

inflexible sense of justice they had a profound admiration, had made promises which had led them to expect increasing independence; but now they found that the "strings" which Allenby had reserved for the High Commissioner had been converted by Lloyd into iron chains—not, I may say, my own words but the precise phrase used to me by more than one Egyptian Minister.

Why had Lord Lloyd, who in India had been quite liberal and had always acted in the spirit of the constitution under which he governed as well as the letter, shown so different a face in Egypt? Why had he indeed acted not as a High Commissioner but as a Viceroy with plenary powers? May the answer not be that when he was in India as Governor of Bombay, the Montagu-Chelmsford constitution, whose principles he applied liberally and generously, limited home rule to certain clearly specified spheres of activity and administration, and within those well-defined limits there was neither need nor excuse for Lloyd to interfere? But in Egypt the glove came off his iron hand; for there the whole relationship was fluid and indeterminate, and there were no clear-cut lines of demarcation to divide and define the respective spheres of authority of the King and his Ministers and of the British High Commissioner. The Egyptians considered that their country was an independent sovereign State and that the King and his advisers were absolutely their own masters, not only in all matters of internal, executive, day-to-day control, and administration of their country's affairs, but indeed in external relations, while the High Commissioner's function was merely to watch Great Britain's interests and see that Egypt took no action and joined no diplomatic combination hostile or injurious to Britain. George Lloyd on the other hand saw no clear definition of his powers or of those of the King and his Ministers, and he realized that if he did not keep a close watch and a firmly guiding hand the whole team might get out of control.

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In the summer of 1930 the Simon Commission issued its report. Its analysis of India's political history under British rule and of her contemporary situation was as masterly as it was lucid; it was, however, on the constructive side of its task that the Commission's report fell sharply short of the high expectations and hopes that

its appointment had aroused. It particularly disappointed the Congress leaders, and their resentment of it was loudly and unequivocally expressed. Lord Irwin, the Viceroy, was on leave in England in the earlier part of 1930, and when he returned to India he announced that His Majesty's Government proposed to convene a Round Table Conference in London to consider the future of the country and to reform its constitution. The announcement came at a time of considerable tension, when a civil disobedience campaign, launched by Mahatma Gandhi, was at its height. It eased the tension for the time being; and the Viceroy was able to receive, in a calmer political atmosphere than had seemed possible a few weeks before, a representative delegation¹ to discuss the date and the personnel of the Round Table Conference, and the question of an amnesty for political offenders gaoled in connection with the civil disobedience campaign. Agreement, however, was not reached at this preliminary meeting; Mahatma Gandhi withdrew, and refused to give any undertaking that Congress would attend the Round Table Conference. The Indian National Congress in session at Lahore, passed a resolution in favour of a renewed resort to civil disobedience.

The Viceroy pertinaciously maintained his hopeful, sympathetic, and wise attitude. If Congress would not, at the outset at any rate, co-operate in the attempt to find a way out of India's political perplexities, the attempt would still be made. As many eminent and representative leaders of Indian political thought and feeling as possible—outside the ranks of Congress—would be invited. Mr. Nehru, in his *Autobiography* which was published in 1936, when the whole issue of Indian independence was still unsettled, made some caustic observations about the personal qualifications of the delegates to the Conference; in the longer perspective of history, however, it can be seen as a remarkable assemblage of men and women of widely differing background and outlook, all genuinely anxious to discover a peaceful and honourable path to the independence and self-government which had explicitly been proclaimed to be the objectives of Britain's rule in India.

¹ The members of the delegation were: Mahatma Gandhi, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Pandit Motilal Nehru, Mr. M. A. Jinnah, and Mr. V. J. Patel, then President of the Indian National Assembly.

The British representatives included the Prime Minister, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald; the Lord Chancellor, Lord Sankey; the Secretary of State for India, Mr. Wedgwood Benn;¹ and—representing the Conservative Opposition—Sir Samuel Hoare,² who was later, in some years that were crucial to India's destiny, to be Secretary of State for India; and Lord Reading, a Liberal leader and former Viceroy. The British-Indian delegation, of which I had been appointed a member, included Muslim, Hindu, and Parsee representatives drawn from many shades of political opinion and other delegates representing numerous smaller communities; among the Muslims, Mr. M. A. Jinnah, Sir Muhammad Shafi, Sir Zafrullah Khan, and Maulana Muhammad Ali; and two women delegates, the Begum Shah Nawaz and Mrs. Subbaroyan. Among the Hindus were Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, the Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, Sir Chimanlal Setalvad, Mr. M. R. Jayakar, and Dewan Bahadur Rama Mudaliyar; among the Parsees were Sir Phiroze Sethna, Sir Cowasji Jehangir, and Sir H. P. Mody. Mr. Ambedkar, himself born an "untouchable", represented the Depressed Classes, and Sir Henry Gidney, the Anglo-Indian community. The representation of ruling princes was as impressive as it was stately, including as it did many of the bearers of the greatest and most famous names in Indian chivalry. The Maharajah Gaekwar of Baroda was their leader, and others with him were the Maharajahs of Bikaner, Patiala, Bhopal, Kashmir, Rewa, and Jamnagar—better known perhaps to millions of British citizens as the unforgettable "Ranji" of cricket fame. The Princes were accompanied, many of them, by their Diwans—their Prime Ministers—who included statesmen of the quality and distinction of Sir Akbar Hydari and Sir Mirza Ismail, and other eminent men.

We assembled in London in the autumn of 1930. I had the honour of being elected leader of the Muslim delegation. We established our headquarters in the Ritz Hotel, where it has long been my custom to stay whenever I am in London. It is no formality to say that it was an honour to be chosen to lead so notable a body of men—including personalities of the calibre of Mr. M. A. Jinnah, later to be the creator of Pakistan and the Quaid-i-Azam, or Sir Muhammed Zafrullah Khan, for many

¹ Now Lord Stansgate.

² Now Lord Templewood.

years India's representative at numerous international conferences and first Foreign Minister of Pakistan, or my old and tried friend, Sir Muhammad Shafi, one of the founders of the Muslim League.

The happiness of being thus chosen was for me one of the many joys of an exceptionally happy, as well as eventful, period of my life. It was the first twelvemonth of my marriage to Mlle. Andrée Carron, and I had also had the by no means negligible experience of winning the Derby with Blenheim.

Later, then, in this—for me—memorable year the full first Round Table Conference began with a formal inaugural session in the House of Lords, presided over by His Majesty King George V. My colleagues then accorded me the further honour of electing me to be Chairman of the British-Indian section of the Conference, that is, of all the Indian representatives except the ruling princes, who had come, of course, as their own representatives and in their own capacity as the sovereigns of their various Principalities and States.

The King, not long recovered from his extremely serious illness, made of his opening speech a most moving appeal to us all to contemplate the momentous character of the task to which we had set our hands. He said:

I shall follow the course of your proceedings with the closest and most sympathetic interest, not indeed without anxiety but with a greater confidence. The material conditions which surround the lives of my subjects in India affect me nearly, and will be ever present in my thoughts during your forthcoming deliberations. I have also in mind the just claims of majorities and minorities, of men and women, of town-dwellers and tillers of the soil, of landlords and tenants, of the strong and the weak, of the rich and poor, of the races, castes, and creeds of which the body politic is composed. For those things I care deeply. I cannot doubt that the true foundation of self-government is in the fusion of such divergent claims into mutual obligations and in their recognition and fulfilment. It is my hope that the future government of India based on its foundation will give expression to her honourable aspirations.

Other eloquent and stirring orations followed; and the Conference, moving to St. James's Palace, settled down to its complex and formidable task. We achieved a surface harmony, but underneath there were deep and difficult rifts of sentiment and of

outlook whose effect was bound to be felt from the outset. In order to understand this, it is necessary to restate briefly the political situation and the state of Indo-British relations as they both stood in this autumn of 1930. The Simon Commission's Report advanced a scheme which denied central responsibility and also relegated the idea of a federation of India to a distant and undefined future. This could not really be satisfactory to anybody, for it offered not a workable compromise but an evasion of an existing—indeed a pressing—political conflict. For while the whole drive of the Hindu movement to self-government was concentrated on the idea of a strong central government and the establishment of an immediate democracy, conceived solely in terms of numbers, in which religious differences counted as such and as nothing more, Muslim opinion had crystallized steadily in favour of a distribution of powers from the centre to virtually self-governing and autonomous provincial governments. Finally, no one had as yet evolved the conception of an All-India federation in which the States would be partners. Therefore none of the major parties at the Conference arrived with any definite scheme—only with conflicting claims. The British Government, not unnaturally, were somewhat at sea when presented with what seemed to be a series of contradictory and irreconcilable claims and counter-claims.

The first essential task, as I saw it, was to find some way of bridging the gulf between the Muslim and Hindu sections of the British-Indian delegation. Only when we had achieved that bridge did it seem to me that we could offer to the British representatives our conjoint proposals for the constitutional development of India.

Pre-eminent among those whose efforts were devoted with zeal and enthusiasm to the same or closely similar ends was my friend, His Highness the Nawab of Bhopal. He was an outstanding figure among the ruling princes of his time—a devout Muslim, a man of driving energy and will-power, of great physical strength, a sportsman and athlete and a first-class polo player. He was also a convinced Indian nationalist, eager to throw off India's semi-colonial yoke, and do away with her dependent status. He agreed with me entirely that, if we of British India could not find ways and means of settling our own differences of opinion, we could

not go to His Majesty's Government with any formulated set of demands; and this was leaving out of consideration altogether the protected States. From the first moment that we met at the Nawab's house, it was my deep conviction that this was what mattered most, which made me a champion of a Muslim-Hindu understanding about our ultimate view of an independent India—on the one hand a truly confederate State, or on the other a State such as Canada, in which the principal and overriding authority and power are reserved for the central government.

As a preliminary to reaching agreement with our Hindu colleagues we had to secure agreement inside our own Muslim delegation. At first several of the Muslim delegates, in particular Mr. Jinnah, were—as they had long been before the Conference—suspicious of the idea of federation. Its dangers were, I well knew, neither remote nor unimportant; to associate a growing democracy with a number of States in which personal rule was the established and, as it then seemed, inalienable custom, might well be a risky as well as a complex innovation; and also there was the danger that since the majority of ruling princes were Hindu, there might be a serious diminution of the political influence of the Muslim community within the federation as a whole. However, I was convinced that, whatever the temporary difficulties and risks involved in a federal scheme, it still offered the best and the most acceptable solution of India's political problems, that it offered an opportunity which might never occur again, and that if it required compromise to make it effective, that would be a small price to pay for its obvious and numerous advantages.

I am happy to think that when within the Muslim delegation we had made our decision in favour of federation, Mr. Jinnah, who had been its doughtiest opponent, was an inflexibly loyal and irreproachably helpful colleague throughout all the subsequent discussions and negotiations.

Since the ruling princes had signified their assent to some federal form of government, it remained now only to win the agreement of the Hindu representatives. I strove to convince them that if they made the concession of accepting the principle of a federated and not a united India they—and we—would reap the harvest of the benefits of immediate and large-scale political advancement for the country as a whole. The guarantees which we asked

consisted of: a truly federal constitution; undertakings that the Muslim majorities in the Punjab and Bengal would not, by artificial "rigging" of the constitution, be turned into minorities; the separation of Sind from Bombay, and its establishment as a separate province; the introduction of a full-scale system of constitutional government in the North-west Frontier Province; and the assurance of the statutory reservation of a certain proportion of places in the Army and in the Civil Service for Muslims. If they gave us assurances of this character, we in our turn would offer them a united front in face of the British. I even went further and offered, as a special concession, unity of command under a chosen Indian leader whose orders we would bind the Muslim community to accept. In his memoirs, Sir Chimanlal Setalvad has referred to these offers of mine, and his evidence at least stands firmly on record that if the first Round Table Conference did not achieve all that was expected of it, and if, ultimately, not only was "Dominion status" not brought about, but India had to be partitioned, some at least of the beginnings of these momentous happenings are to be found in the Hindu delegation's refusal to accept my offer. I am certain that Sapru and Sastri, in their heart of hearts, wanted to accept our Muslim proposals, but that they were afraid of their Hindu colleagues and, above all, of the influence of the Mahasabha.

I must formally record my solemn conviction that had my views been accepted then and there, later history would have taken a profoundly different course, and that there would now have long since been in existence a Federal Government of India, in which Muslims and Hindus would have been partners in the day-to-day administration of the country, politically satisfied, and contentedly working together for the benefit of India as a whole.

In a subsequent chapter I shall have occasion to refer to the continued stubbornness and intransigence of Hindu opinion, which at a much later date rejected the constitution offered it by the British Cabinet Mission. The formulation of this constitution, in outline and in principle, should have marked the beginning of the Round Table Conference, if the Hindu representatives, when we met them in the Nawab of Bhopal's house, had accepted my offer on behalf of the Muslims with the sincerity with which I put it forward.

That acceptance denied us, the rest of the first Round Table Conference was not of much essential or practical importance, since the foundation on which its deliberations should have been built was vague and fragile, instead of strong and firm.

One successful step forward seemed then to be of great importance, but time and a train of great events have shown it to have been minor and transient. This was the princes' announcement of their acceptance of the idea of federation. The British representatives at the Conference hailed it—perhaps not unnaturally from their point of view—as a significant and constructive advance, of real assistance in the task of securing a devolution of power from the United Kingdom Parliament to a so-called Indian Federal Parliament.

It gained in impressiveness from the fact that Lord Reading, the Leader of the Liberal Party in the House of Lords, enfolded with the august aura of prestige which his status as an ex-Viceroy gave him, and strongly convinced as he was of the importance of a centralized responsibility in all major spheres of administration and executive authority, gave it his hearty if measured approval. To the Prime Minister, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, it seemed salvation and success for the Conference, rather than the shipwreck which—so it appeared at the time—would have been disastrous. Mr. MacDonald's situation throughout the Conference was complicated and delicate, though hardly unique, for it was the kind of situation which he frequently had to face in his career. At the height of his power he faced it with aplomb and adroitness, but it was difficult to disregard the fact that, despite all his diplomatic skill and finesse, he was not unlike the driver who has eight spirited horses in his coaching team and is aware that any couple can and probably will go off on its own and seek to pull the coach in a totally different direction from that which he intends.

To the Indian representatives at the Conference Mr. MacDonald had to be—and was—our Chairman, presiding with shrewd and benevolent impartiality over our deliberations, wise and venerated, our guide, philosopher, and friend in the tricky mazes of democratic, constitutional procedure and theory in which we were having our protracted initiation. To his own party, burdened with office—in 1930, that year of dark foreboding and hints of the turbulence and the sorrow that were

imminent—but without that support of a solid and unthreatened majority in the House of Commons which alone could ensure effectiveness and permanence to its decisions, he had to appear as the leader in the long crusade against out-of-date imperialism and obstructive vested interests, and the emancipator, the creator of Indian freedom and independence which he sincerely desired to be. In this role he was conscious that his was an advanced and most progressive view of India's problems, and that he and his party were eager to travel swiftly the whole road to Dominion status, with few and minor reservations or restrictions. But the Conservative Opposition, whose patience he could not possibly afford to test too highly, was jealously watchful of Britain's imperial interests; and both in Parliament and in the Press the right-wing "die-hard" element of the Conservative Party possessed powerful and authoritative citadels whence to challenge—perhaps to overthrow—him, if he too flagrantly disregarded their views.

In these circumstances it was perhaps inevitable that an especial atmosphere of hopefulness and optimism should envelop this, the Conference's one major tangible achievement. Something, it was felt, above and beyond mere provincial autonomy had been established and ensured. The lawyers among us, like Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, let themselves become zestfully absorbed in the details of what they then believed would lead to a serious and permanent advance along the road to Indian self-government. I must say that I in my heart of hearts was always suspicious that our work might not procure any real or lasting results, because the great realities of India in 1930 were being forgotten.

It was forgotten that there were, first and foremost and all the time, fundamental differences between the Muslim and Hindu peoples that inhabited the subcontinent; and that these differences were most apparent between the Muslims of the two north-western and eastern sections of it and the Hindu majority in the rest.

It was forgotten that the intelligentsia—although only ten per cent of the total Hindu population—numbered between forty and fifty million, who could not possibly be dismissed as "a mere microscopic minority". It was forgotten that they desired the British to quit India, bag and baggage, finally and for ever; this was the aim for which they laboured and strove, and indeed it was

brought to pass in 1947. All the minutiae of an elaborate paper constitution, with all its cautious safeguards, its neat balancing of power by abstract and theoretical formulae which were to be embodied in it, seemed to them a pack of cunning and pernicious nonsense, a lot of irksome tricks by which all that the British seemed with one hand to give could be—and would be—snatched back with the other.

It was forgotten that the princes, for all their wealth, ability, personal charm, prestige, and sincere loyalty to the British connection, had in fact very little power or influence. They were not, of course, the sinister stooges that hostile propaganda often dubbed them, but both their actual authority and their capacity to sway opinion by their influence had been sapped in long years during which their subjects—and the Indian people at large—had come to realize that they were powerless, and incapable of holding an independent view or making an independent decision, if that view or that decision conflicted with the policy of the all-powerful British Residents. Thus gradually their support of the federal constitution—though it took in the British ruling class—was shown to possess very little reality, and to be a shadow without the substance of power.

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By the time the second Round Table Conference assembled in the autumn of 1931 the world situation had changed vastly, and so had the state of Indo-British relations. The economic crisis, in all its sharpness and severity, had hit Europe and the United Kingdom. The collapse of the famous Austrian Credit-Anstalt Bank had led to a general and hasty restriction of credit, and a long steep tumble in world trade. In Britain the number of unemployed mounted to a vast, grim total in the region of three millions; the publication of the May Report, an authoritative, officially-ordered survey of the country's economic, financial, and fiscal condition, which contained a number of recommendations for economy measures which were totally unacceptable to the majority of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald's Cabinet colleagues, precipitated a major political crisis. In September the King interrupted his annual and cherished holiday at Balmoral and returned to London, summoning to meet him the various leaders of the political

parties. Thereafter a National Government was formed, charged with the task of dealing with the crisis; Mr. MacDonald was Prime Minister, supported by Conservatives and Liberals like Mr. Baldwin, Sir Austen Chamberlain, Sir John Simon, and Sir Herbert Samuel. In the General Election which followed quickly on the formation of this government, its supporters, mainly Conservatives and National Liberals, were returned to power with an overwhelming majority, and Labour representation in the Commons was reduced to "rump" proportions—almost the only ex-Ministers left in the House being Mr. George Lansbury, the veteran pacifist, and Mr. Attlee.

These changes could not but affect the second Round Table Conference; but, grave and preoccupying as were the events in which Britain and the British Government were involved, they did not cause its postponement. Meanwhile the patience and the considerable powers of persuasion of the Viceroy, Lord Irwin—"the tall Christian" as Mr. Muhammad Ali called him in an historic phrase—had prevailed and Mahatma Gandhi agreed to come to London. He went in his own personal capacity, but it was generally felt that, even if he did not come as the nominated leader and representative of Congress, his was the voice of authority and decision so far as the vast majority of Hindus were concerned.

We Muslims for our part hoped that Mahatma Gandhi, with his unique political flair allied to his vast personal prestige, would appreciate the fact (and act upon it) that to make a combined front of Hindus and Muslims would in itself be a major step forward, and all realized that it would offer an unparalleled opportunity for extracting out of the Round Table Conference a constitution which would be a genuine transference of power from British to Indian hands, and would give India the status of a world Power. Though Mahatma Gandhi could not possibly in 1930 have foreseen or hoped for anything like the final solution of 1947, he must, when he arrived, have hoped, as did most of us from the East at the Conference—that real power would be transferred, even if India and Whitehall were still linked by one or two silken strings.

Mahatma Gandhi arrived in London in November 1931 as the sole representative of Congress. He was accompanied by the

eminent Indian poet, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu. Our first meeting in our capacity as delegates to the second Round Table Conference occurred at midnight in my own room at the Ritz Hotel. It may be a suitable moment therefore to pause in my narrative and sum up my impressions and recollections of two truly remarkable personalities.

One way and another I knew and was in touch with Mahatma Gandhi for more than forty-five years. I first heard of him about 1899 or 1900 when both he and I were actively concerned with the status and future of Indians in South Africa, a perennial problem which was to engage our attention across many years. At that time his philosophy was only beginning to coalesce, and he had not made the major personal decision of his life, which was the break with, and the turning away from, modern material progress. On and off we were in touch for the next ten or twelve years, usually on some facet of the Indian problem in South Africa. We were in London at the same time shortly after the outbreak of the First World War; as he had done at the beginning of the South African War he offered his assistance to the British Government for ambulance and field hospital work. Already he had, however, travelled far along his own mental and spiritual road, and I was aware that he had decided that salvation for India and for his fellow countrymen lay in renouncing contemporary, industrialized and materialistic so-called civilization. I have given an account of our contacts at the time of the Khilafat agitation in 1920-1; thereafter Mahatma Gandhi was, for the rest of his life, a major figure in world history.

I believe that both in Mahatma Gandhi's philosophical outlook and in his political work there were certain profound inconsistencies, which all his life he strove, without complete success, to reconcile. The chief, formative spiritual influences of his life were Christ, as revealed in the New Testament, Tolstoy, Thoreau, and certain exponents of various forms of Hindu asceticism; yet he was not, in the ordinarily accepted sense, a pure ascetic; he had little patience and no sympathy with the merely contemplative life of the mystic totally withdrawn from the world, or with monks, whether Buddhist or Christian, who accept the rule of an enclosed order. If I may say so, I am convinced that Gandhi's philosophy was not renunciation of this world but its reformation, with

mutual and associative human love as the dynamic spark in that reformation. Yet this involved for him a certain degree of renunciation. This attitude to the products of the industrial and technical revolution of our time was characteristically ambivalent. He believed that all men ought to have the full benefits—in generally diffused well-being—of the power over nature which science has put at man's disposal. Yet he felt that, at man's present level of social and spiritual development, if some individuals accepted these benefits, then the vast majority would be deprived of them and would be both proportionally and absolutely worse off than before.

This ambivalence, rooted as it was in a profound mental and spiritual contradiction, was always evident throughout his life, in his relations with his nearest and dearest friends, and in his teaching and in his practice.

I remember that I once had a long conversation with him in Poona after he had been gravely ill, and had undergone an operation. He was in bed at the Sassoon Hospital, where I went to see him. His praise and his admiration for the hospital, for the British surgeon who had operated on him, for the consultants and the nursing staff, were unstinted. Yet he could not but feel that since such a standard of treatment and attention could not be given to every single one of the millions of India's population, it must be wrong for it to be at his disposal here in Poona. Just as much as everyone else, however, he realized that it would be a crime to abolish the Sassoon Hospital—and everything which it symbolized and represented—that its benefits must go to some, since they could not go to all, but to whom? And yet, he felt, and yet, and yet . . . his philosophy tailed off into a question mark that was also a protest.

There in his bed in that Poona hospital he faced the impossibility of complete adjustment. It was this hard fact of incomplete adjustment, in the world as it is, which made him appear at some moments "for" material progress, and at others "against" it. It gave some critics cause to doubt either the sincerity of his Christian Tolstoyan ideals or the efficacy of his activities in the world of practical politics and economics. It would perhaps be more just as well as more charitable to realize that Mahatma Gandhi was far from alone in the contradictions and the conflicts

of his inner and his outer life. Are not such contradictions the very foundation of life for all of us, in its spiritual as well as its material aspects, and if we seek to be of any use or service to ourselves and to our fellow men, can we do otherwise than live, as best we may, in the light of these contradictions?

Our last talk in 1945-6 was in its way a reflection in miniature of the whole of Mahatma Gandhi's spiritual and intellectual life. Its setting and its circumstances illustrated, forcefully enough, the simple fact that in our world as it is we can never get away from contradictions. I had come to talk politics with Gandhi; since I was no longer actively a participant in Indian politics, I had to some extent come as a companion of my old and valued friend, the Nawab of Bhopal. Bhopal, Chancellor of the still existent Chamber of Princes, was a free-lance in the Muslim ranks of the time, for he had not accepted the Quaid-i-Azam's conviction that only a partition of the subcontinent could give the Muslims what they wanted. I for my part still cherished some hopes that the full and final amputation could be avoided, if something on the lines of the constitution proposed by the last British Cabinet Mission could have been acceptable. Now I see clearly that I was wrong; amputation was the only remedy. Mahatma Gandhi and I talked of these matters; we talked too of South Africa; and then I changed the subject and asked: "What really is your opinion of Marxism—of Marx himself, of Engels, of Lenin, and of Stalin?"

His answer was as characteristic as it was adroit: "I," he said, "would be a hundred per cent communist myself—if Marx's final stage were the first stage, and if Lenin's economic ideals were put immediately into practice."

If—there lay the contradiction. If, as Marx had laid it down, the State would "wither away" not as the last phase of the revolution but as the first; and if Lenin's economic axiom, "From everyone according to his capacity; to everyone according to his needs," could be put immediately into practice, then indeed the Marxist millennium would begin. I countered him with the orthodox Stalinist argument: the world as it is today contains capitalist-imperialist States, whose productive capacity is geared not to peace and utility but as a means to the possible end of aggressive and imperialist war; in such a world the Communist State must be organized in its own defence; and how can there be

a free society in which the State has indeed "withered away" without the essential preliminary phase of the world triumph of organized socialism?

"Well," said Gandhi, "let one country do it. Let one country give up its State organization, its police and its armed forces, its sanctions and its compulsions. Let one State really wither away. The happiness that would there prevail would be so great and so abiding that other countries would, for very shame, let their capitalist-imperialist societies and States wither away."

Mahatma Gandhi no more than anyone else could evade the contradiction that lies at the base of life in this epoch. We have constantly to put up with second-best and probably worse, since we cannot achieve our full ideal. Gandhi, too, realized this, despite his hope that mankind could attain Marx's final phase—a goal which, if it is ever attainable at all, will be reached by another route than an immediate short cut by way of selected portions of the lives of Christ, Mohammed, and Buddha.

Mrs. Naidu, Gandhi's companion in his midnight conference with me at the Ritz that autumn night in 1931, was in her way hardly less fascinating a personality. She was one of the most remarkable women I have ever met, in some ways as remarkable as Miss Nightingale herself. Her home after her marriage was in Hyderabad. Although her original inclinations and her upbringing were extremely democratic, she was a poet. Her sensitive and romantic imagination was impressed by the originality and strangeness as well as the glamour of the character of the then Nizam of Hyderabad—the father of his present Exalted Highness—a gentle and timorous man, of a delicate and refined sensibility and sentiment, yet endowed with great clarity of vision, independence of judgment, and generosity, and withal the possessor of a great heart in a sadly frail frame. He, too, had poetic aspirations, and some of his Urdu writings could indeed almost be dignified with the name of poetry. Mrs. Naidu sang his praises; but she herself was a real poet, who wrote strongly and tenderly of love and of life, of the world of the spirit and the passions. In that linking of tenderness and strength which was her nature there was no room for malice, hatred, or ill-will. She was a vigorous nationalist, determined that the British must leave India and her destiny in the hands of India's children, yet her admira-

tion for Western civilization and Western science—above all for English literature—was deep and measureless. Her proud freedom from prejudice she demonstrated at the time of the death of Rudyard Kipling. Kipling's out-and-out imperialism, the rigid limitations of his view of the political capacity and potentialities of Indians—despite his recognition of their qualities of intelligence and fidelity—were inevitably at the opposite pole from Mrs. Naidu's outlook. Yet when he died Mrs. Naidu published a statement in which she paid her full and generous tribute of admiration to his genius—to the poet, the novelist, the unequalled teller of tales—making it clear beyond all argument that this recognition of the artist by the artist was utterly distinct from and unaffected by her profound and abiding dislike of his racial and political philosophy.

Such then were the notable pair who were ushered into my sitting-room at the Ritz at midnight. We posed together for the Press photographers, and then settled down to our conversation. I opened it by saying to Mahatmaji that, were he now to show himself a real father to India's Muslims, they would respond by helping him, to the utmost of their ability, in his struggle for India's independence.

Mahatmaji turned to face me. "I cannot in truth say," he observed, "that I have any feelings of paternal love for Muslims. But if you put the matter on grounds of political necessity, I am ready to discuss it in a co-operative spirit. I cannot indulge in any form of sentiment."

This was a cold douche at the outset; and the chilly effect of it pervaded the rest of our conversation. I felt that, whereas I had given prompt and ready evidence of a genuine emotional attachment and kinship, there had been no similar response from the Mahatmaji.

Years later—in 1940—I reminded him of this. He said that he completely recollected the episode. "I am very, very sorry," he said then, "that you misunderstood that answer of mine. I didn't mean that I was aware of no emotional attachment, no feeling for the welfare of Muslims; I only meant that I was conscious of full blood *brotherhood*, yes, but not of the superiority that *fatherhood* would imply."

And I, on my side, had only meant in that word "father" to

show respect for the frailty of his age—not of course, frailty in health or mental capacity—and not to hint at any superiority.

This unfortunate initial misunderstanding over words had more than a passing effect. For it left the impression, which persisted not only that night but throughout the Round Table Conference, that our attempts to reach a Muslim-Hindu *entente* were purely political and lacked the stabilizing emotional ties of long fellow-citizenship and of admiration for one another's civilization and culture. Thus there could be no cordiality about any *entente* we might achieve; we were driven back to cold politics, with none of the inspiring warmth of emotional understanding to suffuse and strengthen our discussions.

This preliminary talk did not take us far. Thereafter we had a further series of conversations—usually at midnight in my rooms at the Ritz—I myself presiding as host, and Mr. Jinnah and Sir Muhammad Shafi negotiating on one side and Mahatma Gandhi on the other. The story of these discussions is long and not, alas, particularly fruitful.

They were informal talks and no record was kept. I said little and left the bulk of the discussion to Mr. Jinnah and Sir Muhammad Shafi, and to other delegates who from time to time took part, notably Sir Zafrullah Khan, Mr. Shaukat Ali, and the late Shaffat Ali Khan. Much of the disputation vividly recalled FitzGerald's verse:

Myself when young did eagerly frequent
 Doctor and Saint, and heard great argument
 About it and about: but evermore
 Came out by the same door as in I went.

Always the argument returned to certain basic points of difference: was India a nation or two nations? Was Islam merely a religious minority, or were Muslims in those areas in which they were in a majority to have and to hold special political rights and responsibilities? The Congress attitude seemed to us doctrinaire and unrealistic. They held stubbornly to their one-nation theory, which we knew to be historically insupportable. We maintained that before the coming of the British Raj the various regions of the Indian subcontinent had never been one country, that the Raj had created an artificial and transient unity, and that when

the Raj went that unity could not be preserved and the diverse peoples, with their profound racial and religious differences, could not remain fellow-sleepers for all time, but that they would awake and go their separate ways. However close, therefore, we might come to agreement on points of detail, this ultimate disagreement on points of principle could not be bridged.

The Mahatma sought to impose a first and fundamental condition: that the Muslims should, before they asked for any guarantees for themselves, accept Congress's interpretation of Swaraj—self-government—as their goal. To which Mr. Jinnah very rightly answered that, since the Mahatma was not imposing this condition on the other Hindu members of the various delegations attending the Round Table, why should he impose it on the Muslims? Here was another heavy handicap.

Our conditions were the same throughout: very few powers at the centre, except in respect of defence and external affairs; all other powers to be transferred, and especially to those provinces in which there were Muslim majorities—the Punjab, Bengal, Sind, Baluchistan, and the North-west Frontier. We were adamant because we knew that the majority of the Muslims who lived in Bengal and the Punjab were adamant.

Mahatma Gandhi fully recognized the importance of having us in his camp. Who knows?—perhaps he might have seen his way to accept our viewpoint, but Pundit Malaviya and the Hindu Mahasabha exerted great pressure against us, deploying arguments based on abstract political doctrines and principles which—as the partition of 1947 proved—were totally unrelated to the realities of India.

As time went on the hair-splitting became finer and finer, the arguments more and more abstract: a nation could not hand over unspecified powers to its provinces; there was no constitutional way of putting a limit on the devices by which a majority could be turned into a minority—fascinating academic issues, but with little or no connection with the real facts and figures of Indian life.

In fairness I ought to mention one practical reform which did emerge from all our discussions and in the end contributed something to the settlement of 1947. This was the separation of Sind from Bombay and its establishment as a province with a Governor

and administration of its own. For at least thirty years previously the continued connection of these two had been an anachronism; its existence explains much of Sind's so-called backwardness, and the rivalry and the jealousy that arose between Bombay, the older city which ruled, and Karachi, the younger city which was ruled.

In the Province of Bombay the I.C.S. officials who attained the highest ranks of the service tended to have spent years in Marathi or Gujerathi districts. Sind differed from other parts of the province in race, language, religion, and the physical shape of the land: and service in it required a quite different outlook, mentality, and training. Sind had been neglected in matters like communications, roads, and internal development, by an administrative centre from which it was far distant and with which its only connections were by sea or across the territories of princely States.

A special committee to consider the whole question of the separation of Sind was set up. The Muslim representatives on it—of whom I was one—did not argue the case on communal lines; we urged that Sind be separated from Bombay as an act of common justice to its inhabitants, and on practical and administrative grounds. Apart from one or two members who represented Bombay and were anti-separation, our other Hindu colleagues supported us, and our proposal was carried.

The Chairman of this particular committee was the late Earl Russell, the elder brother of the present Earl, better known as Bertrand Russell. He was a lively and interesting personality, who had endured—and surmounted—the difficulties and the legal and social complications of a stormy marital career in his early life. He was a grandson of the first earl—Lord John Russell, Queen Victoria's famous Whig Prime Minister. Born and reared in this inmost circle of the old Whig oligarchy of England, he was himself supremely unclass-conscious, endowed with a wonderful memory, richly stored, and with great gifts as a raconteur.

He died in the South of France not long after the end of the Conference; the news of his death came as a shock, for I had looked forward to our friendship continuing and enriching itself for the rest of our lives.

One of his former wives, who lived not far from my own then home at Antibes, was no less remarkable and original a character—the tiny, inimitable and indomitable Elizabeth, of *Elizabeth*

and her *German Garden*. She maintained her passion for garden-building to the end. She lived not far from the country club and golf course at Mougins; she designed much of its landscape gardening and floral planning; and my wife, Princess Andrée, and I consulted her more than once about our own garden.

To return to the Round Table Conferences: in the end, the many long sessions achieved little. Mahatmaji returned to India; the sum total of all our work was a vast array of statistics and dates, a great many speeches, and little or no positive understanding. The second Conference finished, all the delegates dispersed, and we awaited what was in fact the third Round Table Conference, but was officially known as the Joint Select Committee appointed by Parliament under the chairmanship of the Marquess of Linlithgow, to draw up the Indian Federal Constitution.

* * * * *

Meanwhile my ordinary life outside politics had continued tranquilly and eventfully. My wife, Princess Andrée, had throughout the exhausting and protracted sessions of the first two Round Table Conferences been of quite invaluable support and help to me. For the Conferences had a circumambience of hospitality and sociability, parties, receptions, and dinners innumerable, at which my wife was my constant, graceful, and accomplished partner. In January 1933 my second son, Sadruddin, was born in the American Hospital at Neuilly, just outside Paris. At the end of that year Princess Andrée paid her first visit to India with me, leaving our son in the South of France. We travelled all over the country, seeing most of the famous, beautiful, and historical sights; stayed several days with the renowned old Maharajah of Bikaner; stayed in Calcutta as the guests of the Governor, Sir John Anderson;¹ went up to the hills for a time, and travelled on to Burma. We were home in Cannes by April 1934, delighted to be greeted by a much-grown, healthy, strong little boy.

Then I found myself fully back in political harness. The third of the series of Indian Round Table Conferences was upon us. On the British side there had been changes, consequent upon the formation of the MacDonald-Baldwin National Government. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald was still Prime Minister, but his support

¹ Now Lord Waverley.

in the House of Commons came now from the enormous Conservative majority of which Mr. Baldwin was the master. This removed Mr. MacDonald from direct and close concern in our deliberations about India; consulted in all important matters he doubtless continued to be, but the effective decisions were, one could not help feeling, being made by the man in charge of the India Office. This, of course, was Sir Samuel Hoare, a sensitive, sagacious, broadminded, and keenly intelligent statesman, who was acutely aware of the realities of our mid-twentieth-century world, and—so far as India was concerned—fully realized that the day of the diehard imperialist was ended.

The Joint Select Committee assembled in London in the spring of 1934. The Chairman, Lord Linlithgow, was later to be Viceroy of India. The composition of the Committee was as varied as it was strong. The British representation contained inevitably a heavy Conservative preponderance; the knowledge and experience of India of individual members varied in quantity and quality. Respected and influential leaders like Lord Derby and Sir Austen Chamberlain were at the outset non-committal; there were others who were frankly opposed to the whole idea of a federal solution to India's problems. India's representation was on the whole good. Mahatma Gandhi did not attend, but there was a sizeable element of advanced Indian nationalism, drawn from outside the ranks of Congress. Looking back now on what happened in the course of this Committee, I think I regret Mr. Jinnah's absence as much as that of Mahatmaji. It was, I think, extremely unfortunate that we Muslims did not insist on having Mr. Jinnah with us; had he been a member of the delegation he might have subscribed to what I consider was the most valuable result of these Round Table Conferences.

This was the Joint Memorandum, which—for the first time in the history of Indo-British relations—put before the British Government a united demand on behalf of all communities, covering practically every important political point at issue. It propounded what would have been, in effect, a major step forward—the penultimate step indeed before Dominion status. By it we sought to ensure continuity in the process of the further transfer of responsibility. It was signed by all the non-official Indian delegates; it had been drafted by the delegation's brilliant official

secretary and myself. It was a claim for the transfer to Indian hands of practically every power except certain final sanctions which would be reserved to the British Government. Had a constitution been granted along these lines, later critical situations—India's declaration of war in 1939, the problems which faced the Cripps Mission in 1942, and the final and total transfer of authority—might all have been much less difficult. Had this constitution been fully established and an accepted and going concern, it would have been in due course a comparatively simple operation to lop off those reserve powers which in our draft marked the final stage of constitutional devolution.

As I said in the course of evidence which I gave before the Joint Committee on the Government of India Bill:

I accept the term "Responsible Government" though as an ideal my preference is for self-government either on the American federal plan or on Swiss lines leaving ultimate power through the Initiative, the Referendum, and perhaps the Recall. But the facts of the situation have to be recognized . . . "Responsible Government" must be our way towards evolving in the future some plan more suited to a congeries of great States, such as India will become, and I believe the way will be found in something akin to the American Federal Plan.

Despite all (as we thought) its merits, our Joint Memorandum was disowned by Congress, and therefore the British Government felt compelled in their turn to reject it. In its stead they brought into being the constitution adumbrated by the Government of India Act of 1935, which left far too many loopholes for British interference, and indeed actual decision, on matters which every Indian patriot believed should have been solely for India to decide—for example India's entry into the Second World War. Its grossest failing was that it offered no foundation on which to build; Sir Stafford Cripps, during his mission in 1942, and Lords Alexander of Hillsborough and Pethick-Lawrence on their subsequent mission, were halted by this unpalatable fact. Neither did the Act supply an impetus to any effort to bridge the rift between Hindus and Muslims; and in the testing times of 1942 and 1946-7, the emptiness in the Act were glaringly revealed. By its reservations and by its want of clarity about the real meaning of Indian independence, the 1935 Act made a United India an impossibility.

It had to be set aside and the effort made to build up Indian independence from scratch. Then it became harshly clear that Indian unity was impossible, unless it were based on extremely wide federal, or confederate, foundations.

The second Cabinet Mission of 1947 did finally propose a constitution which would have maintained the unity of India, but at the price of handing over all ultimate power to the three confederate States of a Federal India. This was the sort of constitution for which our Joint Memorandum of 1934 could have naturally and steadily prepared the ground. Congress's attitude to this last effort was, to say the least, lukewarm; and it, too, fell by the wayside. In the end, the only solution was that which occurred, and those strange Siamese twins—Muslim India and Hindu India—that had lived together so restlessly and so uncomfortably, were parted by a swift, massive surgical operation.

CHAPTER XI

MY WORK FOR
THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

WITH the Joint Memorandum, and with the termination of the work of the Joint Select Committee in 1934, my own connection with Indian politics ended. However, I found myself striking out along a new line in public affairs and taking up new activities which were to be my main concern and interest in life from the early 1930s until the outbreak of the Second World War.

These developed from my close association at the India Office with Sir Samuel Hoare. He and I, in the intervals between our official discussions on the Indian problem, found ourselves more and more frequently exploring world affairs—in the 1930s an absorbing if formidable theme.

The curiously facile yet plausible optimism which had buoyed up the hopes of so many in the 1920s broke down rapidly; it gave place to an increasing and deepening anxiety. It is pitiable now to recall some of the illusions that were fostered in the years immediately after the First World War. I heard supposedly intelligent people, who habitually moved in circles which were considered to be well informed, remark for example that the war "had not impoverished but enriched the world and that its apparent cost had been more than met by a superior system of price control and economic adjustment". Only when the slump came was it realized that a war has to be paid for. As that realization dawned it became harshly apparent that the world was lurching towards a new catastrophe.

Then as now there was no getting away from the question of Germany and the Germans. Today, as we are all aware, the crux of Europe's difficulties and problems is to be found in Germany. There is indeed no hope of a real and abiding world peace without

a final solution of the problem of Germany, to be achieved either by a frank and sincere understanding between Russia on the one hand and the Western Powers under American leadership on the other, or by the consolidation of a Germany allied with and integrated with Western Europe. Just as grimly the problem of Germany was with us in the 1930s; questions about whether the Western world was moving, and of how it would work out its destiny, and the great issue of peace or war, were quite inseparable from the question of what was going to happen to Germany.

Eighty million highly intelligent, industrious, efficient, and well-educated people, cooped up in a comparatively small area between the Rhine and the Vistula, the North Sea and the Alps, with "colonies" of their kinsfolk settled outside the Reich's borders, in the Sudetenland, in Austria, and as far away as Rumania and parts of Russia, seeking unity yet conscious of a long history of religious and dynastic strife, constituted a permanent and enormous question-mark in the very heart and centre of Europe. Nor was it the only one of its kind. Fascist Italy loomed very large—Mussolini's imperial ambitions, his attitude towards Ethiopia and towards Albania, his talk of the Mediterranean as "mare nostrum".

Mussolini, for all his crimes and follies for which he paid in his ignominious fall and death, was in many ways a man of brilliant and powerful individuality. He achieved in the Italy of the period between the wars a political revival, in some respects analogous to the Wesleys' religious revival in England in the eighteenth century. His revival did not touch every section of the populace—nor did Methodism. But many of its emotions suffused Italian society as a whole—far outside the ranks of the Fascist Party itself. There was, for example, the longing for a place in the sun, the feeling that while nations like England, Spain, and Portugal had built up vast daughter-nations overseas, Italy—Rome's successor and inheritor—banned from expansion in Europe outside the confines of her own peninsula, now had the sacred right and duty of renewing Rome's imperial mission overseas. Therefore there was a passionate concentration on Ethiopia—first to wipe out Adowa's shame, and second and far more important to build up in those high equatorial lands (climatically so similar to many of the countries of South America) a vast European colony whose people might

one day mingle their blood with that of the native Amharic aristocracy—as the Spaniards had mingled theirs with the Incas—reducing those whom they considered racially inferior to permanent helot or peon status.

Away in the Far East, Japan was engaged in what came to be known as "the China incident"; the need of a policy of colonial expansion seemed imperative to her then leaders; she was already deeply committed in Manchuria. To topics such as these, real, insistent, and ugly as they were, Hoare and I found ourselves reverting again and again, whenever we turned aside from the constitutional niceties of India's political development.

He gradually became aware that, from the moment that India began to play a part—however limited—in international politics, I (so far as making any use of me was concerned) had been deliberately neglected and cold-shouldered by the Government of India. The reasons for this policy in New Delhi and Simla were not difficult to analyse; Hoare took their measure quickly enough. The exalted mandarins of the Indian Civil Service, that all-powerful and closely-knit bureaucracy which governed India, had neither the desire nor the capacity to appreciate a man of independent position and views like myself, who had first-hand knowledge of a great many of these problems. They were painfully aware, too, that were I to be given any official diplomatic status and be therefore in a position to receive the Viceroy's instructions I would not hesitate to make known to the Viceroy my own views, and if necessary criticism, of official policy, and that if I were overruled unreasonably, I should similarly have no hesitation in resigning, and in giving my reasons for resignation fully and with conviction to both the Viceroy and the Secretary of State. If I represented India at any international conference there would be no chance of my being a ventriloquist's dummy for officialdom. Officialdom therefore considered that I would be far more of a liability than an asset—after all, I might prove officials to be wrong.

Not unnaturally the bureaucrats rationalized their distaste for me and their fear of me. They pointed out that I was a racehorse owner; that I was an amateur of literature and the arts; that I had founded Aligarh University as a sectional, if cultural, institution; that since I was Imam of the Ismailis, my first loyalty would

always be to my followers, and therefore the Government could not take the risk of employing me. The files in the Secretariat were, I daresay, heavy with minutes and memoranda about me; and they all added up to the one word "no". Sir Samuel Hoare saw through the whole elaborate façade, and recognized it for what it was—arrant prejudice.

When arrangements were in train for the Disarmament Conference and the Indian delegation to the League of Nations was in process of being appointed, Sir Samuel Hoare took the whole matter up with characteristic energy and thoroughness, drew the Viceroy's attention to the fact that I had deserved more useful employment, and insisted that I be given a chance to serve India in the international field. Someone had used about me the phrase "Ambassador without Portfolio". The Secretary of State urged that it was high time for me to be given official status.

I think that I may claim that I brought to my new task a mind fairly well versed in its main issues. My grounding in European as well as Eastern political and social history had been thorough. Ever since adolescence I had read widely and steadily. I was—and still am—a diligent student of the newspapers, and of those political magazines and quarterlies which, in Britain and France especially, give an authoritative and often scholarly commentary on all the main events and trends of our time. I had also for many years lived an active life in both national and international affairs.

Let me recall the international atmosphere of the spring of 1932, and some of the main international trends and factors. The U.S.S.R. was seeking to establish at least a superficial appearance of respectability. We know now that the internal situation in Russia, after the appalling disruptive effects of the first Five-Year Plan, was parlous. Stalin, by now sole master of his country's destiny, desired a period of relaxed external tension. In Litvinov he had a Foreign Minister who knew England well, who had an English wife, who had personal cognizance of the shrewdness and practical wisdom of British statesmanship and of the possibilities it afforded, if properly handled, of securing Russia her fit place in the comity of nations.

Litvinov was himself unaffectedly eager in his desire to promote the idea of his country's respectability, and to present her to the world as a thoroughly honest woman; the matron herself stood



The Aga Khan with his younger son, Prince Sadruddin, and his grandsons, Prince Karim Aga and Prince Amyn Mahomed



Arriving at London Airport with the Begum Aga Khan during a recent visit to England

The Aga Khan among some of his followers in Malahat, Persia



MY WORK FOR THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

somewhat hesitant on the threshold—for reasons which became apparent later. However, social relations with Litvinov and with other members of his mission were at least possible. On my own initiative I broke the ice (somewhat, I suspect, to the surprise and secret amusement of my British colleagues, accustomed to the hesitations of previous Indian members of the delegation), and I gave a special dinner party in Litvinov's honour. His gratification was obvious. That dinner laid the foundation of a friendship which lasted as long as Litvinov was in Geneva; and it extended to embrace other Russian diplomats, who never failed in return to invite me to their social functions. Litvinov, indeed, began to appear in the role of a dinner-table diplomat and achieved his own quite real social success. My old friend, Baron Maurice de Rothschild, who had a beautiful chateau not far from Geneva, took to giving small informal luncheon parties, bringing together Litvinov and his colleagues with leading British and French delegates and with representatives of other countries.

The United States had disowned President Wilson and refused to join the League of Nations, and had proclaimed in sternly isolationist terms America's faith in her own destiny. But by 1932 the effects of the depression were being acutely felt all over the North American continent; the epoch of Harding-Coolidge Isolationism was drawing to a close. The State Department had become increasingly aware that America could not afford to wash its hands of the rest of the world; it was decided that the Disarmament Conference offered a convenient method of exploring the long-unfamiliar international atmosphere of Geneva. Weimar Germany—unlike the U.S.S.R.—was now a respectable member of the international fraternity, on terms of at least superficial equality with Britain and France. Had not Stresemann, Briand, and Austen Chamberlain met in heart-stirring amity at Locarno, and had not Briand signaled the event with the tremendous oration which began, "A bas les canons . . .?"

In 1932 the key-word was "disarmament". Disarmament was the concept to which so many high and noble hopes were pinned. Optimism still ran high: get the representatives of the nations around a table, agreeing in principle on disarmament, and let them work out the practical details of disarming—the melting down of the guns and the rifles, the scrapping of the battle-cruisers,

the limitations on the use and the armament of aircraft—and surely world peace could be made sure and stable.

Yet beneath this optimism there ran an undercurrent of doubt and fear. Were prospects as bright as many tried to believe? Was Weimar Germany all that she seemed to be? Ebert and Stresemann were gone; Brüning battled against a strange swirl of increasingly hostile forces, some of which were economic but many blatantly and violently political. Had all the effort that had gone into trying to woo Germany for democracy been in vain? Had the mountain laboured and merely brought forth a negligible mouse?

A new word had come into current political phraseology: Nazism, which, we were told, meant National Socialism, seemed a confused and extremely German version of Italy's Fascism; was already capturing the loyalty and the imaginative and romantic idealism of thousands of Germany's youth; and was associated with a man called Adolf Hitler.

Now the military adviser to the German mission in Geneva at this time was none other than General—later Field-Marshal—Blomberg, the man who later became chief of Hitler's Reichswehr, was Hitler's representative at King George VI's Coronation, and finally fell into disgrace in somewhat mysterious circumstances—allegedly on account of his unsuitable marriage. This Prussian soldier and I established quite friendly relations. From him I heard a good deal about the men who were then trying to rule Germany—tiny midgets, he called them contemptuously, who had stepped into Stresemann's man-size shoes. He was impatient with what he thought their combination of doctrinaire liberalism and practical incompetence in statecraft.

Such then was the troublous sea on to which I now was launched. The Secretary of State's wishes prevailed in the Secretariat in New Delhi. I was appointed a member of the Indian delegation to the Disarmament Conference, nominally as second-in-command to Sir Samuel Hoare, but to take charge as soon as he left. I was also appointed chief Indian representative at the 1932 Assembly of the League. Thus began a phase in my public life which was protracted, with little or no intermission, until Hitler's armies marched into Poland and the fabric of world peace which the League strove so hard to maintain was violently shattered.

The optimism that was prevalent in Geneva in 1932 was a mood which I could not fully share. A more strenuous and a more realistic effort was needed, I felt sure, to bring about the fruition of our hopes. As best I could, I sought to expound my own ideas and beliefs in this new arena to which I had been summoned. I made a speech of some length, and with all the earnestness that I could muster, at the fourteenth plenary session of the League:

We have found that armaments still hold sway and that the feeling of insecurity still persists. It is by no means certain that the war to end war has been fought and won. On the moral side we must set ourselves to remove the paralysing effects of fear, ill-will, and suspicion. On the material side it is absolutely essential that the non-productive effort devoted to warlike preparations should be reduced to the bare minimum. In distant India, no less than in Europe, the World War created a host of mourners and left a legacy of bitter tragedy. Over a million of my fellow-countrymen were called to arms, of whom more than fifty thousand laid down their lives. India's own scale of armaments allows no margin for aggressive uses. The size of her forces has to be measured with reference to the vastness of her area and the diversity of her conditions. The fact is so often forgotten that the area of India is more than half that of the whole of Europe, and her population nearly one-fifth of that of the entire globe. There is a cry going up from the heart of all the peace-loving citizens of every country for the lessening of their military burdens, for a decrease of the financial load which those burdens impose, for the security of civil populations against indiscriminate methods of warfare, and above all, for security against the very idea of war.

The words of many of us who, in those years, spoke out in the effort to prevent a second World War, have gone down the wind. But that is not to say that the effort was not worth making, or that we were not right to make it. The vast palace in Geneva that housed the League of Nations is no longer put to the purpose for which it was built, but the United Nations Organization, which has arisen out of the ruin and the tragedy which we strove to avert, shows—by continuing our work in a new era and with new techniques—that we did not labour entirely in vain.

For the rest of the thirties the work of the League, and of its off-shoot the Disarmament Conference, absorbed most of my time and my interest. I found myself in Geneva for months at a

time, through many harassing and disillusioning happenings—Japan's aloof snubbing of the League, Germany's dramatic exit from it, and then the direct challenge of Mussolini's aggression in Ethiopia. Early in this period I cemented a close friendship with Mr. Arthur Henderson, the President of the Disarmament Conference. Henderson was perhaps one of the most remarkable statesmen who have come out of the British Labour Movement. He had been a conspicuously successful and much-liked Foreign Secretary in Mr. Ramsay MacDonald's second Labour Administration, but he had not found himself able to support his leader in the rapid and dramatic changeover which resulted in the formation of the National Government. He retained therefore the passionate and proud loyalty of Labour in Britain, but the immediate effect of his decision was to deprive him of power and of office. It was universally felt that it would be disastrous, for the world as for Britain, to lose his sagacity, his experience, and his flair in the spheres of international affairs in which he had made so notable a mark.

Henderson was therefore appointed permanent President of the Disarmament Conference and until his untimely death he discharged his duties in this post—in face of much disappointment and a heartbreakingly uphill struggle—with courage and distinction. Our acquaintance ripened rapidly into a sincere and mutually affectionate friendship of great warmth. His mind and his achievements were as remarkable as his character was lovable. Like most of the Labour leaders of his generation he was a genuine son of the people who from humble beginnings had made his way upward in the world to the high, onerous, and lonely position which he occupied. He was modest and forthright, shrewd, imperturbable, quiet of speech, and of rock-like integrity. A Labour leader of a younger generation, Mr. Morgan Phillips, has said that the origins of the British Labour movement are to be found in Methodism rather than Marxism; this was certainly true of Arthur Henderson, for he remained all his life a serenely devoted Methodist. His wife had been his faithful companion on his long and strenuous road; she was a woman of great sweetness and generosity of character, staunch and true and, in her own fashion, very wise.

Henderson was often my guest at my villa at Antibes; Bernhard Baron, the millionaire and philanthropist, would sometimes drive

to Monte Carlo to spend an hour or two in the Casino, and Henderson would happily go along for the ride. When they reached the Casino, however, Henderson sat contentedly in the car, waiting till Baron came out again. Henderson was as steadfast as he was good, as selfless as he was courageous. We came to rely on each other for advice and support in the difficult and trying times through which we steered our way in Geneva.

The year 1935 was a memorable one. It was the year of Mussolini's attack on Ethiopia. It was the year in which the Government of India Act came into being—the last major piece of Indian legislation enacted by the Parliament of the United Kingdom until the brief, dramatic statute of twelve years later which ended the British Raj in India. It was the year of my great and good friend King George V's Silver Jubilee; and I fully shared the sentiments of gratitude, affection, and loyalty with which his people so signally greeted the King and Queen Mary. For me it was Bahram's year, for during that summer that magnificent horse won the Two Thousand Guineas, the Derby, and the St. Leger—the Triple Crown of the Turf, as the sporting journalists called this feat—the first horse to achieve it since Rock Sand, thirty-two years before.

I was able to be present at Epsom when he won his Derby—Freddie Fox was the jockey—and of course I led him in after his victory. I was immensely honoured by being the guest (in company with other members of the Jockey Club) of their Majesties, the King and Queen, at a celebration dinner at Buckingham Palace. Queen Mary herself had ordered that the table decorations should be in my racing colours, green and chocolate.

I was not in quite such happy surroundings when Bahram won the St. Leger. By then I was back at my duties in Geneva. I can at least, however, claim a record: I am sure I must have been the only member of the Assembly of the League ever to be called away to hear that his horse had won the St. Leger.

But the international scene by now was gloomy and its skies were darkly overcast. The little, glimmering lights of peace and hope which had been set burning since the end of the First World War were going out, one by one. Exactly a fortnight before Mussolini launched his attack on Ethiopia, I spoke in the Assembly of the League of Nations. The time had passed, I was convinced,

for smooth glib words. On my own and my country's behalf I spoke as frankly and as gravely as I could.

India is troubled by the League's lack of universality and by the great preponderance of energy which the League devotes to Europe and European interests. India is troubled by these dramatic failures, by the long-drawn-out and fruitless Disarmament Conference and by the fact that the rearmament of States members is in full swing. India's criticism of the League is directed to its shortcomings and not its ideals. The world is at the parting of the ways. Let wisdom guard her choice.

As 1935 drew to its close I went to Bombay to celebrate my Golden Jubilee as hereditary Imam of the Ismailis. Half a century had passed since I, a small, shortsighted, solemn boy, surrounded by my bearded elders, had ascended the *gadi*. The climax of the celebration was the ancient ritual of weighing me against gold. Earlier we had a special ladies' party at the Jamat Khana, at which my beloved mother sat on my right and my wife on my left. The actual weighing ceremony was both stately and heart stirring, evoking as it did strong currents of reciprocal affection between my followers and myself.

Our rejoicings, however, were cut short by the grievous news of the passing of my old, staunch, and good friend, the King-Emperor, George V, who died at Sandringham in January 1936. I thought of all the years of our friendship, of the many tests and trials it had undergone in war and in peace, of his constant kindness and consideration to me in all matters great and small. The last word which I had had from him, indeed, had been a warm message of congratulation on my Jubilee. We immediately abandoned all further festivities out of respect to his memory, and I read out this brief statement to my assembled followers:

I am deeply touched to hear the terrible news of the death of the King-Emperor. I have decided to stop all activities in connection with my Golden Jubilee celebrations, except the purely religious rites. We are in deep mourning. I myself will wear black clothes, and my people will wear their national mourning dress. The King-Emperor was not only a great ruler, but he was in the true sense a great man. His Majesty was always most kind to me personally. I am sure that the new King-Emperor will, with his knowledge of the world and of the whole Empire, be a worthy successor to Queen Victoria, to King Edward, and to King George.

Although within a few brief months events had turned out sadly different, I do not for an instant regret or withdraw that last sentence of my statement. I had long known the attractive, brilliant, and lovable man who that January day in 1936 acceded to his father's throne, surrounded by an Empire's loyalty and affection, and high hopes of a long and illustrious reign.

I first met him at York House, St. James's Palace, in 1898, when he was a child of four. His mother, then Duchess of York, brought two little sailor-suited boys into the drawing-room to shake hands with me—David and Bertie as they were known within their own family. The elder boy's vivid personality stamped itself instantly on my imagination; he had a look of both intelligence and kindness, and a limpid clarity of expression, which were most impressive. I still possess a photograph of the two boys as they were then with their names written across it by their mother.

In the years that followed I encountered him often, in successive phases of that long and devoted career of patriotic public service of which the culmination was his accession to the Throne and to the duties for which he had so arduously prepared himself. I recall the shy, slim lad staying in Paris to learn French in his late teens wondering (he who later in life was to become a devoted Parisian) "what my grandfather saw in Paris". I remember his early years as Prince of Wales. I remember the gallant young soldier, who strove in every way to evade Lord Kitchener's stern order that the heir to the Throne be not allowed near the front line. I knew the man whose spirit was stamped forever by the sense of slaughter and waste of those years of trench warfare, the man who has said so poignantly and so truly, in his own memoirs, "I learned about war on a bicycle"—endlessly trundling his heavy Army bicycle along the muddy roads of Flanders, to places like Poperinghe and Montauban and the villages around Ypres, the man who in after years in that annual ceremony at the Royal Albert Hall recited Laurence Binyon's "For the Fallen" with so rapt a sense of dedication and of loss.

I remember in the years after the First World War the "Ambassador of Empire" who ceaselessly travelled the Commonwealth and Empire and the whole world in the service of his country and his people. In the early twenties I met him more than once, strained and tired out as he was, during his extremely testing

visit to India. At a big State banquet at St. James's Palace, given in honour of the then Crown Prince of Japan—the present Emperor—I sat next to him. I remember his saying to me then that if Japan's request for the renewal of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance were refused—for this was the real reason of the Crown Prince's visit—the Japanese would never forgive us. His voice had not the robust, far-hailing quality that was in his father's and his grandfather's; his tone was in comparison with theirs always quiet and restrained, but he spoke with their earnestness, conviction, and faith in the importance of what he said.

It was a commonplace of the 1920s to say that the Prince of Wales made friends wherever he went. That was no formal tribute, but a simple statement of the truth. Why was it? What was the source of his immense and irresistible attraction, which won the sympathy and admiration of the masses no less than the respect of the powerful few? The *Times* correspondent who accompanied him on one of his many journeys found, I am convinced, the true explanation. The Prince of Wales, he said, was an artist. There lies the real secret of his temperament, of his tragedy as much as of his achievements; he was a born artist. He won the affection and the understanding of millions as only the greatest of artists can do, not by dramatic or thaumaturgic technique, but as a receiving and an "offering up" anew to and for others of that which he received from them and evoked in them. That is why all his State visits, with their numerous mass encounters, drained so much out of him. When he came back after a long drive through thousands of cheering people the exhaustion which he felt had causes far deeper than the merely physical. Virtue had indeed gone out of him, for he was in profound nervous, mental, and spiritual accord with those who so eagerly surrounded his slowly-moving car.

In the early spring of 1936 I had my first audience of him after his accession. He was fully aware of my recent and current activities. He knew that for the past few years I had been India's chief delegate at the Disarmament Conference and at successive sessions of the Assembly of the League. He knew that I was gravely perturbed by the increasingly menacing state of world affairs; burdened—like so many of us who to any extent were behind the scenes in those years—by a deepening sense of the doom

which we sought to avert; aware of the cancer at the heart of international—especially European—politics; alarmed, too, at what looked like American indifference and at the existence of what in those days we called Russia's Gunpowder Plot, her supposed plan to blow up capitalist civilization by a war in which the Soviet Union would take no sides but at the end of which she would appear as beneficiary and all-powerful arbitrator.

The Lords-in-Waiting and the India Office officials who had come with me expected, I daresay, that I would have the ordinary perfunctory and brief audience. However, they cooled their heels for an hour and a half or more in the anteroom, while I underwent at the King's hands one of the most searching, serious, and well-informed cross-examinations that I have ever experienced. I walked out at last filled with admiration not only for his knowledge, gleaned by his wide and deep reading of all the official and Cabinet papers which came to him, but even more for the seriousness of his outlook and the penetration of his insight.

During 1936 I met the King several times, at private cocktail parties, and at luncheon in the houses of one or two close friends. At the bigger gatherings, even in the midst of flippant people, I was greatly struck with the King's utter lack of flippancy, his seriousness, and his concentration on his duties. After my first audience, whenever I met him on these private and unofficial occasions during those months, he was accompanied by Mrs. Wallis Simpson, now the Duchess of Windsor. I found her as intelligent as she was charming, admirably well informed, devoid too of flippancy, and seriously and conscientiously striving to adjust her outlook to the King's. At two different houses I met them at luncheon, and on each occasion the only other person present, beside our host and hostess, was my old friend—himself an ardent and persevering seeker after spiritual enlightenment—Philip Kerr, Marquess of Lothian.¹ Our conversation could not have been in its general tone, more serious and more anxious.

Naturally neither the King nor Mrs. Simpson ever mentioned their personal affairs to me or in my hearing, but, of course, wherever one went in London that year the whispers and the rumours abounded.

I have already mentioned a poignant conversation which I had

¹ Subsequently H.M. Ambassador to Washington, he died in 1940.

with Queen Mary on my return to London from Geneva. Later in the year, in July I think, a great friend of Queen Mary's told me that every day she wept bitterly when she thought of this hidden, unspoken catastrophe which loomed for her dearly-loved son.

It was during this same critical period that Lord Wigram, when the two of us were lunching alone, said something that struck me greatly. "King Edward VIII," he said, "has it in him to be the greatest king in the history of our country. With his charm and his personal prestige he can carry with him the whole population—regardless of class."

Lord Wigram, after all, spoke out of long and deep experience. He had been King George V's private secretary, in succession to Lord Stamfordham, and a calm, wise, loyal counsellor and friend he was; but before he became a courtier he had been a serving officer in the Indian Army, and then on Lord Curzon's staff when he was Viceroy. His equable and unimpassioned judgment seemed to me of considerable importance; yet I could see that, even as he spoke, he was mastering strong and extremely painful and anxious emotions.

By the autumn I was back in Geneva. The King spoke to me once on the telephone; our conversation necessarily was guarded, yet I was aware once more of the profound sadness and the complexity of the drama in his own life and in the life of his country, whose bleak climax was then so near. The swiftness and the completeness of the final irrevocable decision were utterly tragic.

Years have passed, and they have brought inevitably a new perspective to our view of those sombre happenings of the first weeks of December 1936. After King Edward VIII's abdication, his younger brother acceded as George VI. We are all now gratefully and gladly conscious of the magnitude of his selfless and steadfast service to his country and to the cause of human freedom in his sixteen years' reign, and of the immense, quiet goodness of his character, so like his father's.

George VI was blessed—as his elder brother was impelled to remark in the most poignant public utterance of his life—in a supremely happy marriage. His gracious Consort, now Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, was as persevering and as selfless in public service as he was, always at his side to sustain and support him through many testing years which covered the dangers and

the arduous of the Second World War and the post-war period of far-reaching social and economic change.

Now a beloved, charming young queen reigns as Head of the Commonwealth. She brings to her task mental and spiritual qualities of the highest order, and it is already obvious that she has earned the deep loyalty and devotion of her peoples all over the world. She is sustained by the steadfast love of her husband, and her home, like that of her father before her, is a model of tranquil and affectionate family life. The omens are auspiciously set for a splendid new Elizabethan era in Britain's long, eventful history. The institution of the Crown in Britain and the Commonwealth has quietly and triumphantly survived its severest test; on this score, therefore, there is no reason for regret.

Yet considered as a human happening in its own right, apart altogether from its constitutional and political consequences, surely the story of Edward, Duke of Windsor, and his Duchess is one of the very great love stories of all time. Set it alongside the imperishable, tragic, and beautiful stories of Persian or Arabian legend, alongside the stories of Antony and Cleopatra and of Romeo and Juliet, and does it not stand forth as perhaps the most moving of them all?

When I was discussing my religious views, I quoted the saying of the poet Hafiz to the effect that those who are not granted the grace and aid of the Holy Spirit to achieve direct communion with that Divine Presence in which we live, move, and have our being, may yet attain blessed and pure felicity if they achieve the heights of human love and companionship—something not won lightly or easily, but the crown of a lifelong attachment, in which one human being devotes all that he has, knows, and feels to the love and service of another.

Surely his former Majesty, King Edward VIII, who lost and sacrificed so much, has been granted, if not the supreme, at any rate the lesser and by no means unworthy blessing and illumination of a durable and all-enfolding love.

I have one personal postscript to add to this sad yet stirring story. In the autumn of 1937 I found myself staying in Berlin, at the same time as the Duke and Duchess of Windsor. I called on them and we had a long, extremely intimate, and extremely revealing conversation. I was deeply affected by the obvious and

transparently sincere loyalty and devotion with which the Duke talked of his brother, speaking of him always as the King; the whole tenor of his remarks was that of fidelity from a devoted subject to his sovereign. Later that year when I was in London I had an audience of King George VI; the ostensible reason for my being summoned to the Palace was that I should give His Majesty an account of the interview which I had had with Hitler. Before I left, the King asked me, "You saw my brother?" I then told him the substance of the Duke of Windsor's conversation with me, and I stressed the warmth and the obvious sincerity of the Duke's loyalty. The King was clearly most deeply moved by his elder brother's willing and complete acceptance of the new situation—so moved in fact that I myself was equally stirred.

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Can we sustain the peace, or must there in the end be war? This was the question with which we were faced at Geneva, year after year. To understand its intensity, and to understand the way in which each of us, as individuals or as representatives of our countries, strove to find our own answer, it is necessary to explore a good deal of the historical and political background. Munich has constantly been hotly attacked as a single, unparalleled, and causeless act of appeasement, and Neville Chamberlain, the British Prime Minister, whose name is forever associated with Munich, who thought it his greatest triumph and found it to be his greatest tragedy, has been criticized in the most unmeasured and ferocious terms. Yet who are, in fact, the "guilty men", whom partisan propaganda so vituperatively pursued? What are the real reasons and not the superficial "blame", for Munich?

We must first probe far back into the story of Germany's relations with the rest of Europe. We must look afresh at that unfortunate, false, and unjust assertion, made at the end of the First World War and given explicit formulation in the Versailles Peace Treaty, that Germany's and Germany's alone, was the war guilt. Whatever strict apportionment of guilt there should be, it is by no means all Germany's. Nearly half the responsibility was Russia's. What about the folly, the incompetence, the insane ambition and the revengeful self-satisfaction of a man like Isvolsky who, as Tsarist Ambassador in Paris, said to me—not to me alone,

for he said it to everyone he could—"C'est ma guerre"? What about the same idiot boast on the lips of Sazunov, that weak and foolish man who, despite all the warnings given him by abler men like Witte and Rosen, did not shrink in anticipation from a war that was to ruin his country, his Emperor, and his own class?

However, at the end of the war, to millions in the victorious nations, blinded by their own propaganda, Imperial Germany seemed a convenient scapegoat. Germany was branded as the only criminal. And then, almost before the ink had dried on the signatures to the Versailles Treaty, a significant development occurred in political thought. The intellectuals of the Left in Britain, profoundly affected by the limpidly persuasive writings of John Maynard Keynes, discovered that their consciences were troubled over Versailles' injustice, and over the admission written into it, above the enforced signature of Germany's representatives, that Germany alone was to blame for all the horrors and miseries of the First World War; and until Hitler came to power, very vocal they were in their criticisms of the 1919 settlement.

Doubts about not merely the wisdom but the morality of the Versailles Treaty were by no means limited to the highbrows of the Left. Many a conscientious political thinker on the Right—though perhaps more pragmatic, more inclined to see the issue in terms of power politics—had severe misgivings about the justification, at the price even perhaps of a war, of maintaining a *status quo* founded upon a falsehood. The constitution of the League of Nations, which formed part of the Versailles Treaty, was similarly questioned. Under this, the League was endowed *in theory* with absolute authority to right all wrongs—"to break down this sorry scheme of things and replace it by something nearer heart's desire"—but, as familiarity with the actual processes of the League quickly made clear, its constitution was in fact so pliable that it was impossible for the League to right any wrong, however glaring.

The *status quo* had everything on its side. There was as much chance of achieving any real rectification of frontiers, any adjustment of conflicting national claims, through the League, as there would have been of steering a bill providing for universal suffrage successfully through the House of Lords of 1820. The ideologues of the immediate post-war era worshipped the constitution of the

League, but like most idols it had feet of clay. It was, in fact though not in name, a repetition of Alexander I's Holy Alliance of 1815. It was Metternich's system, dressed up anew as democracy, freedom, and—sacred word—self-determination. But it had been so adjusted that the "haves" among the nations had things all their own way, and the only hope for the "have-nots" of changing their inferior status lay either in sowing disunity among the "haves" or in building up their military power, sedulously and secretly, until they were able to launch direct and open aggression. This failing in the League was as durable as it was palpable. As I myself said later to Lord Halifax when he was Foreign Secretary, "You cannot make a silk purse out of a sow's ear."

Defects of this character could not long be hidden. The blood-stained Gran Chaco dispute between Bolivia and Paraguay was in a remote—and at the time strategically insignificant—region, but the difficulties it presented were real and grave, and those of us who had any share in reaching a fairly just solution of this problem were acutely conscious of them.

Then there arose the protracted Sino-Japanese trouble. Here the slate was, from the outset, the reverse of clean. At the conclusion of their successful campaign against Tsarist Russia, early in this century, the Japanese had built up a special and powerful position for themselves in Manchuria, from Port Arthur almost to the walls of Peking itself, under which China's sovereignty was still recognized but the country was administered and exploited by Japan as if it were a Japanese protectorate. The war-lords of Northern China had, in Bismarck's phrase, "a telegraph wire" with Tokyo—indeed a full and constant connection by telephone and radio as well. Though China was for years torn by internal strife, this relationship became more and more bitterly hostile, as the extent and the determination of Japan's ambitions were disclosed. For a long time it was customary to talk politely about "the differences" between China and Japan; but they were in fact a war, to which we in Geneva strove to put an end.

From the League's point of view China's legal case was utterly unanswerable. Japan had no right in China except in the various concessions—the ports, railway lines, commercial depots, and bases—which she had received from China, or won from Russia,

to whom China had voluntarily given them. Her territorial pretensions, open or veiled, were without a shred of legal justification.

But when the League rebuked Japan and sought to intervene, it seemed to Japan's rulers that the pot was loudly calling the kettle black. What about the hold that Britain had established in India in the eighteenth century? Were they not, the Japanese argued, doing in the twentieth century precisely what countries like Britain and France had done in building up their empires a century or two earlier? They would not and could not accept the claim that, under the constitution of the League, a new world had come into being and with it a new international morality binding on all nations, under which the only way to effect any political change was through the League's elaborate, complicated, and devious machinery. It was, in the Scriptural phrase, far easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for Japan to procure *de jure* recognition by the League of her *de facto* position on the northern Asiatic mainland. The "haves" said "No"; it was only open to the "have-nots" to break through or to circumvent this wall of negatives.

When the Sino-Japanese dispute was brought before the League, I on my own initiative approached Sir John Simon, then British Foreign Secretary, and told him that I felt that it was my duty as India's representative—as an Asiatic—to do all I could to bring about a direct understanding by conversations between China and Japan. John Simon has been bitterly assailed in many quarters, but he possessed the mind of a statesman, not a bureaucrat. He saw immediately that, while such a departure by an Indian representative, at a time when India was still without self-government, might seem unusual if unaccompanied by overt British support, the value of an Asiatic intermediary in a solely Asiatic dispute might be considerable. I was authorized to see what I could effect. I had several conversations with both Chinese and Japanese representatives. On one final occasion I got together the heads of the Chinese and Japanese delegations in a supreme effort to bring about an understanding; the three of us were actually photographed together.

However, a good deal more than the flash of a Press photographer's bulb was required. The negotiations broke down. Subsequently hostilities in Asia were renewed on a larger scale. The

"China Incident" became all-out war in Shanghai and in central China. Ultimately Japan left the League. Manchuria was separated from China, and the Japanese set up a puppet Emperor in Manchuria in the person of a scion of the old Manchu imperial dynasty, the man who, according to legitimist views, ought to have been Emperor of China. In central China conflict continued without cessation thereafter between the Japanese and the forces of General Chiang Kai-shek until—with Japan's attack on Pearl Harbour in 1941—the extension of the Second World War to the Far East.

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Personalities as well as policies were of significance in those difficult years. I came to know many remarkable men in Geneva, as we battled with successive problems and crises. The first Secretary-General of the League was Sir Eric Drummond¹—an ideal man in a difficult, a well-nigh impossible, position. He was not only aware that there were two sides to any argument, he saw every question fully in the round. In my many conversations with him I began to appreciate the complexity and the far-reaching effects of every apparently small move or decision made by the League. It seemed that we were for ever watching the widening ripples on the pool caused by the throwing of seemingly small pebbles. Yet I must not give the impression that Eric Drummond was in favour of immobility in international affairs, or of stubbornly preserving the *status quo*. No one, I daresay, had better appreciated than he had the lessons of history; no one realized more clearly, for example, that—in spite of all that Alexander I and Metternich strove to establish—the European system established in 1815 had collapsed in something near chaos by 1830. Drummond had a flexible mind and highly developed powers of persuasion; I know that many a dispute that might have grown serious was settled in his office, simply by his exercise of tact and sagacious foresight. However, his influence and authority were limited, for the tradition that permanent officials had no views of their own had transferred itself from the national to the international plane, and therefore as Secretary-General he had no right to initiate policy on his own.

Brüning, the German Chancellor, was a forlorn, pathetic figure.

¹ Later the Earl of Perth.

A sincere Christian, a devout Roman Catholic, he was obviously beset, in the midst of our troubles, by a genuine Christian conscience, by his patriotism as a German, by the growing difficulties of keeping democracy afloat in Germany, by the mounting challenge of the Nazis, and by the increasing feebleness of the aged Hindenburg's attachment to the republic which had elected him as its President.

Beneš of Czechoslovakia was in his different way a no less tragic figure. He fully realized the dangers to which his country was exposed. More than once over a coffee or at luncheon he talked to me of his troubles and his difficulties. He knew that the German minority in Czechoslovakia had to be won over, persuaded to give up their pan-German dreams, and become loyal and sincere citizens alongside the other racial groups in the country; but he realized that a heavy price had to be paid for such an achievement. He continued, however, to pin high hopes to it. Yet whenever he went into the Sudetenland, to places like Carlsbad or Marienbad, he was faced with the limitations and the potential breakdown of his policy, because the Czechs in those areas, although in a minority, strove to assert their superiority—politically and economically, and by the use of educational and linguistic barriers—to the German-speaking majority. His was a classic example of the way in which a well-meaning political leader cannot persuade his followers to carry out his express and sincere intentions.

Someone who was then embarking on his great career I encountered first in Geneva in those years—Mr. Anthony Eden. An immediate point of sympathy and understanding between us was that the subject in which he had taken honours at Oxford, immediately after the First World War, was Oriental languages; he had studied Persian and had known my very old friend Dr. E. G. Browne, the Orientalist and authority on Persian, who was Professor of Arabic. This shared friendship and our shared knowledge and understanding of, and fellow-feeling for, Islamic literature, thought, and philosophy, were special ties, uniting us more closely than the normal affiliations and social propinquity natural between a representative of the British Government and a representative of India at a meeting of the Assembly of the League. It has not been difficult for someone who has watched, as I have, the careers of so many eminent statesmen past and present, to

foresee Mr. Eden's ultimate and splendid destiny. Today I join my prayers with those of so many others that, when at length the great call comes and he takes up the highest position of all, he will have regained in full the health and the strength which, over past years, he has expended so generously in the service of his country and of humanity in general.

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The next great crisis which faced the League was Italy's assault on Ethiopia in 1935. It presented a more serious challenge even than the Sino-Japanese dispute, for however aggressive Japan's actions were, there were explanatory, if hardly ameliorative, factors involved, which—as I have indicated—made it impossible for any of the Great Powers at least to regard that as a clean-cut case. All the various concessions, with all their legal equivocations about status, and (since the Japanese occupation of Korea) a common frontier along the Yalu River, were in themselves occasions for quarrels in which lack of diplomatic satisfaction could—and usually was—made the excuse for military action. The whole situation was morally indefensible, of course, but it had centuries of usage to sustain it and give it at least the superficial appearance of respectability.

Italy, however, possessed none of these opportunities or facilities for whitewashing her aggressive, imperialistic designs on Ethiopia. Italy's only case was one of naked need for living space for her ever-increasing population, if they were to remain Italian. Libya's possibilities of intensive and large-scale exploitation and colonization were few; fertile areas in this long stretch of the Mediterranean littoral were limited, and the desert was vast. Italy's surplus population seemed therefore faced with one of two possibilities. Either they could emigrate across the Atlantic to North or South America, or to neighbouring Mediterranean lands like Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria, and be lost to Italy as citizens; or they could remain in Italy, always below the margin of subsistence, millions too many for her limited soil to bear, with a standard of living far below that of any of their western European neighbours and thoroughly unworthy of the nation that had succeeded Imperial Rome.

Mussolini made no secret of his intentions. He made stirring

speeches in towns and cities all over Italy, and his eloquence roused thousands to passionate enthusiasm and sympathy. At the diplomatic level he gave more than one warning, couched in terms, however, which were ambiguous enough for him to be able to interpret the silence with which France and Britain greeted them as consent, if not as direct encouragement to him. Whatever the shadowy background of the Duce's mental processes, there could be no ignoring the blatant openness of his preparations, throughout the summer of 1935, for the military conquest and annexation of the free, independent, and sovereign State of Ethiopia, on pretexts which were flimsy in the extreme. The Ethiopians were faced with a tragic choice: either to accept an ultimatum from Mussolini; or, rejecting it, to wage a hopeless war which could only end in total military defeat and subjection.

The League was thus thrust into a hopelessly difficult situation; and there developed that deep and catastrophic division of opinion in Britain and in France, and indeed throughout much of the world, which was to persist with such unfortunate results until the outbreak of the Second World War four years later. In two countries, however, there was no chance for any division of opinion to show itself: the U.S.S.R and Nazi Germany. Russian policy was simple and monolithic; Litvinov had proclaimed Russia's doctrine, "Peace is indivisible", and whatever weaknesses and drawbacks communist policy may possess, there has nearly always been about it a façade of logical unity between dogma and practice. The Nazis, of course, saw a superb opportunity to break up what remained of unity among the Powers who had been victorious over Germany in the First World War and who had sought to make their victory permanent by the guarantees written into the Versailles Treaty. They had the shrewdness not to proclaim their satisfaction too loudly; public opinion in Britain and France was therefore not alert to the hidden dangers in the German attitude, any more than it recognized the hidden dangers in Russia's expressions of shocked virtue.

In Britain confusion and irresolution were woefully apparent. There was the "realism"—grossly mistaken, as the naval history of the Second World War was to demonstrate—of old-fashioned imperialists like the late Lord Lloyd, then President of the Navy League, who argued that the Royal Navy had been so weakened