that without this generous spontaneous private provision of relief the Government's resources could have been overwhelmed. Equally important, he said, had been the enthusiastic response to the Government's appeal for a loan, as it started out with an almost empty treasury whilst India refused to hand over Pakistan's agreed share of British India's assets. Under the leadership of Begum Liaquat Ali, women had come out of purdah to nurse the sick and wounded. An administration was improvised in Pakistan's new capital of Karachi, in huts without furniture and equipment, by people who were often themselves refugees, burdened with their own family problems. It broke out of the straitjacket of India's traditional paralysing bureaucracy; people of all ranks had worked long hours, side by side, to enable Pakistan to survive.

Perhaps the most vital achievement had been the rapid settlement of the farmers, who were the great majority of the incoming six million refugees, on the holdings of the departed Hindus and Sikhs in the West Punjab which were the richest agricultural lands in Pakistan. There was corruption in the process of allocation but the current harvest was saved and the next crop sown. Had it not been for this, Pakistan's economy could have collapsed at birth under the burdens of paying for food imports and maintaining millions of demoralized people in camps.

Some of the early élan could still be seen in 1949. New ideas and new demands were in the air. There was an expansion of education at all levels. Muslims who had grown up believing that they did not have the ability to enter the competition of private business were doing so confidently now that the Hindus had left. Factories were being established within the country to process Pakistan's raw materials instead of exporting them to India.

The departure of the Hindus had suddenly opened up a major opportunity for the Co-operative movement. Founded and nurtured with missionary zeal by British officials such as Sir Malcolm Darling and F.L. Brayne, whose sympathies were strongly with the peasants, it had still made only modest progress over thirty years in competition with experienced and often unscrupulous Hindu money lenders. The Provincial Registrars of Co-operatives of West Punjab and NWFP now proudly told me how, when the Hindus left and financial systems were on the verge of collapse, the co-operative departments had taken over banks and Government treasuries and had been able to lend large sums to the State. They had imported and distributed cloth, sugar, seeds and implements. They had set up shops and factories. They had financed loans to rural immigrants for crops and cattle, and in towns, for small industries. In the NWFP, the Registrar told me how a sugar mill had been started up with profits from the sugar crop. He spoke of 'the burning flame in my heart to save the Province from collapse', of how he had established 'an economic war front'.

In 1947 about 75 per cent of the trained nurses in the West Punjab had departed; these were not only Hindus but Anglo-Indians and Christians who had families on the other side. At the same time, the influx of sick and wounded refugees had imposed an enormous strain on the medical and nursing services. In the Mayo hospital in Lahore, for example, the number of patients had risen from 500 to 1500. Begum Liaquat's Committee had recruited emergency nurses, many of them straight out of purdah. Those who were refugees were found accommodation for their families. They had worked devotedly, caring for men as well as women. After the emergency, many of those who knew English remained as probationers, and those who knew only Urdu were retained as orderlies. The Punjab University had made nursing an elective subject at the intermediate level and a West Punjab Nursing Service had been created.

Two thirds of the women doctors in the West Punjab had left at Independence, at which time there was no provision for training them in Pakistan. Within a few months, with active support from Jinnah and Liaquat, a Women's Medical College was established in Lahore and the places were immediately filled.

The way in which women had come forward in the crisis stimulated a broad recognition that they deserved to have a wider role in society than they had hitherto enjoyed in Muslim India. One of the most influential of women Muslim leaders in India for many years had been Begum Shah Nawaz, the daughter of Sir Muhammad Shafi; she had been active in the women's movement since 1917, particularly in the all India Women's Conference until this had become identified with Congress. She told me how, when she attended the Round Table Conference in 1930, Ramsay MacDonald had asked her why there was no separate Muslim women's organization and how she had subsequently founded one within the Muslim League. She explained how admiration for the response of the women in the emergency had opened the way for them to obtain their true rights under the *Shariat*, such as share of inheritance and

property, and initiative in divorce; a Rights for Women Society had recently been founded which was making progress despite a statement by Jinnah's sister, Fatima, that the woman's place was in the home.

During the run up to Independence it had been widely assumed that the substantial numbers of Hindus and Sikhs who were expected to continue to live in Pakistan and of Muslims, who remained in India would provide a reciprocal system of hostages, ensuring fair treatment for the minorities. Jinnah, who had lived most of his life in Bombay, well appreciated the contribution which Hindus in Pakistan could make to its economy. He had insisted that the green Islamic flag of the State should include a broad white band to represent the minorities. He was deeply upset by the massacres and the consequent mass migrations. He told the Pakistan Legislative Assembly in his first address, 'You may belong to any religion or caste or creed. That has nothing to do with the State'. He reminded them that in England, for many years, relations between Roman Catholics and Protestants had been much worse than those between communities in Pakistan today. 'The British came through this', he continued, 'We must keep before us an ideal by which Hindus and Muslims would cease to be regarded as such in the political sense, but as citizens of the State.' He held up as a model of tolerance Akbar, the most ecumenically minded of the Mogul emperors. Amidst the tales of atrocities, which everyone in Pakistan believed the Sikhs to have started, he even told the Assembly, 'This is not the moment to go into the origin or cause of the holocaust or to apportion blame as to which community has disgraced itself most. It will be for historians to give their verdict.'[1] In his speeches, whenever he visited the provinces, he insisted that non-Muslims should have the same rights as Muslims.

After Jinnah's death, Liaquat was equally insistent on the theme. He introduced the Objectives Resolution in the Pakistan Constituent Assembly in 1949, which stated that 'adequate provision shall be made for the minorities to profess and practice their religions and develop their cultures', and that 'adequate

provision shall be made to safeguard the legitimate interests of minorities and backward and depressed classes'. He reminded the Assembly that a non-Muslim could even be at the head of a Muslim state and declared that non-Muslims would be welcomed into the government services.[2]

As has been seen in Chapter 4, nothing could persuade Hindus and Sikhs to remain in West Punjab. By 1949, there were probably only a thousand Hindus in the NWFP and a few thousand in Sind. Several millions, however, remained in East Pakistan.

The only non-Muslim in the Pakistan cabinet was the Scheduled Caste Minister of Law and Labour, J.N. Mandal, who had been a member of the Muslim League ministry in undivided Bengal. He told me that he had an identical point of view with that of Dr Ambedkar, the Scheduled Caste leader who was a Minister in the Indian Government, and that each of them was trying to do his best for his people. Yet, although there were several million Scheduled Caste people in East Pakistan, seventeen of whom were members of the Provincial Assembly, they were not represented in its Council of Ministers. The Pakistan government had reserved 6 per cent of its civil service posts for scheduled castes. In East Pakistan 30 per cent of the posts had in principle been reserved for the minorities, without any special provision for Scheduled Castes. Mandal doubted, however, if even 10 per cent had actually been allocated. His community were poor people, mostly of Bengali mother tongue, who would find the requirement to speak Urdu a severe handicap.

On the whole, Mandal admitted, the scheduled castes were probably receiving better special treatment in India than in Pakistan. It was not surprising to learn shortly afterwards that he had left Pakistan for India.

S.P. Singha, leader of the Christians in the West Punjab, told me that they had experienced a very difficult time there in 1947, being harassed and occasionally even murdered. The trouble had been started by Muslims coming from Ambala in East Punjab, who said that Christians had looted them. This, Singha

admitted, was alas true. At first, ministers and officials in West Punjab had wished to get rid of the Christians but they now seemed reconciled to their presence. 400,000 remained in the Province. Singha had enlisted the personal support of Jinnah in their protection. He himself was no longer Speaker of the Assembly, but he had been put on many committees by the Government and was president of the Lahore Rotary Club.

The most successful minority, though few in number, were the Parsees, among whom Jinnah had several friends whilst living in Bombay; he had indeed married a Parsee. Their capital and their business experience were particularly welcome and Jinnah thanked them publicly for seeking no special representation or protection.

Many Hindus had left East Pakistan immediately before and after Independence, mindful of the communal massacres which had taken place in 1946 in Calcutta and Noakhali. Gandhi and Suhrawardy, however, had spent the day of Independence together, unprotected in a house in a poor quarter of Calcutta, accompanied by Horace Alexander. This brave gesture brought about 'The Miracle of Calcutta'. Not a life was lost that day and the effect spread through both East and West Bengal.

Some twelve million Hindus were estimated to remain in East Pakistan in 1949. They were still dominant at the Bar and occupied a third of the places in the university. In the provincial capital of Dacca, their temple bells could be heard in the evenings, and in their shops in the bazaar, portraits of Gandhi, Nehru, and Patel were displayed. Their worst complaint was of the requisitioning of their houses for the needs of the new government. Their worst fear was of persecutions, arising not from local friction, but out of hostility between India and Pakistan over Kashmir.

In the East Pakistan Provincial Assembly Caste Hindus and Scheduled Castes together held forty-seven seats in a House of 171. The only hope of winning the loyalty of this substantial minority appeared to lie in giving it representation in the Cabinet, which would also lead to the places reserved for them

League ministers, however, were unwilling to take them in whilst Pakistan's relations with India were so strained and whilst the Hindus' allegiance to Pakistan was suspect. Some of the Hindus with whom I talked in Dacca would say philosophically, 'Perhaps we will come to have a similar influence over the Muslims as the Greeks had over the Romans'. They told me that the press was gagged and that there was no freedom of thought. They praised Nazim-ud-Din, however, who as the first Premier of East Pakistan had maintained good relations between the communities when there was so much bloodshed in the West. 'In his time', they said, 'The dove of peace flew from place to place'.

In Dacca, one was aware not only of the problem of the minority community in East Pakistan but that of the Muslim majority, who were almost as numerous as the Muslims in West Pakistan, but felt that they had an inadequate share in the institutions, programmes and revenues of the new State of Pakistan.

There had been wide initial enthusiasm for Pakistan among Bengali Muslims, who had never forgotten how East Bengal had been made a separate province, with its capital in Dacca, between 1905 and 1912, and how the commercial interests of Calcutta combined with Hindu political agitation to reverse the decision. I did not meet many Muslims who agreed with Suhrawardy's attempt, immediately before Independence, to establish a United Bengal as a sovereign State, independent of India and Pakistan. They remembered how in Bengal under British rule, although the Muslim majority had been reflected in the establishment of Muslim led governments, Hindus had been dominant in the public services and professions and in education and commerce and industry. Hindus had also usually been the landlords, often non-resident, and Muslims the cultivators in what was now East Pakistan.

Whilst some well to do Muslims lamented having to move from Calcutta, the City of Palaces, to what they described (with some exaggeration) as the bamboo and corrugated iron town of Dacca, the rising middle class appeared self-confident, rejoicing

in the wide new opportunities of employment as many Hindus moved to West Bengal. This exodus took place with none of the horrors which had accompanied the Punjab migrations.

Yet by 1949, there was considerable grumbling in Dacca. Had they, the Muslims of East Pakistan were asking, exchanged the rule of the British and the dominance of the Hindus for that of Muslims from outside the province? In the elite Indian Civil Service and its successor the Pakistan Administrative Service, whose members held the highest administrative posts in the Province, there were eight British officers, twenty Muslims from outside Bengal and only two Bengali Muslims. It was widely complained that whilst the revenue from East Pakistan's jute provided the backbone of Pakistan's economy, the Province was receiving little in return. Some of the criticism of the Pakistan government was uninformed. Muhammad Ali, its Secretary-General, was arranging for a substantial reserved quota for East Pakistanis in new recruitment to the Pakistan Administrative Service but the results could not be seen until they were trained, as was the case in the legal and educational professions. The building of jute mills and other factories was planned so that raw materials could be processed locally instead of being exported. The port of Chittagong was being expanded. Though the calibre of the East Pakistan ministers was unimpressive, they were making a serious attempt to abolish the permanent land settlement of Bengal made in 1793, under which the East India Company had given the zemindars, usually Hindus, the right to pay a fixed revenue to the Government but to exact an unlimited rent from the tenant. The Settlement, by restricting the government's ability to increase its revenues, had greatly limited economic development in Bengal but it had hitherto proved impossible to abolish.

A gesture had been made by the appointment of Nazim-ud-Din, the Premier of East Pakistan, as Governor-General of Pakistan when Jinnah died. Yet it seemed that the importance of symbols was not well enough recognized in the West-East relationship. To influential people in Karachi and Lahore, with whom I felt able to talk freely, I mentioned how other countries

which consisted of units of diverse histories, such as South Africa, had found it necessary to subordinate efficiency to political imperatives by locating the legislature, executive, supreme court, and national bank at different centres or by rotating the sessions of the legislature between them. Burdened by the immediate problems of the new state, especially the Kashmir question, my friends tended to give only polite attention to such possibilities.

Muslims in the University of Dacca spoke to me of the adverse impact on the students, Muslims as much as Hindus, when Jinnah told them on his visit to Dacca in 1948, that in Pakistan there must be only one state language, which had to be Urdu. This upset them not only in their cultural attachment to the rich Bengali language, they also resented the handicap which this would impose in the competition for well-paid employment. It was even rumoured that the University was planning to insist on use of Urdu characters in the Bengali language.

Back in Karachi, making a visit to Nazim-ud-Din in the Governor-General's palace, I was struck by how much more suitably his qualities appeared to fit the position of a constitutional head of state than that of the Premier of Bengal when I had served under him in 1944–45. Fair minded, religious, and affable, his lack of panache and his hesitations now appeared less of a handicap. Jinnah had been far from a constitutional Governor-General; as the *Quaid-e-Azam*, the Great Leader, his proposals and decisions were seldom disputed. Liaquat, who had for many years before Independence served loyally as Secretary of the Muslim League whilst Jinnah was its leader, had continued in the role of his lieutenant as the first Prime Minister of Pakistan. Now he carried the main responsibility. Although, through his long service, he commanded general respect, some politicians suggested to me that he was not sufficiently firm and dynamic, taking decisions, for example, by vote in the Cabinet as Jinnah had never done. He was sometimes blamed for the lack of success of Pakistan's Kashmir policies. Some critics maintained that he had pushed the Maharaja into acceding to India by permitting the invasion of the tribesmen,

and that their indiscriminate plundering and occasional murdering had also alienated Muslims in the Valley, whose votes would be needed by Pakistan if there were to be a plebiscite.

Horace and I had first appreciated Liaquat's ability to listen and ask pertinent questions when, in 1942, we had sought his sympathy as Secretary of the Muslim League in obtaining the co-operation of non-governmental organizations in our civil defence work. Later, when he was Prime Minister of Pakistan, we were impressed by the unemotional and rational way in which he discussed with us Indo-Pakistan problems in relation to the Punjab and Kashmir. Although some of those with whom I now talked seemed to feel that more dynamic qualities were also needed in Jinnah's successor, the succession did not appear to be overtly disputed.

The rising star seemed that of the Finance Minister, Ghulam Mohammad. In a long talk, he told me how, on arriving in Karachi on 15 August 1947, he found only one table as the equipment of his office; everything despatched from Delhi had been looted from the train. He had many friends in India but the Indian Government had done everything possible to strangle Pakistan at birth, by refusing, for example, to transfer its agreed holdings in the reserve bank or to refund excise duties. However, in the long run, Pakistan would gain from having to diversify its sources of supply and its import partners. Nehru had recently asked him to consider a customs union, but Pakistan now preferred to encourage its own industries. On Kashmir, he considered that whilst Nehru was obsessed, Patel was malicious. Immediately after Indian troops entered Kashmir in October 1947, Liaquat and Ghulam Mohammad had agreed with Mountbatten and Ismay—whilst Nehru was ill—on nineteen of the twenty-one controversial points at issue between India and Pakistan, until Patel came up to Lahore and put the brake on.

Foreign economists, he told me, had been unduly despondent in their estimates of Pakistan's viability and had not foreseen the enthusiasm and willingness of its people to make self-sacrifices.

With the lack of success of Pakistan's Kashmir policies, the press and public now sought to find achievements elsewhere. They took particular pride in the ability of Pakistan's currency to maintain parity with the US dollar when India followed Britain into a substantial devaluation in 1949. The wisdom of this controversial decision for Pakistan was to be confirmed when commodity prices soared during the Korean War. Under Ghulam Muhammad's leadership, there seemed a general optimism as to the availability of capital and of external technical assistance, which was enabling factories to be established, in order to process, in Pakistan, the jute, cotton, sugar, fruit and, other commodities which had previously been exported raw to India.

Behind the scenes, Chaudhri Muhammad Ali, who was both Secretary-General and Cabinet Secretary, had played an essential part in the consolidation of the State; coming like Ghulam Muhammad, from the Indian Audit Service, he was described by Lord Ismay as one of the ablest civil servants he had ever known.[3] As head of the Pakistan Civil Service, he ensured consistency in the new Government's policies by holding weekly meetings of the Permanent Secretaries of ministries, in parallel with the meetings of the cabinet. Wherever there was a major crisis he appeared, though not saying much, beside the responsible minister. He told me that the unavailability of the old Government of India's files to Pakistan had, on balance, proved a benefit: in novel situations, decisions were not delayed by the traditional bureaucratic searches in the files for precedents. He had also learnt that many of the Government of India's routine and time consuming requests for information, which had existed since the nineteenth century, and whose purpose no one recollected, could be discontinued. No one was more helpful to me in providing a broad understanding of Pakistan's situation, and in suggesting to those to whom he gave me introductions that they talk to me with similar frankness.

Muhammad Ali's counterpart in India was H.M. Patel, together with whom he had been mainly responsible for detailed arrangements in the months before Independence for the division

between India and Pakistan of undivided India's assets. Negotiations between the senior civil servants, nurtured in common traditions, continued to be more successful after Independence than those between politicians. This was notably demonstrated in the rapid agreement reached on the complicated question of the protection of the property rights of the refugees.

In the West Punjab, there had been open rivalries within the cabinet of the Khan of Mamdot, leading to resignations and eventually, in January 1949, to the dismissal of the Premier by the Governor, on the instructions of the Governor-General of Pakistan, on grounds of incompetence and corruption. As no other ministry could be formed, the Governor had taken over the administration himself until new elections could take place. These could not be organized until electoral rolls incorporating the refugees were compiled.

One of those who had resigned in disgust from Mamdot's cabinet had been Mumtaz Daultana, the Finance Minister, who as an old member of my Oxford College talked freely to me. He told me that in his home districts of Lahore and Multan the refugees had settled down quite well, thanks to the helpful spirit of the local people rather than to action by the Government. He had resigned because Mamdot had been incapable of making up his mind or putting down corruption. Under Governor's rule, the administration had become more efficient and the anti-corruption drive more successful. The most important programme for a new government, which must be elected on an adult suffrage, would be land reforms which would give farmers fixed tenure and thus remove the political influence of the landlords over them. The influx of refugees provided a unique opportunity for such a reform and for an expanded role for co-operatives.

He did not think that the religious party, which had been favoured by Mamdot, was at all strong. Jinnah, he said, who was very sensible on social questions, had taken a leading part in breaking down purdah by taking his sister to all public meetings. Liaquat was weaker and too obliging to the Mullahs. He also thought that Liaquat had been too amiable with the

British and that Pakistan's publicity abroad, particularly in Britain and America, had been deplorable by comparison with the well organized Indian services.

A new nation needs a history of the culture which brought it into being. This was not to be obtained off the peg. A scholarly administrator, S.M. Ikram, did more than anyone to guide my reading and to enable me to understand the role of the three great fathers of the Indian Muslim renaissance; Syed Ahmed, who had brought about a reconciliation of the Indian Muslims with Western science and learning; Ameer Ali, who had given them a pride in the progressive nature of Islam and its early civilisations; and Iqbal, with his message of a path of Islamic brotherhood, which was distinct from Western capitalism. But I did not feel capable of doing full justice to this subject, and was fortunate in persuading Professor Ahmed Ali to contribute a chapter on the Culture of Pakistan to my book.

Lahore, though its society had lost much of its sparkle with the departure of the Hindus, had the oldest university in Pakistan and was the intellectual and cultural centre of West Pakistan and a nursery of its poets. Its monuments reminded the visitor that it had once been the capital of the Mughal Empire. Among those there who could talk attractively about all aspects of Pakistan was Faiz Ahmed Faiz, the Editor of the *Pakistan Times*, which the Governor, Mudie, regarded as a hot bed of Communism. Scandalized by its criticism of Liaquat for proposing the toast of the King on his birthday and by its attack on the British Labour government for being insufficiently socialist, he wanted to penalise or suspend the paper, but was not encouraged by Liaquat. Faiz told me quite fairly that Governor's rule had at first been widely welcomed in the West Punjab because of the unpopularity and corruption of the Mamdot regime. The anti-corruption drive had been successful but feeling was now turning against the Governor's regime because the bureaucracy, though honest, was inaccessible, and because it was supposed to favour British business interests. The people, he said, were loyal to Pakistan but not to the Muslim League, which appeared to have neither principles nor a

programme. Now that the struggle against the British was over, any serious party must have an economic programme and indicate its attitude to land legislation and to capitalism. He thought that the Maulvis in the religious party which had been associated with the Mamdot ministry had lost credit and influence, that women were coming out of purdah and that few people cared about prohibition.

He was equally happy to talk to me about literature and the rising writers of the time, and about the artistic heritage of Muslim India.

Although its ministry had been unsatisfactory, the West Punjab Government had some substantial achievements, thanks to a considerable extent to pressure from the Governor. Despite the massive exodus of the Hindu and Sikh farmers, not only had the 1947 harvest been saved but there had been a bumper wheat crop in 1948. Almost all the refugee camps had been cleared. Some 5000 refugee teachers had been placed in schools and colleges to replace the departing Hindus and Sikhs. Electricity supply and road transport companies had been nationalized to keep them going when their owners had fled. Medical students had been enrolled to control a dangerous cholera epidemic in the refugee camps, which had a lower mortality rate than any previous recorded epidemics. There was now a marked improvement in revenue collection. Under Mudie's rule, corrupt civil servants were being vigorously disciplined.

In Sind the Premier, Yusuf Haroon, gave me a cheerful if not wholly optimistic, view of its progress. Still in his thirties, he came from a family of export and import merchants and described the province to me as a paradise for capitalists, though foreign investors still needed to be convinced of this. The Lower Sind Barrage would bring large new areas under cultivation. Here, as elsewhere, land reform, of which the British had been somewhat shy, was in the air though most people with whom I talked were doubtful as to whether the power of the great landlords under the existing feudal system could be broken.

The number of Muslims coming into the West Punjab from

who departed. Eventually, about a million of them had been diverted to Sind where, in a different language, culture, and system of land ownership, they appeared to be much less successfully assimilated than in the West Punjab.

Karachi before Independence had a non-Muslim majority. Though some Hindus still remained there, the influx of Muslims had greatly altered the city's character, as had the fact that the Pakistan Government had taken over administration of the city from the Government of Sind as a Federal Capital Area. Educated and moneyed Muslim refugees from all parts of India tended to make for the capital of Pakistan; and Sind's commerce, industry, and administrative services seemed less handicapped by shortage of trained personnel than those in the other provinces.

The Sind Industrial Trading Estate, a public company, was the first large scale attempt at industrial planning in the Indian sub-continent. Applications for sites had much increased since Independence; about half the factories which had started up were foreign, mostly British. There were considerable natural resources to be exploited and new development projects were being planned. The young Sind University was benefitting from the new cosmopolitan atmosphere of Karachi. In the clubs, hotels and cafés, the talk was of the future not of the past, as in Lahore. Not only the Premier, but most officials and non-officials with whom I talked saw prospects as good, provided—and this was a considerable proviso—that both the rural and working class refugees could be integrated.

The problems of the North West Frontier Province at Independence differed from those of West Punjab and Sind in that the number of Hindus and Sikhs who departed had greatly exceeded that of the Muslim refugees who had arrived. The urgent problem for Abdul Qayyum's Muslim League Government, which had succeeded its Congress inspired predecessor at Independence, had thus been how to prevent the collapse of arrangements previously handled by Hindus in this deficit province, for import and distribution of food, cloth, and other essential commodities. They seemed to have coped fairly

satisfactorily with the situation. They had also assisted sugar mills to be set-up, which considerably benefitted farmers and led to increased production. They were introducing legislation to give tenants the right to own their lands. This had lost them support of some large landlords in the legislature but a sufficient number of opposition members had crossed the floor to give the Government a majority.

In the long run the efficient replacement of the departed Hindus by Muslims in the public and private sectors depended on the improvement of the educational system. On his visit to Peshawar, Jinnah had promised the Province its own Khyber University. Primary and secondary education were being considerably expanded. Dr Brotherton, the British Principal of the Islamia College in Peshawar, told me that the present ministry had doubled the salary of primary school teachers; consequently, for the first time it was possible to select teachers for training instead of taking all who applied. Qayyum had also taken a strong personal interest in the creation of the Khyber University, a project welcomed by the Principal because the Punjab University, to which his college was affiliated, had become very inefficient since Independence. Its increased use of Urdu in place of English put the Pushtu speaking Pathans at a disadvantage.

The ebullient Director of Public Instruction, Aslam Khattak, told me that ultimately Urdu was likely to be the medium of instruction in the Khyber University. It was also intended that Urdu should replace Pushtu from the third year in primary schools. In the expansion of primary education, there was no problem in enrolling girls but many parents were reluctant to let them continue into secondary education, which they feared would spoil their prospects of marriage. The Director was introducing a system of primary education related to the rural environment, along the lines of the Wardha scheme with the somewhat startling difference that the rifle of the Frontier would be substituted for Gandhi's symbol of the spinning wheel.

The British had kept a considerable military force on the frontier which had engaged in frequent minor wars with the

tribes. The Pakistan Government considered that this presence had offended the tribes in their keenest susceptibilities, their religion and their Independence. The Pakistan Army, which was now needed on the borders with India, was withdrawn from the tribal areas shortly after Independence and its duties taken over by a locally recruited corps. When Jinnah visited the area in 1948, the tribes had enthusiastically pledged their allegiance to Pakistan. In response, Jinnah had agreed to their request that under the new regime they should continue to deal with representatives of the central, not the provincial government.

Discussing the tribal problem with the Chief Secretary, Peter Hailey of the Indian Political Service, and then with the Political Resident, Saidullah Khan, I was told that it was largely economic. The tribesmen wanted access to education, hospitals, land, and employment. Action was being taken to meet these demands. Ultimately, integration of the tribal with the settled districts was the Government's aim. Saidullah informed me that the tribesmen had gone into Kashmir primarily for religious reasons but hoped to be rewarded with land and employment on their return.

British officers occupied more of the top administrative posts than in the other Provinces, including not only that of Governor (until later in 1949) but Chief Secretary, Inspector General of Police, and Revenue Commissioner. By staying on, they had done much to prevent the services from collapse. Their presence did not seem thus far to have created the same tensions as in the West Punjab. The Frontier had been one of their favourite areas of service and their relationship with the Pathans at the personal level had on the whole been mutually appreciative. Yet the end of British rule appeared to have lessened the tensions in the tribal areas.

To the outside observer it was remarkable how both Pakistan and India had been alienated by Britain because of what they felt to be its lack of support over Kashmir. At the United Nations in New York, I had witnessed how the UK representatives had persuaded other delegations to put forward resolutions instead of taking an ostensible lead. These resolutions, however, were

generally assumed to have been drafted by Britain, being the only member of the Council with detailed knowledge of the background to the disputes between India and Pakistan on Kashmir and other issues. Almost all educated Pakistanis whom I now met believed that the British Labour government favoured India under the influence of Cripps and other long term friends of Nehru. Mountbatten was universally supposed to have intervened to cause Radcliffe unfairly to award India a frontier with Kashmir. Mountbatten's personal dislike of Jinnah was known, and much of his hostility to Pakistan was attributed to jealousy because he had not been accepted as Governor-General of both Dominions at Independence. Disappointment with Britain extended to the Commonwealth, which had shown little desire to involve itself in the Kashmir dispute and had altered its rules to enable India to continue as a member when it became a Republic. Some of this legend did not seem wholly valid. Jinnah, for example, appears to have encouraged Mountbatten to continue as Governor-General of India at independence.[4] But there was hardly anyone I met who did not believe it all.

By 1949, the USA was being turned to as the source of political support and economic and technical assistance. In Pakistan's Ministry of External Affairs, in reaction to India's apparent desire to establish a dominant role in South Asia, I found a strong interest in Pakistan's position as a major power in the Middle East. This, however, was of little interest to the East Pakistanis. As for the UN Kashmir Commission, Colonel Iskander Mirza, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Defence, told me that it had achieved nothing at all; he asked me 'whether they are all pro-Indian or only some of them'—a question which he might have withdrawn when the Commission's final report, which was implicitly somewhat critical of India's position, was published at the end of 1949. Some of the bitterness against the British came to be directed against those who were still in the service of Pakistan. The refusal of General Gracey, the acting Commander-in-Chief, to obey Jinnah's order to move troops into Kashmir to counter those flown in from India in October 1947 was particularly resented. So was the subsequent

intimation that British officers would be withdrawn from both Pakistan and Indian armies if there were hostilities between them. Naqvi, Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Defence, told me resentfully that the British Government had said that if British officers fought for the King of Pakistan against the King of India they would technically be guilty of treason. Both Pakistan defence circles and the man in the street, he said, 'had been shaken by this'. He had asked Sir William Slim, Chief of the Imperial General Staff, why the Commonwealth or UK could not guarantee the integrity of Pakistan against aggression and why Pakistan should be expected to come to the aid of Britain, if it were attacked by Russia, whereas Britain would give no reciprocal assistance in case Pakistan were attacked by India.

In 1949, articles in the Pakistan press were suggesting that if Pakistan could not do without foreign military and officers these did not have to be British.

Rajagopalachari, reflecting on his experience as Chief Minister of Madras before Independence, once said to me, 'I discovered that though the British are unimaginative masters, they make good servants'. Jinnah seemed to have felt somewhat the same. The years he spent as a practising barrister in London may have caused him, at times, to feel more at home with the reserved British professional classes than with some of his exuberant compatriots, caught up in the emotions of the struggle for Pakistan. At Independence, he appointed British ICS officers as Governors of three of Pakistan's four provinces. Sir Francis Mudie in the West Punjab had been Home Member of the Viceroy's Council and then Governor of Sind. Sir Frederick Bourne in East Bengal had been Governor of the Central Provinces. Sir George Cunningham was reluctantly brought out of retirement to return to the North West Frontier Province where he had previously served as Governor for eight years. Sir Ambrose Dundas, an ICS officer from the NWFP, became the Governor-General's representative, and virtual ruler of Baluchistan. British ICS officers were permanent secretaries in five of the Pakistan ministries and occupied many other senior posts in the central and provincial administrations. They held

the highest positions in the armed services, in which there were proportionately a considerably larger number of British officers than in India.

The extraordinary position of the British under Jinnah was illustrated when the key meetings which decided that Pakistan should support the tribal invasion of Kashmir were attended, in addition to Jinnah and Liaquat by only three other people, all British, Gracey, Mudie, and Cunningham.[5]

In Pakistan's first year, the presence of the British civil and military officers was seen as invaluable in maintaining the services when so many non-Muslims had suddenly disappeared and when, in spite of the arrival of Muslims from India, there were an inadequate number of Pakistanis qualified for senior positions. Their loyalty to, and enthusiasm for, Pakistan was evident. In Jinnah's lifetime, the position of the British Governors was particularly strong because they were known to have his confidence; he used to stay with Mudie on his frequent visits to Lahore. After Jinnah's death, though Liaquat, an Oxford graduate and Nazim-ud-Din, a Cambridge graduate were anglophiles, the British Governors' position was perceptibly weakened, mainly as a result of the Kashmir controversy.

Cunningham had initially been bypassed by his ministers in arranging transport for the tribesmen through the NWFP into Kashmir. His personal popularity on the Frontier was great but he was probably not sorry to have medical reasons to retire after seven months. Jinnah appointed as his successor Sir Ambrose Dundas, who only remained for a year and was replaced by a Pakistani in 1949.

In the West Punjab, the contribution of Mudie in dealing with the near collapse of the Government under the impact of six million refugees had been vital, working closely with Jinnah and Liaquat, who both came up to Lahore from Karachi to support him. After Jinnah's death, Mudie repeatedly implored Liaquat to instruct him to dismiss Mamdot as Premier because of the corruption in the Government, which he failed to check and in which, Mamdot and his family were alleged to be involved. When Mudie took over the administration, he cleansed

it vigorously and made it more effective but insisted, in spite of Liaquat's reservations, in having Mamdot prosecuted. He thus exposed himself, for Mamdot persuaded the Provincial Muslim League Committee to demand his recall. Liaquat proposed a compromise by which Advisers would be appointed to assist the Governor and who would be nominated by the Provincial Muslim League Committee. Mudie refused to accept this and resigned. With a strange insensitivity to the danger of prolonging the political crisis, which was front page news, he proposed, however, to continue in office for two months until a convenient boat sailed from Bombay. This was too much even for the easy going Liaquat, who told him to quit Government House promptly.[6]

Bourne also retired from the Governorship of East Pakistan in 1949. All three British Governors were replaced by Pakistanis.

At a lower level, British former ICS officers still stayed on, hurt that despite their devoted work for Pakistan, they were being traduced in the press, but somewhat consoled by knighthoods and other decorations for which they were generously recommended to the Queen by the Government of Pakistan. The programme of replacement of the British in the armed forces, though for technical reasons it could not take place as rapidly as that of the civilians, was accelerated after the British Government threatened to withdraw them in event of war between India and Pakistan.

The themes of Jinnah's public statements throughout Pakistan's crucial first year, during which he was Governor-General, had always been the same. Loyalty to Pakistan must come before provincial attachments; corruption must be rooted out, particularly in government; civil servants must be loyal to the State, not to political parties; the position of the minorities must be safeguarded; able young men should aim for careers in business instead of wanting safe posts as government clerks.

Towards some of these objectives there had been evident progress, towards others little. Jinnah had not perhaps been sufficiently aware of linguistic susceptibilities, nor of the constant need to make East Pakistan feel that it was being treated

as fairly as the West. Yet a year after his death, despite the almost universally gloomy predictions of those in Britain, the USA and elsewhere, who wrote about its prospects before Independence,[7] Pakistan's viability appeared to have been established short of a war with its powerful neighbour.

The major task which its leaders appeared to face in 1949, apart from settlement of the Kashmir question, was to frame a constitution which satisfied both its Western and Eastern wings and to work out the conventions in which it should be implemented.

NOTES

1. M.A. Jinnah, *Speeches as Governor General of Pakistan,* Karachi, 1949, pp. 4, 22.
2. *Constituent Assembly of Pakistan Debates Official Report*, 7–12 March 1949.
3. Lord Ismay, *Memoirs*, London, 1960, p. 425.
4. *Transfer of Power*, vol. 11, London, 1982, p. 902, Liaquat Ali-Mountbatten, 4 July 1947; p. 947, Minutes of Viceroy's Staff Meeting, 7 July 1947.
5. A.N. Mitchell, *Sir George Cunningham*, London, 1968, pp. 141–144.
6. Some of these events were known when I was in Pakistan. Mudie's great abilities and considerable tactlessness are documented in his papers in the British Library, London, Oriental and India Office Collection in MSS EUR f 164/48 and other files.
7. A number of these are quoted in the Introduction to Richard Symonds, *The Making of Pakistan*, London, 1950, Karachi, 1966, 1976.

10

EPILOGUE

It may be recollected that in November 1947 I had arranged with the President of Azad Kashmir, Sirdar Ibrahim, that non-Muslims should be enabled to leave. At the same time Horace had investigated what was being done to protect Muslims on the other side, in Jammu. After my illness, Horace returned to Jammu with Agnes MacLean of the Friends Service Unit, who had been a social worker in Bombay for twenty-five years. Sirdar Ibrahim now demanded that the Hindus and Sikhs in Azad Kashmir should be exchanged for an equal number of Muslims from Jammu. Four hundred from each side were exchanged in an operation organized by the Friends Service Unit under the supervision of the International Red Cross, until further exchanges were suspended because some trucks supplied from Jammu were not returned. Eventually, the camps in Azad Kashmir were cleared by April 1948.

Agnes MacLean, who was the moving spirit in the operation, not only cared for the refugees from Azad Kashmir; she was also successful in the rescue of many Muslim girls abducted by Hindus and Sikhs in Jammu and in restoring them to relations either in Pakistan or in Srinagar, where Muslims were so predominant in the population that those from Jammu could feel secure.[1]

After the assassination of Liaquat Ali, some of those who succeeded him and whom I had admired in their previous roles, seemed miscast. Neither Nazim-ud-Din, a respected Governor-General, nor Chaudhri Muhammad Ali, a very effective head of the Civil Service, appeared to have the charisma necessary for Pakistan's Prime Minister when the foundations of the State

were being established. It was sad to see Pakistan, which in the '50s and '60s was hailed in the West for its remarkable economic growth, frustrated by its inability to evolve a political system which could provide a secure framework for economic and social progress.

I returned to Pakistan later in my career only on brief missions. One of these, in 1966, was on behalf of the UK Ministry of Overseas Development to evaluate what use had subsequently been made of the professional studies and training undertaken by Pakistanis in Britain. After interviewing some 150 former students and their current supervisors, I concluded that on the whole very good use of their experience had been made. However, many of those interviewed had soon become out of date on new developments and techniques in their fields. I recommended, therefore, that a small element should be included in future grants in order to enable them after their return to receive British professional journals; these would not only provide information on new developments in their field but have the advantage for the donors of drawing new British equipment and publications to their attention. When I discussed this recommendation with the Pakistani official with whom I was collaborating, I realized how well the Pakistani bureaucrats still understood the mentality of their counterparts in Whitehall. He laughed and said, 'This is an excellent idea, but I am so confident that it will not be accepted that I promise we will put up a statue to you if it is'. He was right. The bureaucratic reaction was that periodicals could only be provided to institutions, not individuals, ignoring the fact that for a forester or an agricultural officer the nearest specialized library might be hundreds of miles away from their duty station.

Before I left Delhi in January 1948, I went to thank G.D. Birla, in whose house I had been nursed. He mentioned that the Government wanted to turn his house into a museum which was, he considered, somewhat inconvenient and unnecessary, for Gandhi had been assassinated not in the house but in the garden, in which they were very welcome to have a site for a monument. He asked me if I could think of any helpful

precedents. Abraham Lincoln came to mind. When I was in Washington shortly afterwards I visited Fords Theatre where President Lincoln had been shot. The precedent was not, alas, a useful one for me to report to Mr Birla. Ford had reopened his theatre a week after the murder. The scandalized public broke his windows and he had to close permanently. The theatre became an army stable, then it fell derelict until under one of President F.D. Roosevelt's New Deal projects, unemployed former students converted it into a museum.

Some years later, when visiting New Delhi, I found that Birla House had indeed become a museum. Outside it was a mural on which were painted simple and charming scenes taken from Gandhi's autobiography. Some of these were of episodes which he had so amusingly described to me of his life as a student in London. One showed him wearing a tail-coat and playing a violin. In another, he was dancing with a lady of dubious respectability. When I next visited Birla House, the mural was covered with sacking because a member of the legislature had complained that it was disrespectful to Gandhi's memory. It was sad to see the Mahatma treated with such ponderous lack of imagination. In contrast, a statement which he had made in 1936 to the Gandhi Seva Sangha (Gandhi Service Society) came to mind:

> There is no such thing as Gandhism. I do not claim to have originated any new principle or doctrine. I have simply tried in my own way to apply the eternal truths to our daily life and problems... The opinions I have formed and the conclusions I have arrived at are not by any means final. I may change them tomorrow if I find better ones![2]

In his lifetime, even his closest Indian associates were sometimes baffled by his changes of opinion and apparent inconsistencies and were unable to reconcile his teaching with the practical decisions required on political, economic, and social questions. A few of them, however, came to adopt a similar elliptic style. One of these, Morarji Desai, at an advanced age became Prime Minister of India in 1978, defeating Indira Gandhi in a campaign in which an important issue had been her

Government's population programme in which sterilization had been enforced in an attempt to lower the birthrate. After the election, the United Nations Fund for Population Activities was invited in 1978 to send a mission, of which I was rapporteur, to discuss ways to plan and execute an effective but acceptable population policy.

It was a fascinating assignment, involving examination not only of motivation and delivery of family planning services, but ways in which length of school attendance, systems of land ownership, maternal and child health, employment policies, and many other social factors could affect population growth. I carried an introduction from Horace to Morarji, who sat chatting with me about Gandhi for an hour, waving aside secretaries who streamed in with urgent papers.

Our mission spent many hours with Government of India officials discussing the projects which the United Nations might support and the amount of money which it could provide. As usual, the sum which the recipient suggested exceeded what the donor felt it could afford, but it was tacitly understood that, as in the bazaar, agreement would eventually be reached somewhere between the two figures.

We were all summoned from these discussions to meet Morarji, who was not only Prime Minister but temporarily in charge of the sensitive portfolio of Health and Family Planning. He welcomed us by declaring: 'First I should make it clear that India does not need foreign aid'. The dismay was not only on the faces of the Indian officials present, as the ground was shot from under them in their claims for a few more million dollars, but it would have been awkward too for our mission to return to New York, and explain why it had taken us a month to discover that the Government which was our largest client in the world did not want our help. So when we went back to the conference table, neither side ever referred to the Prime Minister's remarks and in due course we agreed on a compromise figure to finance a five-year aid programme.

Not only for Morarji Desai but for most people who were associated with Gandhi, his influence never quite disappeared

from their lives. For much of the period between 1950 and 1979, I served as a Resident Representative of the United Nations Technical Assistance Board and its successor, the United Nations Development Programme, in various countries in Asia, Africa, and Europe. Our business was to help to plan and deliver, through the United Nations and its Specialized Agencies, technical assistance to developing countries in agriculture, industry, health, education, and whatever other fields it was needed. This involved study of a wide variety of social and economic factors and occasionally, I would find myself looking back to Gandhi's teaching and speculating on its relevance to what we were trying to do.

His vision of the village as becoming almost self-supporting has not been fulfilled; nor have efforts to promote village industries and check the drift to the towns often been successful. Yet, it could be said, that over the years United Nations conferences became considerably more aware of the huge, rapidly increasing, and appallingly unhealthy slums of the Third World and came to see the need for a better deal for rural populations in an effort to stem the tide. E.F. Schumacher's Intermediate Technology Group were frankly Gandhi's disciples in promoting cheap and simple tools and devices which improved the life of the villager even while Schumacher himself somewhat bizarrely earned his living by working for the National Coal Board.

Little remained from Gandhi's enthusiasm that every one should engage in home spinning, but its spirit survived wherever the message of the dignity of labour, which he inherited from Ruskin and shared with Tolstoy, had been spread in other forms. His example of simplicity in public life was still one to which a minority everywhere could look for inspiration in rejecting prevailing values by which corruption was tolerated and favours to the family were considered more important than duty to the community and the state.

In health and nutrition, Gandhi had advised his fellow workers not to take the easy way of making friends by distributing free medicines but to concentrate on preventive measures, simple

improvements in sanitation and sensible diet. This kind of approach, reversing previous policies by which most government health resources had been concentrated on urban based curative services, gradually came to be adopted by the World Health Organisation and UNICEF.

His ideas on education appeared heretical to the establishment of his time. He was unenthusiastic about study abroad, and Western literary curricula in Indian universities; he wanted all education to be carried out in local languages. By the time of his death, such ideas were coming to be accepted by a number of internationally eminent educational reformers, and UNESCO incorporated in its Fundamental Education and other programmes his principle that education should be related to the economic and social conditions of the local environment.

His concern about India's dependence on food imports and his confidence that self-sufficiency was possible if the correct agricultural methods were adopted was justified by the Green Revolution in India and in other Asian countries, when new techniques in rice and wheat cultivation were introduced, with the aid of FAO.

As for social policies, he regarded crime as a problem of health and held prayer meetings in jails many years before the Pope did so. His somewhat conservative ideas on the role of women in public life had gradually become more liberal when women insisted on taking an even more active role in the nationalist movement than he had foreseen. As a consequence of the part they had played, women were given equal rights with men in the franchise and in the civil service when India became independent. Feminists have criticized him for not going further, and indeed in some ways his style remained Victorian all his life, though that of a progressive Victorian. His profoundest contribution on this question was made in teaching that women should not be seen just as objects of social reform but as active agents of social change. His views on sex, however, were depressing, holding that it was a duty not a pleasure, and that married couples should cease to sleep together after they

had a few children. He was also opposed to contraception in all its forms. Few people anywhere heeded this part of his teaching.

Although a number of his economic and social ideas have not stood up to the test of time, and some indeed were quirky , his massive *Collected Works*, with their comprehensive subject index, can still reveal initiatives which are remarkably relevant to our times, provided that they are approached in his own spirit of 'never take anything for Gospel truth even from a Mahatma'.

If one is in contact with a saint, however occasionally, something may rub off. One may not practise what one absorbed, but uneasiness can lurk in the conscience. I had experienced how Gandhi, at a time of acute anxiety, pressure, and sadness, had found it possible every day for a month to chat and encourage and joke with a sick and then convalescing young Englishman of no importance. After this, whatever position one occupied later, one knew—even if one did not live up to it—that there can never be an excuse for failing to find time for anyone who comes for help or advice. One was guarded too from ideas of grandeur. In a career as a United Nations representative in various countries, it had to be recognized that rules of protocol are essential. Yet at heart, it was difficult to take very seriously systems of titles, honours and decorations, the significance of where people were placed at diplomatic dinners and the assertion of their importance by the size of their residence or the length of their car. For the most impressive person I had known had owned only his few garments and the wooden monkeys which stood on his desk to remind him to hear no evil, see no evil and speak no evil.

One lesson to be learnt from his example seemed that there is no shame in admitting to changing an opinion in light of new evidence. How could Gandhi be expected to be rigidly consistent when he called his autobiography *The Story of my Experiments with Truth*? It was his openness to other views, as well as his inspiration, kindness, and sense of humour, which made it delightful to be with him.

Eventually, I even came to understand why he had rebuked me for being a literalist. Some of the exasperation of British

politicians and officials might have been avoided if they had realized that they were being confronted with parables and allegories in much the same way as they met and accepted them in their own Christian New Testament, by which Gandhi was much influenced. This can be illustrated in the homely way in which he talked to uneducated women, urging them to give up their jewellery to help in the campaign for independence. He told them that their ear and nose rings were instruments of slavery by which they could be led by men. When they complained that the homespun cloth which he asked them to use, was coarse and unattractive, he replied that he had never known a woman to throw away her baby because it was ugly. Discussing the roles of men and women in the independence movement, he would remind them that a cart could only run smoothly if both wheels were in order.

It does not seem appropriate for Gandhi to be written about solemnly, any more than Saint Francis of Assisi. As his Quaker friend Agatha Harrison remarked, he was 'a great tease'. In particular, he thought it good for the young to be teased, which I suspect I did not realize when I was young. In 1969, a large public meeting was held at Friends' House in London to celebrate the 100th anniversary of his birth. Philip Noel Baker, Lord and Lady Mountbatten's daughter, Patricia, Horace and I and others each spoke for five minutes, and Dame Sybil Thorndike read from his memoirs in her wonderful booming voice, like a bell sounding over a silent lake. But a quiet man whom none of us recognized stole the show. He turned out to have been Gandhi's jailer many years earlier at Yeravda. He told us how, when he had been in charge of Gandhi, he himself had suffered from a severe stomach ache which defied all conventional pills and medicines. Observing this, Gandhi offered to send out for something which would help. A nameless brown powder arrived which, mixed in milk and water, achieved a rapid and complete cure. Overjoyed, the jailer asked for the prescription. Gandhi suggested that it would be better for him not to know it, but when pressed and pressed he finally explained: 'It is cow dung'. How vividly I could imagine him

then with that twinkle behind his glasses which made us all not only revere but love him, even if sometimes we felt unable to follow his teaching.

Lord Attlee, in his retirement, often said that the achievement of which he was proudest was giving India its independence.[3] As a member of the Simon Statutory Commission on Indian Constitutional Reform, he had spent several months in India in 1928–29 and had acquired a considerable knowledge of the underlying issues, on which he had subsequently kept up to date. As Prime Minister, the reins of Britain's Indian policy were firmly in his hands despite the eagerness of Cripps to offer his services. It was Attlee's own decision in 1947 to cut the knot of the endless and fruitless constitutional discussions by announcing that Britain would leave India in eighteen months time.

Though Attlee was responsible for the strategy, the tactics were Mountbatten's, those of a dashing naval commander who compressed the process of withdrawal into four months instead of eighteen. Studying the *Transfer of Power* papers, the reader cannot fail to be impressed by the energy and resourcefulness with which he hustled almost all concerned into co-operation in the final arrangements, with the important exception of the rulers of Kashmir and Hyderabad.

From the point of view of British interests, the subsequent complacency of Attlee and Mountbatten is understandable. The withdrawal from the Indian Empire had been accomplished without loss of British lives and with the goodwill of its peoples, though the latter was perhaps less true in Pakistan than in India. It could be compared very favourably with the record of the Dutch in Indonesia and the French in Indo-China, who left only after losing bitter wars against the nationalists who enjoyed considerable sympathy in much of the rest of the world.

In most of India—even unexpectedly in Bengal—the succession was peaceful. In the Punjab, however, over a million people are estimated to have died and the lives of many more were ruined. The governments of India and of the Punjab had plenty of warning of the intentions of the Sikhs and the likely

reaction of the Muslims. Sir Evan Jenkins, Governor of the Punjab, repeatedly urged Mountbatten that the Award establishing the boundaries between East and West Punjab should be announced before Independence Day in order that action could be taken to maintain law and order by transferring the officers who had opted for India, and those who had opted for Pakistan, to the appropriate districts.

So, far from accelerating publication of the Award, Mountbatten pressed Radcliffe to postpone it. When Radcliffe refused to do so, the Viceroy would not admit to having read the report or allow it to be circulated until after Independence. In his final Personal Report to the British government, he was explicit in explaining that the postponement had been made in favour of British interests at the expense of those of the Punjabis He wrote:

> From the purely administrative point of view, there were considerable advantages in immediate publication, so that the new boundaries could take effect from 15th August and the officials of the right Dominion could be in their places before that date. However it was obvious all along that the later we postponed publication the less would the inevitable odium react upon the British.[4]

So the Independence celebrations were not spoilt by the inevitable protests which could be expected from both Indian and Pakistan governments when they learnt of the awards in the Punjab and Bengal. As the Viceroy happily reported to the Secretary of State, the rejoicing in Delhi resounded with cries of 'Mountbatten Ki Jai'.[5] Meanwhile in the Punjab, the successor Government of the East Punjab had until the last moment established no capital, refusing to move out of Lahore, to which it had vainly made a claim. Throughout the two new provinces, law and order broke down because it had been impossible to make administrative arrangements for the succession without knowing where the frontiers would run.

Though there would have been much loss of life in any case, it was considerably increased by the failure to publish the boundaries before independence. The ghosts of those who

perished for this reason deserve to be remembered whenever the British consider their record in India and the manner of their departure.

NOTES

1. Friends House Library, London, FSC File 4710.
2. Mira Behn, *The Spirit's Pilgrimage*, London, 1960, p. 200.
3. F. Beckett, *Clem Attlee*, London, 1997, p. 83.
4. *Transfer of Power*, vol. 12, p. 611. Minutes of Viceroy's Staff Meeting, 9 August 1947, p. 760, Viceroy's Personal Report, 16 August 1947.
5. Ibid., 12, Viceroy's Personal Report, p. 772, 16 August 1947.

APPENDIX

THE FRIENDS AMBULANCE UNIT IN THE BENGAL FAMINE OF 1943

Since this book went to the publishers, my attention has been drawn to the existence in the archives of Friends House, London, of letters which I wrote to our London headquarters whilst Officer in Charge of the F.A.U., India Section, in Calcutta during the Bengal Famine of 1943.

I did not keep a diary at that time. Reading the letters reminds me how unusual our position was during the Bengal Famine. This resulted from the role which we had acquired in civil defence. On the one hand, because of our experience elsewhere, we were working within the Bengal Government setting up civil defence organizations, some of which could be turned over to famine relief. On the other, we were helping voluntary organizations which were reluctant to collaborate with Government to prepare for civil defence activities. Our co-operation with them had already extended into the emergency relief work which the government asked us to undertake in Midnapore after the cyclone in the autumn of 1942.

In the famine we were operating in several different ways. Firstly, we were running our own relief projects with the aid of local Indian volunteers who were mainly organizing feeding centres for children aged 3 to 12 and thus, above the age eligible for care by the Red Cross. Secondly, we made grants to support the feeding projects of various voluntary organizations, whilst keeping ourselves informed on their progress and problems through inspection visits. Thirdly, two of our members were lent to the Indian Red Cross to organize large scale programmes of milk distribution to mothers and infants. Fourthly, several of

our members worked within the Bengal Government on an honorary basis, administering food control and food distribution and reporting to the Government on the needs of different areas in Calcutta and its suburbs. As the position changed, we supplied children's winter clothing as well as food, and financed and organized work centres for destitute women. We were thus able to draw not only on our direct experience but on that of the voluntary organizations with whom we were working when we made recommendations in notes to, and interviews with, the Governor, ministers and officials in Bengal and with the Government of India, as well as in occasional articles in the press. Our partners covered a wide spectrum including the Red Cross, Christian missions, political parties and social and women's organizations: there were also *ad hoc* local committees, started up by doctors, lawyers, politicians and other people of good will.

In general, we sought to inject humanity into bureaucracy, in particular by trying to insure that the government's relief measures should not cause families to be broken up.

Prominent among our recommendations was the need for co-ordination within the Bengal Government Secretariat and for additional relief staff to be appointed to assist the District Magistrates and Subdivisional Officers outside Calcutta. Grievous as the famine was, it was exacerbated by the Government's dismal public relations. Its lack of frankness about its relief measures, we suggested, was making other provinces reluctant to release food grains to Bengal. Looking ahead, we pointed out the need for a massive extension of medical services as starvation left the population with lower resistance to disease. Eventually indeed more people probably died of disease than malnutrition. Most of us on our travels found ourselves pressed in emergencies into giving injections and inoculations. This was no more irregular than our cash payments, made to reactivate Government staff in remote areas, who had refused to continue to work because their salaries were long unpaid. As the relief phase merged into rehabilitation we pointed out that pauperization through free doles was reducing landless destitute

people almost to imbecility and pressed for paid work to be made available.

Arriving back in Britain, Horace Alexander was not only invaluable in raising money for us but in arousing recognition, when Churchill was unsympathetic to sparing shipping for food to India, of Britain's moral responsibilities. To do this, he wrote vigorous letters to *The Times, the Guardian, News Chronicle, Spectator* and other papers. He also went to the USA to urge the American Friends Service Committee to increase its aid. As a consequence, a senior American Quaker came out to investigate, with whom I visited the Viceroy, Governor, ministers and officials; subsequently considerable financial help and supplies arrived together with American volunteers to join us.

In tasks which were harrowing because millions of lives were at stake, we were sustained by a wave of compassion. Financial contributions, often sometimes from people who could ill afford them, came in from Britain, USA, Canada, Australia, South Africa and India itself. British army officers and men gave up their leave to work with us, often in squalid conditions. Reinforcements reached us from Britain at the beginning of 1943. Indian colleagues, both on a long term and short term basis, were invaluable. In 1944, the Americans arrived. Our representative in Dacca was the splendid Irish veteran Arthur Moore, who had been editor of the *Calcutta Statesman* until the Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow, persuaded his directors to dismiss him for criticizing the Government. He was to turn up again to work with Friends in the post Independence disturbances in Delhi in 1947.

The Governor, ministers and officials of the Bengal Government, as well as the Government of India from the Viceroy downwards after Wavell arrived, were accessible and attentive to our recommendations. On some problems and procedures, however, we could make no impression. The communal ratio, applied strictly by the Bengal Public Service Commission, had such a crippling effect in holding up recruitment of urgently needed staff that at one point we considered withdrawing our members from working within

Government offices. The Bengal Government's cooperation with voluntary organizations too was mostly ineffective and luke warm. Although the responsible minister, T.N. Mukerjee, chaired meetings with them, no agenda was circulated. Without this, many representatives were able to use the occasion for broad attacks on the Government instead of constructive discussion. Perhaps most discouraging of all, nothing, it seemed, would, or could, be done to speed up the machinery by which requests to spend money on urgent relief needs made their way up the ladder of authority through the District administration and then took their leisurely course round the Secretariat in Calcutta. Maladministration seemed to be responsible for as many deaths as shortage of food.

The letters reveal a sombre consciousness that as a voluntary organization our own efforts, however hard we worked, could only assist a very small proportion of the people affected. When it came to influencing the Government to take measures which might save far more lives, we usually encountered agreement with our suggestions but often failure to carry them out because of a paralysis of the Government machine. Personally I should have had a more agreeable life if I had continued to head a relief organization with virtually no restrictions on the use of its quite considerable resources and which was met with co-operation and good will on all sides. Yet it would have seemed cowardly to refuse the Governor's plea to help from inside to overcome the inertia in the administration which we had attacked as the major obstacle to relief and rehabilitation.

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