



# DISASTROUS TWILIGHT

A PERSONAL RECORD OF THE  
PARTITION OF INDIA BY  
MAJOR - GENERAL  
SHAHID HAMID

PRIVATE SECRETARY TO  
FIELD MARSHAL  
SIR CLAUDE AUCHINLECK  
1946 - 1947

WITH A FOREWORD BY  
PHILIP ZIEGLER



AFGHANISTAN

Kabul

DIR

SWAT

HAZARA

Dargal Malakand Muzaffarabad  
KHYBER PASS Landikotal Mansehra Peshawar  
Pisapur Attock Srinagar

Kohat

Rawalpindi

KASHMIR

Miranshah

BANIHAL PASS

Razmek

Jhelum

Chillianwala

Wazirabad

Sialkot

Pathankot

Kandahar

Quetta

PAKISTAN

CHINA

Nushki

Kalat

BOLAN PASS

Bolan

Nasirabad

Indus

BALUCHISTAN

Sukkur

BABA WALPUR

RAJPUTANA

PUNJAB

Multan

Bahawalpur

Suitel

Jhelum

Ravi

BALLOKI BARRAGE

Nankana Sehbi

Lyallpore

Ajalia

Amritsar

Lahore

Ferozepore

Montgomery

Patiala

Bhatinda

Moga

Zehra

Julundur

Simla

Kalka

Ambala

Mussooree

Dehra Dun

Hissar

Rohtak

Gurgaon

Meerut

Delhi

Sikandarabad

Aligarh

Bharatpur

BEARATPUR

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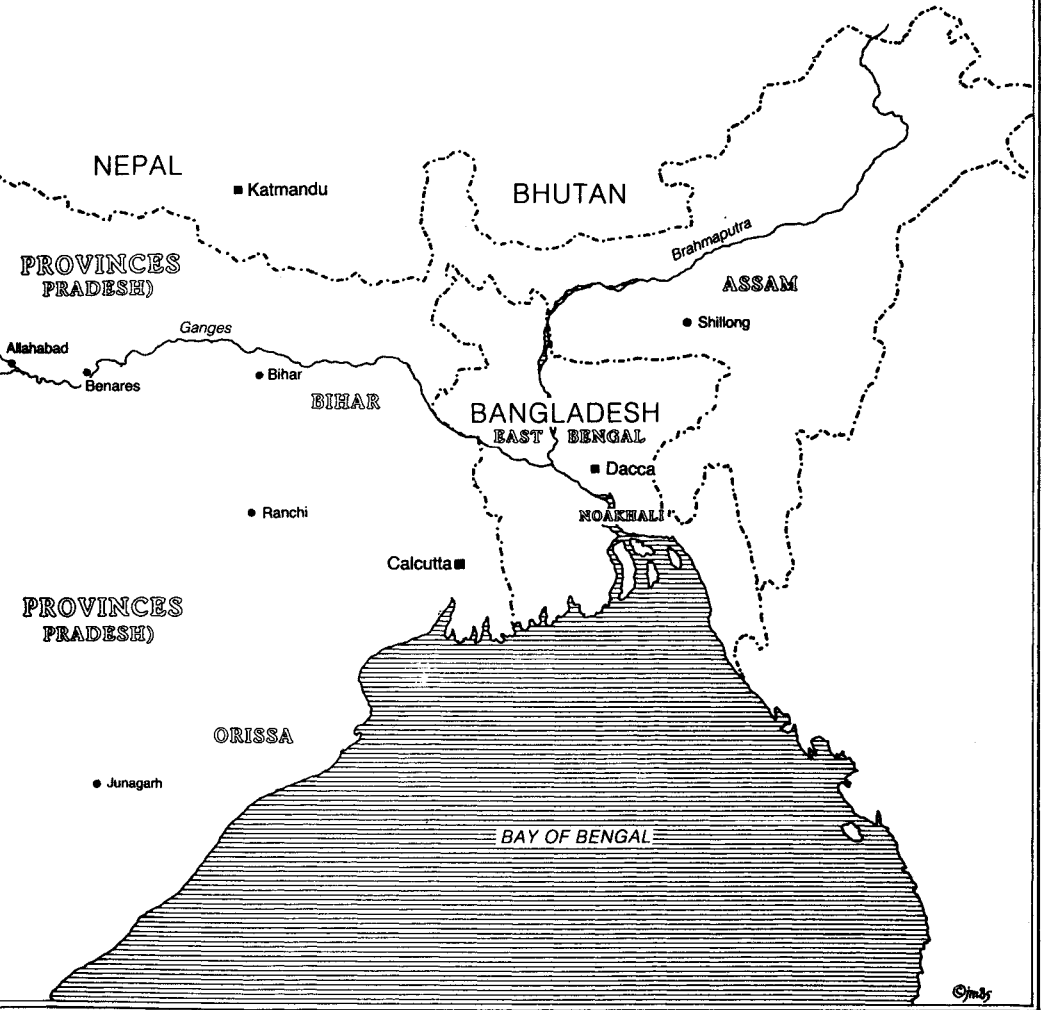
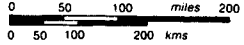
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## *Disastrous Twilight*

The sun . . . . .  
In dim eclipse disastrous twilight sheds  
On half the nations, and with fear of change  
Perplexes monarchs.

Milton, *Paradise Lost* Book I

# *Disastrous Twilight*

A PERSONAL RECORD OF  
THE PARTITION OF INDIA

Major-General S. Shahid Hamid

PRIVATE SECRETARY TO FIELD-MARSHAL  
SIR CLAUDE AUCHINLECK

1946-47

*With a Foreword by*

PHILIP ZIEGLER

*and Preface by*

PETER WILLEY



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*In Memory of*  
*Field-Marshal Sir Claude Auchinleck*  
GCB, GCIE, CSI, DSO, OBE  
*The Last Commander-in-Chief in India*

# *Illustrations*

*Between pages 174 and 175*

- Field-Marshal Sir Claude Auchinleck, Commander-in-Chief, India.  
Mohammed Ali Jinnah – the Quaid.  
The Quaid and C-in-C at a party at the author's house.  
General Akbar Khan, Sir Claude Auchinleck, the Quaid and Miss Jinnah.  
Jinnah, Sir Claude, Admiral Jefford, Miss Jinnah and the author, at the author's house.  
Lord Wavell.  
Major-General Sir Walter Cawthorne.  
General Sir Reginald Savory.  
The Nawab of Rampur and Sir Claude Auchinleck.  
The author's house in Delhi – 12 Willingdon Crescent.  
The C-in-C with his pet cranes, George and Mary.  
A *Barakhana* at the C-in-C's house.  
A game of football after dinner in the C-in-C's house.  
Sir Claude Auchinleck taking the salute of the Indian Contingent at the Victory parade in London.  
Three Field-M Marshals: Montgomery, Wavell, Auchinleck.  
A reception at the C-in-C's house; left to right: Admiral Miles, General Godwin-Austen, the C-in-C, Sir Walter Monkton.  
The C-in-C. with Their Highnesses of Jodhpur, Bhopal and Jaipur.  
The C-in-C with Lord Mountbatten and Field-Marshal Slim.  
Lord Pethic-Lawrence with Lord Mountbatten.  
The Auk's farewell to India.  
The Auk with the author and his children.  
The Auk with Ayub Khan on the way to review the Parade of the 1st Punjab Regiment.  
The Auk with the author's younger daughter Chootu during a visit to Pakistan.  
The Auk, the author and his wife at the Auk's 90th birthday party at the Hurlingham Club.  
A letter from the Auk to one of the author's children.

# Contents

<i>Preface to second edition</i>	ix
<i>Foreword</i>	xxi
<i>Corrigendum to the Foreword</i>	xxiv
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xxvii
<i>Introduction</i>	xxix
<b>PART I – THE BACKGROUND</b>	<b>1</b>
The Political Stalemate	3
The Indian Army	12
The Indian National Army	15
The Royal Indian Navy Mutiny	23
The Sikhs	27
The North-West Frontier	29
<b>PART II – IT NEARLY SUCCEEDED</b>	<b>33</b>
March 1946	35
April 1946	48
May 1946	59
June 1946	71
July 1946	79
<b>PART III – THE STILL SERVICEABLE TRACTOR</b>	<b>89</b>
August 1946	91
September 1946	99
October 1946	106
November 1946	112
December 1946	119
January 1947	123
February 1947	132
<b>PART IV – GOVERNMENT BY HUNCHES AND FLASHES</b>	<b>137</b>
March 1947	139
April 1947	156

May 1947	166
June 1947	175
July 1947	197
<b>PART V – THE UNPRECEDENTED UPHEAVAL</b>	<b>215</b>
August 1947	217
<b>PART VI – DISMISSAL</b>	<b>241</b>
August 1947	243
September 1947	245
October 1947	265
November 1947	281
<b>PART VII – THE SILENT MAN</b>	<b>287</b>
Epilogue	289
<b>APPENDICES</b>	
I Memorandum by the Commander-in-Chief on the First INA Trial	303
II The Commander-in-Chief's Broadcast, 28th March, 1946	307
III The Strategic Value of India to the British Empire	309
IV Policy Note on the Future of the Armed Forces	314
V The Commander-in-Chief's Staff College Address	319
VI Setting up of the Armed Forces Nationalization Committee	322
VII Division of the Armed Forces	324
VIII Preparation of Plan for the Partition of the Indian Armed Forces	330
IX The Military Implication of Pakistan	334
X Minutes of the Meeting on Liaquat Ali Khan's Paper	340
XI Massacres in Punjab	344
XII <i>Daily Mail</i> interview with Sir Claude Auchinleck	347
XIII Extracts from Letters to the Author and his Family	350
 <i>Index</i>	 355

## *Preface to Second Edition*

This second edition of *Disastrous Twilight* is important for two main reasons. Firstly, many people who were deeply interested in the whole subject of Partition in India, in the events that led up to it, the process of Partition itself and the very controversial issue of the boundary awards, as well as the appalling aftermath of Partition, were unable to obtain copies of Shahid Hamid's book. Their needs must now be met and it is also necessary to consider the strong reactions to the book both in literary reviews and in letters, debates and broadcasts after its publication in 1986.

Secondly, important new evidence has come to light recently about the Boundary Award following disclosures made by Christopher Beaumont, who was secretary to Sir Cyril Radcliffe, Chairman of the Boundary Commission between India and Pakistan. After the death in 1989 of Sir George Abell, who was private secretary to Lord Mountbatten as Viceroy, Christopher Beaumont is now the only person alive who can personally testify about the reasons for the decisions behind the Award and the modifications those decisions underwent. His disclosures cast considerable doubt on the impartiality, and indeed the integrity of the last Viceroy of India at that period, and must therefore be examined carefully. It is an inevitable consequence, too, that Philip Ziegler's judgements, both as the official biographer of Lord Mountbatten and as the author of the foreword to the original edition of *Disastrous Twilight*, must also be called into question.

I have known Shahid Hamid for a very long time and have been closely associated with him in some of the books he has written. I think, therefore, that I am able to make personal judgements about him and his work with due impartiality. I also had the privilege of knowing the Auk quite well after he had retired as Commander-in-Chief, India, and will not conceal my admiration for that great man.

Let us start by examining the reviews and comments which were made after the publication of *Disastrous Twilight*. It is clear that the events in India during 1946 and 1947 still arouse intense passions among many

people in the U.K. and others overseas. These views are not confined to the older generation who lived through those momentous times, but have percolated down to their children and even their grandchildren. When lecturing on India to adult audiences for Bristol University I have found them especially interested in the period of the British Raj and its eventual break-up, a subject which always produces lively discussion because so many British families have had connections of some sort with India. The discussions turn quickly to personalities, involving particularly General Wavell, still very much loved in the U.K., the Auk and Mountbatten on the British side, and Nehru and Jinnah on the Indian.

This clash of personalities dominated, too, the debate and the reviews after *Disastrous Twilight* had appeared. In his article 'A Biased General' John Grigg of *The Daily Telegraph* wrote that Shahid Hamid was 'a partisan of Muslim separatism so blinded by prejudice that he can seldom see any good in a Congress leader, while apparently he sees no defects at all in his hero, Mohammed Ali Jinnah'. Grigg concluded by accusing Hamid of being 'a committed Muslim Leaguer who clearly acted as a spy for Jinnah, with possibly disastrous consequences' – an astonishing assertion to which Shahid Hamid gave a dignified denial in a letter to the same paper. The comments of John Keegan of *The Daily Telegraph*, however, were far more perspicacious. After stating that Hamid had 'a mind of the first class, allied to personal qualities quite as outstanding', he continued, 'But politics are not the real fascination of this book. Personality predominates. General Hamid is a sort of Indian Saint-Simon. He has an eye quite as keen as that of the Pepys of Versailles for the vanities, egotism, ambition, spitefulness, petty self-advancement and surreptitious doing-down of rivals that characterize any court'.

Although John Keegan is quite right in what he says it is a sad reflection that Vice-Regal Lodge should have become at this time – as it undoubtedly did – a hotbed of intrigue and ambition. Did Mountbatten, one is tempted to ask, regard himself as a sort of 20th century Moghul emperor? There is some evidence that he did. The one towering unshakeable character in the midst of these storms and tempests was Auchinleck – a fact acknowledged by almost all the reviewers, especially John Biggs-Davidson in his article 'Calendar of Chaos' in *The Spectator* and the reviewer of *Disastrous Twilight* in the *British Army Review*. The latter writer commented that the political scene was so tortuous and the atrocities committed against the Muslim peoples were so horrific, that there were times when the reader was driven to feel that the whole story was like some 'daemoniac and nightmarish version from Alice in Wonderland'. He could well have added Franz Kafka.

It is against this background that the officers of the Indian Army stand out so superbly in their desperate attempt to maintain their standards of total impartiality. They had been devoted to Wavell, who was so disgrace-

fully treated by the British government, as Shahid Hamid describes in this book, and above all to the Auk. Hamid reminds us that Churchill wrote of him: 'The Auk was an officer of the greatest distinction and a character of singular elevation . . . the greatest general of the war'. The author of the article in the *British Army Review* sums up quite brilliantly the essential issue when he writes ' . . . This (book) is a story of stark tragedy and of utterly disgraceful behaviour – a dark bitter pool of reminiscence from the depths of which few characters of real integrity stand out like beacons, the brightest of which, need one say, being that great and much-wronged figure – the Auk'.

Integrity – surely that is the highest accolade which history can accord, for it also implies a correct judgement and an absence of personal ambition. In this book Hamid arraigns before the bar of history the representatives who were chiefly responsible for the terrible mistakes and events of the period – the Auk, Mountbatten, Nehru and Jinnah and those who served under them. There is no doubt that in his opinion the Auk and Jinnah pass the test of integrity: Mountbatten and Nehru do not.

Pursuing the simile of a court – history is the judge – just as Hamid is counsel for Auchinleck, so is Ziegler counsel for Mountbatten. In some ways it was strange that Philip Ziegler should have been asked to write the foreword for *Disastrous Twilight* and it was stranger still that he accepted. Does he perhaps have a trace of vanity which was certainly a conspicuous trait in Mountbatten's make-up? Both he and Hamid are historians of distinction, but Ziegler hardly acknowledges the fact that the reader, whether he be pro-Pakistan or pro-India, pro-Jinnah or pro-Nehru, must consider this book as a seminal work for any serious student of the period. Ziegler's tone in the foreword is patronising and ill at ease. As one correspondent wrote 'the value of any diary such as this must depend on the intelligence and integrity of the writer and the reader's assessment of this'. Ziegler acknowledges neither quality in the author. His opening paragraph denigrating the intellectual shortcomings of almost-English gentlemen, to whom he likens Hamid, is arrogant, insulting and irrelevant. His summary that Hamid's is 'the age-old protest of the straightforward soldier against the devious politician, of the idealist against the pragmatist, of the traditionalist against the progressive' makes no sense to anyone who has bothered to study Hamid's subsequent career. Straightforward soldier he may be in the sense that he has always been loyal to his country and his religion and his country's founder, in the same measure as he has been loyal to the King-Emperor who signed his commission and to the Army he has served as Master General of Ordnance and Adjutant General. We must also remember that he has had a distinguished political as well as a military career. He was Minister of Information and Broadcasting in the Pakistan government and later Minister of Culture, Sports and Tourism. He is a well-known author and historian

and is certainly a shrewd judge of men and affairs. He has been a special ambassador for Pakistan and has wide international contacts. Ziegler's somewhat dismissive comments are therefore very wide of the mark. Hamid is a liberal, progressive and highly intelligent man. Ziegler rebukes him for not modifying his views on the events of Partition since writing his diaries. Why should he? He has had plenty of time to reflect and to talk at leisure with other people involved. If he felt he had reason to alter his stance he would have done so. The fact is that his research since 1947 has confirmed his conviction that he was right in what he had originally written.

In his foreword Ziegler also doubts the accuracy of Shahid Hamid's diaries, maintaining that many of Hamid's judgements were based on information which was probably incomplete or inaccurate. The same criticism could be levelled against Philip Ziegler or any other historian. The truth of events, real historical truth, is not easy to obtain. It takes a long time before all the relevant information can be examined and objectively assessed. 'Instant' biographies, written to satisfy public demand, are seldom of great value in the long run. Philip Ziegler's own biography of Lord Mountbatten is bound to be disputed by future historians. I am sure that he himself must expect that. When Lord Mountbatten was killed he became a popular hero figure. The public demanded a biography, a picture in which the warts were removed. But, as the years went by, the public also began to realize that Mountbatten had his weaknesses, too. This is the second phase of biographical appreciation. To speak ill of the dead is no longer *lèse-majesté*: in fact it almost becomes fashionable. Then eventually comes the third phase, when more evidence is clear and the historian can come to a provisional judgement. Such judgement may always remain provisional, as there are so many differing accounts of one event. We cannot really yet make a final assessment of the achievements and the weaknesses of Alexander the Great, to say nothing of Winston Churchill. My complaint about Philip Ziegler's foreword is that he gives the impression that his own picture of Lord Mountbatten is immutable and as sacred as the tablets of the law which Moses received from Jehovah. Legends are dangerous. They perpetuate prejudice and may cause lasting injustice – in this case to Field Marshal Sir Claude Auchinleck. That is why Hamid's book is so valuable. He speaks the truth as he sees it and in no way distorts the evidence.

We must now consider the new evidence given by Christopher Beaumont early in 1992. He is a retired circuit judge living in Yorkshire and, as I have already said, he was secretary to Sir Cyril Radcliffe, Chairman of the Boundary Commission, and as such he of course had access to all official papers and was present with Radcliffe at all meetings of the Commission. In some respects his role can be compared to that of Shahid Hamid's with Auchinleck. Although Beaumont did not keep a diary at the time, on returning to the U.K. he wrote down his own version of

events. Realizing, of course, that his document was of great historical importance, and inevitably controversial, he entrusted it to the care of the Warden of All Souls, Oxford. The document's importance was increased by the death in 1989 of Sir George Abell, Lord Mountbatten's private secretary. Christopher Beaumont then became the only person who knew the truth about the 1947 Partition of India, though he had confided to his close friend, Sir Penderel Moon, a well-known historian of India, and his brother-in-law, Sir Robin Latimer, what had happened.

In his first paragraph Christopher Beaumont requested that the contents of the document should not be divulged until after his death, and then only to people approved by agreement between the Warden of All Souls and the Permanent Representative of the Foreign Office. But interviewed by Simon Scott Plummer for a long article published in *The Daily Telegraph* on February 24th 1992, Beaumont explained that he had been led to reconsider the question of publishing what he knew about the events of Partition on learning that his grandson had been given the Partition of India as a special subject for the History Tripos at Cambridge. This made him realize belatedly 'that the event had passed into history and that the time had come for the truth to be revealed'.

Under the headline 'How Mountbatten bent the rules and the Indian border' Scott Plummer's account of the interview began with the statement: 'Earl Mountbatten manipulated in India's favour the findings of the (Boundary) Commission'. He then quoted Christopher Beaumont as saying that Radcliffe had yielded 'to what he thought was overwhelming political expediency' in agreeing, after he had decided the boundary, to the transfer of the Ferozepore and Zira sub-districts from Pakistan to India.

In his document Christopher Beaumont states that Sir Cyril Radcliffe was appointed Joint Chairman of the Boundary Commission on July 6th 1947, and that he was appointed private secretary to Radcliffe on July 8th. Rao Sahib V.D. Ayer, a Hindu, was appointed assistant secretary. Mountbatten, Nehru and Jinnah agreed that Radcliffe should complete his report on the boundary lines for Bengal and the Punjab by August 15th. 'Radcliffe objected, since it was clearly impossible to complete the task properly in one month and nine days. His objection was over-ruled. 'Mountbatten, Nehru and Jinnah must share the blame for this irresponsible decision' is Beaumont's comment.

Beaumont goes on to state that it was a serious mistake to appoint a Hindu (the same would have applied to a Muslim) to the post of assistant secretary to the Boundary Commission. In Beaumont's opinion an assistant secretary should have been sent out from the United Kingdom. He asserts that once the Hindu and the Muslim High Court judges, who were supposed to help Radcliffe draw up his plan, 'were discarded as useless, the only people who knew about the subsequent discussions were

Radcliffe, Beaumont himself and Ayer'. Beaumont concludes this paragraph of his document by stating 'I have not the slightest doubt that Ayer kept Nehru and V.P. Menon informed of progress'.

Beaumont goes on to give evidence for this assertion based on the fact that Nehru voiced his concern to the Viceroy at the decision to give certain territories (he quotes the Chittagong Hill tracts in East Bengal) to Pakistan. Nehru could not have known that unless Ayer had told him – and it was clearly a breach of confidence. Beaumont quotes John Christie, one of the assistant private secretaries to the Viceroy, as writing the following entry in his diary for August 11th; 'H.E. is having to be strenuously dissuaded from trying to persuade Radcliffe to alter his Punjab line'.

The most serious boundary alteration, however, concerned the tehsils of Ferozepore and Zira. A tehsil is an administrative area of some 400 square miles. Ferozepore was particularly important. This district included the canal headworks which largely controlled the irrigation system of the state of Bikaner. Radcliffe had allotted these two tehsils to Pakistan. Sir Evan Jenkins, Governor of the Punjab, had asked Sir George Abell to let him know the course of the Partition line, so that he could send troops to the areas in which violence might arise. Perfectly properly, Sir George Abell asked Christopher Beaumont for this information. Beaumont told him and sent him a map, which Abell passed on to Sir Evan Jenkins. This map was never destroyed and after Jenkins had left the Punjab in August it came into the hands of the new Pakistan government. Its discovery naturally gave rise to the suspicion that the original boundary line had been altered by Radcliffe. Christopher Beaumont is sure that the alteration was made 'under pressure from Mountbatten', who himself came under strong pressure from Nehru and also the Maharaja of Bikaner, whose state might have suffered if the canal headworks at Ferozepore had been controlled by Pakistan. The Maharaja was certainly friendly with Nehru.

In his document Christopher Beaumont tells how V.P. Menon, who played a key role in Indian politics at that time, had paid a midnight visit to the Vice-Regal estate shortly after the boundary map had been sent to Jenkins. Menon asked if he could see Radcliffe, who was working there. He said that Mountbatten had sent him. Beaumont refused to accede to this request. The following day Sir Cyril Radcliffe was invited to lunch by Lord Ismay, the Viceroy's private secretary, but Radcliffe was asked by Lord Ismay not to bring Beaumont with him, as there would be no room. Beaumont relates: 'This was the first time that Radcliffe and I had been separated at any sort of function'. He continues: 'That evening the Punjab line was changed; Ferozepore going to India'.

Beaumont's judgement of this discreditable affair is as follows: 'So Mountbatten interfered and Radcliffe allowed himself to be overborne. Grave discredit to both'.

Beaumont says there were certain mitigating circumstances for this action. Mountbatten was overworked and tired and was doubtless told by Nehru and Menon that if Ferozepore went to Pakistan there would be war between the two states.

In Beaumont's view Radcliffe must have been persuaded by Lord Ismay and the Viceroy at the fatal lunch, from which he was excluded on the flimsiest excuse, that if Ferozepore were given to Pakistan, despite its Muslim majority, civil war could follow. He points out that Radcliffe was largely ignorant of the Indian political situation – he had been there for only six weeks and had never visited the country before. He probably did not realize that Nehru and Menon were putting pressure on Mountbatten. Beaumont sums up this lamentable incident: 'He (Radcliffe) yielded, I think, to what he thought was overwhelming political expediency' and in his final sentence he says 'This episode reflects great discredit on Mountbatten and Nehru and less on Radcliffe'.

The reader may well conclude with me that Beaumont perhaps allows loyalty to his former chief to colour his judgement. Radcliffe should never have allowed himself to be persuaded to alter his award and it was most improper for the Viceroy to resort to this form of force majeure. Nehru, of course, was playing his usual game of Realpolitik, and it is difficult to blame him for doing so. The ultimate responsibility must remain squarely on Mountbatten's shoulders.

These disclosures created, of course, a considerable stir in the U.K. and elsewhere. There were several consequences. The first was to show how right Shahid Hamid had been in his original account of the episode and to justify all that he had written in the first edition of *Disastrous Twilight*. During the summer of 1992 Hamid visited Christopher Beaumont in York and received permission to quote from his document. The second consequence was to cast doubt on the conclusions reached by Philip Ziegler in his official biography of Mountbatten published in 1985. In this work he rejects the suggestion that Sir Cyril Radcliffe, whom he describes as 'a man of monumental integrity and independence of mind', would have meekly allowed his recommendations to be altered. He concedes that at one point, under pressure from Nehru, Mountbatten might have contemplated asking Radcliffe to amend the awards, but that he was probably dissuaded by Lord Ismay to abandon such a move because of the risks it involved. Philip Ziegler adds 'He may have been guilty of indiscretion but not of the arrant folly as well as dishonesty of which his enemies accused him'.

In a BBC interview in 1992 Philip Ziegler was questioned on the problems which arose at Partition and it is interesting to study his replies. Asked if there were any justification for the charge that Mountbatten had set an 'extraordinarily brisk' time-table for the achievement of independence, he replied that there was no real substance in such criticism.

He said, 'The risks were so appalling because the whole structure of India was falling to bits. All the forces which held it together, which preserved law and order, which made possible a viable state, the judiciary, the police, the civil service, they were all breaking up. . . . Only by taking it at a desperate speed was there any chance at all of getting through without a major uproar . . .'

Why, one wonders, and this point was put to me by several men who were junior officers in India at that time, did Ziegler omit any reference to the Army in his list of 'forces' which held India together? Most officers and other ranks, too, would argue that at no time was there any suggestion that the Army was 'falling to bits'. Whether a particular unit was 'Indian' or 'Pakistani' made no difference. It got on with its job, which often included the preservation of law and order. Neither Mountbatten, nor I feel, Philip Ziegler realized the intensity of the loyalty felt by the vast majority of the members of the Army to Wavell and Auchinleck. Many officers did criticize Mountbatten for his haste and wondered if he really knew what he was about. Nor did these officers to the best of their recollections hear much about the civil service or the police 'falling to bits'. Ziegler's answer is, in short, symptomatic of his refusal to acknowledge the part that Wavell or the Auk could have played if they had been allowed to do so.

Later in the same interview Philip Ziegler conceded that Mountbatten 'probably listened slightly more to the Indian than to the Muslim councillors'. He then referred directly to the Boundary Commission, and the Ferozepore and Zira transfers, which he agreed 'were transferred from one side to the other rather late in the day'. He then himself posed the crucial question 'Was this transfer made by Radcliffe because it was more logical or under pressure from Mountbatten because he believed there was going to be an unholy row with the Maharaja concerned and that the whole settlement might break down if he didn't give way at this point?' Philip Ziegler continues 'There is some new evidence since I wrote my book that suggests that he (Mountbatten) may have been rather more involved with modifications to the line than had previously been accepted, but even so I don't think his primary concern was to help India against Pakistan . . . So I think on the whole that his handling of negotiations up to the time of independence was pretty impartial and the Pakistanis don't have any right to say that he monstrously favoured the Indian cause, as they tend to do'.

It is clear that the transfer of the two tehsils was made on political rather than on economic or 'logical' grounds and Philip Ziegler's claim of the strict impartiality of the last Viceroy smacks of a wish to cling to lost causes, although, to do this distinguished historian justice, he does now admit that his former 'nugget of doubt has become a boulder'! But there is one other factor which we must consider before we leave

this question of impartiality and that is the problem of Kashmir.

In a book published in 1991, entitled *Kashmir: A Disputed Legacy 1846-1990*, Alistair Lamb produces new evidence to suggest that Mountbatten wanted Kashmir to accede to India. In his article in *The Daily Telegraph* Simon Scott Plummer suggests, as does Alistair Lamb, that Lord Mountbatten had connived with Nehru and other Indian political leaders to put extreme pressure on the Maharaja to join India, despite the fact that the majority of his subjects were Muslims. Lamb considers that the Viceroy used Radcliffe as a scapegoat. In fact he goes further than this and leaves us in no doubt that he regards the whole Kashmir affair as a sham. He suspects that someone in the government of India had worked out the Punjab Partition line long before Radcliffe appeared on the scene and that Radcliffe's award was based on an already agreed plan. There are also grounds for thinking that Congress was in fact the principal architect of the present borders of India and Pakistan. Congress did not in any way wish to share power with the Muslims. This meant that although Congress had no alternative than to agree to the creation of a separate state of Pakistan, they would do all in their power to ensure that Pakistan got as little territory as possible. Through his influence on Mountbatten and his wife, Nehru was able to achieve the majority of his wishes.

If this assumption is anywhere near the truth it follows that we have to be very cautious in our approach to the role played by Mountbatten. He had of course to appear to be impartial, neutral and above party in all his actions during the birth process of the two Dominions, as Alistair Lamb says. But there is another side to Mountbatten, too, which we must not forget. He was intensely ambitious, extremely well connected and accustomed to command in an almost regal way; he had accepted the post of Viceroy from his cousin the King. But he wanted to finish the job and to return to sea again and become First Sea Lord. That was his real ambition and in doing so he would have repaired the slight on his family honour, when his father was forced to resign as First Sea Lord in 1914 because of his German origin. As Philip Ziegler himself writes: 'But the pain which he suffered in the autumn of 1914 was inexpungible. From then onwards the office of First Sea Lord was to possess almost sacred significance. No other dignity, however glorious, could satisfy his need'. This restless ambition, this need for haste, to get the job done, whatever the consequences, may indeed have induced him to take short cuts in solving the problems of India, which were to cost the country dear.

As one would expect, the publication of Christopher Beaumont's document in *The Daily Telegraph*, followed by a letter from Alistair Lamb in which he contended that the Boundary Commission was merely Mountbatten's escape device, produced a mixed reaction. Critics chastised Beaumont's account as highly speculative and argued that the Boundary

Commission was an organic and independent part of an inevitably improvised partition process. Mountbatten was vigorously defended and attention drawn to his Final Personal Report to the Secretary of State for India in which he is at pains to defend his strict impartiality. But the fact remains that despite all protestations to the contrary Mountbatten had plenty of time between the 9th and 16th of August 1947 to tinker with the award. Hamid pointed out in a letter to *The Daily Telegraph* on February 24th 1992 that Mountbatten maintained that he had received the award on the 13th August and had signed it on the 15th, a statement contradicted by Beaumont as it had been by others before.

Things might have been different if there had been real checks on the Viceroy's powers and actions. But there were in effect few either from the Secretary of State, the government in London or even the Palace. This led Mountbatten to feel that within certain limits he could do as he wished and that the prevailing mood in London was in agreement with his own desire for a speedy solution to the problems of India. He could not understand Jinnah, whom he regarded as intransigent, which indeed he was where the vital interests of the future state of Pakistan were concerned. But Nehru was a man with whom he felt he could do business. The Radcliffe Commission was a useful lever to him, to which he paid lip-service in public, but in private he considered it a charade.

These facts are unpalatable, but are now shared by many, fifty years after the events. Some former senior officers, who are still alive, feel so strongly about them, that out of a feeling of shame and deep hurt they cannot bring themselves to accept invitations from their former regiments to visit them. Did Mountbatten perhaps inflict on India 'a grave injustice which will amount to a breach of faith by the British' – to quote an accusation made by Liaquat Ali Khan to Lord Ismay?

There comes a time when responsible historians must bite the bullet and examine unpalatable truths. What Shahid Hamid has done in this book is to restore the moral superiority and the real greatness of men like Wavell and in particular Auchinleck. In his foreword to the original edition of *Disastrous Twilight* Ziegler damned Hamid with faint praise. As one correspondent wrote: 'Ziegler surely does not know his man. Hamid has constantly acknowledged his debt to this country for his professional training and he has a love for this country as a second home. He is a trained historian and a man of high intelligence and integrity. But there is no question as to his first loyalty and that is of an Indian Muslim. He would not be what he is without it'.

To quote another correspondent: '*Disastrous Twilight* does great service not only to the cause of determining the truth about Partition, but also because we see the world at that time through non-Western eyes'. Fortunately we do not in this country now need to aspire to imperial greatness any more – our greatness rests on quite different premises. Through the

loss of empire we have become intellectually and perhaps morally more mature. We are now ready to accept the truths of history and to abjure the shibboleths of the past.

This book is above all a tribute to that almost forgotten hero – Claude Auchinleck, who repeatedly said that history has a way of putting the record straight. It is also a tribute to the author himself and an affirmation of the mutual affection and respect, based on truth, between Britain and the old India, now the sovereign states of India and Pakistan within the Commonwealth. Whilst we must learn the lessons of that disastrous twilight, and weep for those who lost their lives because of it, we can perhaps draw comfort from the prospect of a new dawn and remember the words addressed by Milton to Oliver Cromwell in May 1652 :

Peace hath her victories  
no less renowned than war.

December 1992  
Upavon  
Wiltshire

Peter Willey

# *Foreword*

*by Philip Ziegler*

Major-General Shahid Hamid is a shining example of that type of man whom the English have in mind when they observe, with the air of one conferring the ultimate in accolades, that really, he might almost have been an Englishman. By this they mean that he is straightforward, loyal, honourable and courageous: all qualities which they like to believe the lesser breeds have in mind when they refer to "the English gentleman" (if, indeed, anyone does still refer to English gentlemen in this most ungentlemanly age). General Hamid also exhibits another characteristic of the species – a tendency to see one thing at a time with the utmost clarity, to the almost complete exclusion of anything else.

In March, 1946, Shahid Hamid was appointed Private Secretary to Sir Claude Auchinleck, Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army. He remained with the Field-Marshal until August, 1947, and was still in close touch with him up to the time that Auchinleck left India some three months later. Throughout this period he kept a diary in which he recorded the events of the day and his reflections on the issues involved. As is almost bound to be the case with such instant records, its judgments are based on information which is usually incomplete and often inaccurate. It was written in the heat of the moment (and, to judge by General Hamid's epilogue, the fires have died down very little in the intervening years). It makes no effort to achieve objectivity and the prejudices that it demonstrates seem to me to be generally wrong-headed. Nevertheless, it is a transparently honest statement of a point of view which, rightly or wrongly, many people held at the time and still hold today. It is right that it should be made generally available.

General Hamid's voice is the more valuable for being one that is comparatively rarely heard. He is a Muslim and a loyal servant of Pakistan, and on the whole the voice of the Hindu and of India has been heard more vociferously in Britain. He is a soldier, and it is the politician or the civil servant whose opinions are most commonly expressed. Above all, he was a devoted admirer and servant of Auchinleck, and that most inarticulate and withdrawn of men has chosen to let his case go, if not by default, then at least without any

attempt to propagate his point of view. The Auk needed a champion and he has found a doughty one in Shahid Hamid.

The picture of Auchinleck that emerges from these pages is an attractive one. The bleak, somewhat unapproachable figure viewed with trepidation by so many of his subordinates is revealed among his intimates as warm-hearted and welcoming. "The Auk is a simple man with a zest for living, having unsophisticated habits and unadulterated joys. He enjoys the little pleasures life has to offer." He relished schoolboy games, laughed heartily at the most unassuming pleasantries and had a weakness for rumbustious practical jokes. Himself lonely and with his self-confidence sapped by the defection of his wife, he responded to the obvious affection and admiration of the young Hamids and joyfully let himself be drawn into their family circle. "The children are very fond of him, and he of them. He has practically adopted them as his own. . . . Whenever the children want a special toy, they let him know. To them the Auk is known as 'Chieft'." He treated his Private Secretary as a trusted friend. "I have been short-tempered, unreasonable and petty at times," he confessed in his farewell letter. "I know my faults and deplore them but my flesh is weak."

But the real significance of this book lies in the picture that it paints of the negotiations that led up to the independence of India and Pakistan, the massacres that followed, and the teething pains of the two new countries, as seen by a Muslim officer who had the ear and enjoyed the confidence of the Commander-in-Chief. Shahid Hamid's fundamental assumptions are predictable: the Muslim leaders were honourable and undemanding; their Congress counterparts were wily, grasping and unscrupulous; Mountbatten was the puppet of the latter, manipulated by the subtle Hindus who knew how to play on his vanity and his ambition. But even allowing for this, the sort of misconceptions that seem to have prevailed in Auchinleck's headquarters are still disconcerting and could have been extremely damaging.

To take one example: "Under Nehru's instructions," wrote Shahid Hamid on 19 June, 1947, "Mountbatten left for Kashmir to pressurize the Maharajah to throw in his lot with India." In fact Mountbatten went to Kashmir against Nehru's strongly expressed wishes and in the hope of pressurizing the Maharajah to throw in his lot with Pakistan – a mission which, in the event, proved singularly fruitless. It mattered little that a junior officer should have got things so completely back to front. It would not have mattered very much if Auchinleck had reached the same conclusion. But things may have gone further than that. Hamid saw it as part of his duty to tell Jinnah what was going on. "In the evening Mountbatten came to see the Auk," he wrote in his diary for 19 April. "He was of the view that the emergence of Pakistan cannot be avoided. I informed the Quaid accordingly." If Jinnah had heard from what he might reasonably have supposed to be, if not the horse's mouth, then at least something pretty close to it, that Mountbatten was going to Kashmir to talk the Maharajah into accession

with India, then what chance was there that he would trust the Viceroy on that or any other issue? Yet if he had instead accepted that Mountbatten was working to achieve the exact opposite, and had indeed persuaded Nehru that Kashmir's accession to Pakistan was proper and inevitable, then he might never have inspired the Pathan invasion and the Maharajah would not have been panicked into joining India. To pin on Shahid Hamid even part of the responsibility for the long-drawn tragedy of Kashmir would be extravagant, but his comments illustrate vividly how prejudice and fear can breed the very perils that they are anxious to avert.

Given Hamid's total dedication to the cause of Auchinleck, it was inevitable that Montgomery would get even shorter shrift than Mountbatten in his diary. "Monty is extremely ambitious and ruthless," is the entry when the Chief of the Imperial General Staff arrives in Delhi in June, 1946. "He knows in his heart-of-hearts that the Auk is a superior person and a better soldier than himself." Montgomery had already made up his mind that Auchinleck had outstayed his time in India and should be got rid of as soon as possible, to be replaced by Slim (an idea that Hamid wrongly attributes to Mountbatten, who in fact was determined that Slim should succeed Montgomery as CIGS). The two men were incompatible, disliked each other cordially, and made little effort to conceal the fact. Hamid had no doubt where his loyalties lay. Montgomery's Private Secretary told him that his master did not like to see anyone smoking in his presence. "When Monty arrived I made certain that I had a cigar in my hand . . . Not a word was said."

It was not only the Muslim army officers who felt sickened and betrayed by the destruction of the Service to which they had given their lives. Shahid Hamid's is the age-old protest of the straightforward soldier against the devious politician, of the idealist against the pragmatist, of the traditionalist against the progressive. It is not necessary to accept the premises of his argument to feel sympathy for the raw pain and anger that permeate this chronicle. His book deserves to be widely read. Any student of the period who accepted it as the whole truth would be gravely misled, but if he were to ignore it altogether he would be missing a statement of real importance.

*Philip Ziegler*

## *Corrigendum to the Foreword*

I received the foreword written by Philip Ziegler while on a visit to the United Kingdom, where I had neither the time nor the facility to include in my full introduction my reactions to his observations. As there are some basic flaws in his interpretation I feel the necessity for this corrigendum.

Ziegler's statement that Mountbatten went to Kashmir to persuade the Maharajah to throw in his lot with Pakistan is not correct. This was a cover plan. If it is correct then there was no need for Mountbatten to ask Nehru for a note on Kashmir before he left. In this note Nehru recommends the removal of Kak, the Prime Minister, his adversary and the release of Sheikh Abdullah his stooge. Nehru also suggested that Kashmir should join the Constituent Assembly of India and not that of Pakistan. (See the Transfer of Power 1942 – Volume XI, No. 229 Pages 442–448.)

The 'Junior Officer' by which Philip Ziegler means me, did not get the facts wrong. History proved me right. I was not a 'Junior Officer' in its true sense but private Secretary to the C-In-C India. Perhaps Philip Ziegler does not understand the significance and importance of the assignment. Irrespective of rank, Private Secretaries have unlimited access both to documents and to the persons from whose desks these documents originate. Even more, they are aware of the thinking behind these otherwise bland documents.

Ziegler states that Mr. Jinnah inspired the Pathan invasion of Kashmir which prompted the Maharajah to panic into joining India. Nothing could be farther from the truth. The Quaid had nothing to do with it. It was the spontaneous reaction of the people to the massacre of the Muslims which was taking place and the pressure which was being brought on the Maharajah to join India. By giving India a corridor to Kashmir, Mountbatten had exposed himself as a partisan and people realized that accession was imminent.

It is a well known fact that Mountbatten wanted to get rid of Auchinleck and Slim refused to serve under him (Mountbatten).

I must mention that I appreciate and value the views of people who disagree with me. Real history emerges only when all points of view are taken into consideration and mine are those of a Muslim and Pakistani. I make no bones about it. Will and Ariel Durant mention in their book *The Lessons of History* – ‘total perspective is an optical illusion’. Perhaps we can learn enough from history to bear reality patiently and to respect one another’s delusions.

Philips Ziegler maintains in his book *Mountbatten* that his version is the only authoritative one, while I maintain that his chapters on the Transfer of Power in 1947 incorporate a point of view based on interviews and the Mountbatten, papers – i.e. secondary sources. While mine rests on what I witnessed as that time – i.e. primary sources. I lived through the period close to the seat of power and there were few events, trends, cross-currents of which I was not aware. It is a well known fact that views and impressions recorded when the events are taking place are invariably more accurate, and unadulterated by facts which persons at the helm of affairs wish to record to cover themselves.

S. Shahid Hamid, 1986

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Finally I would like to thank Philip Ziegler for writing such a stimulating foreword to my book and to assure him that my admiration and affection for him are not one whit diminished by what he says. He will, I am sure, agree that history can never be entirely objective, but even with the benefit of hindsight, and having read his excellent biography of Lord Mountbatten, I still stand by every word that I wrote nearly forty years ago.

## *Introduction*

I had never met Field-Marshal Sir Claude Auchinleck before I was selected to be his first Indian Private Secretary. In fact I had not served at GHQ, India nor met any of the top brass. Why I was selected for the post I do not know.

Well-informed people, including Lord Douglas-Home, have told me that a true and factual account of the events that led up to the partition of the Indian subcontinent has not yet been written. In whatever has been written, Auchinleck has been maligned and made a scapegoat. His greatness lay in not wanting to defend himself during his lifetime, leaving History to judge his actions. On the contrary Mountbatten took every conceivable opportunity to justify his stand.

Few people knew the Auk at such close quarters as I did. I came to know him as a Commander and as a human being. Few had this opportunity. He took me into his confidence and kept me abreast of events. As I became aware of the fact that the time we were passing through was going to be important in the history of the subcontinent I began to keep a diary. The Auk gave me permission to make copies of documents I wanted in this connection though he asked me not to publish anything during his lifetime.

Many an account has been written of the Auk's exploits as a soldier. Very little has been said of his personal and human side. I have endeavoured to bring out this aspect of his character so that future historians may see the 'Whole Man'.

I was fortunate to witness many historic events, and also to meet the men who made them possible. This gave me a unique insight into the character of the leaders and their approach to the national problems that were facing them. I was able to record their opinions, expressed both privately and in the open, alongside my own.

In brief, I witnessed the dwindling glow of the British Empire. I saw small men entrusted with great jobs, playing with the destiny of millions.

This book has been written incorporating the diary I kept diligently during those days. It is not just a record of events, but includes my reactions to what

I saw, what I heard and what came across my desk. After the Auk's death I gave the final touches to my diary and procured copies of some of the documents which were incomplete.

My book is a tribute to his memory.

While this book was being prepared for the printer, Philip Ziegler's official biography of Earl Mountbatten was published. I have read the pages which relate to Mountbatten's time in India and see no reason to qualify anything which I wrote at the time.

On my relinquishing the assignment the Auk wrote to me as follows:

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF'S HOUSE

NEW DELHI

25th August '47

My dear Shahid,

I was greatly touched by your kind and generous letter. It is a very great help and comfort to me to feel that I have such a good and loyal friend in you, and I can only say that I could not have had a better staff officer in what, as you know, have been very difficult times.

As I hope you know, I have always looked on you as a friend and a partner rather than as a subordinate officer and you have fully justified the complete confidence I placed in you.

In these troublous days during which you and I have worked together – I hope for the good of India and our Army – I have kept practically nothing from you and this has been a tremendous help to me – I mean that I was able to do this because of my faith in your loyalty and discretion. Things which I may have kept from you – and they were very very few – I had to keep from other people – like PSOs – also!! You have had, I know, a most difficult and delicate task and I do realise how much you have protected me from many worries and anxieties, which a less competent Secretary would have failed to do. This has meant a very great deal to me and also enabled me to keep on functioning under very heavy strain. I have been short-tempered, unreasonable and petty at times – I know my faults and deplore them but my flesh, like that of most of the sons of Adam, is weak! You have been very patient and good and I thank you. I can not say more. I shall miss you sadly – in fact I am missing you daily now. I am so glad we were able to do so many interesting journeys together in so many parts of the world – made easy and pleasant by your good management and refusal to get bothered or annoyed – great qualities of yours! Never lose them!! I look back on our journeyings together with the greatest pleasure and with profound sorrow that we are to do no more of them.

As to Tahira and the children – they have helped enormously too and it has been a real joy and comfort to me to have known them and learned to love them. I shall miss them terribly for the few months that remain to me here. The house and garden will never be the same without them. You are

truly blessed in having them. I hope they will have long years of happiness and peace before them. Now that Tahira is going, who will come to my rescue when difficult guests are to be charmed and made at home!!!

As to you, I wish you every success and all the luck you deserve in your new service. There are, I fear, difficult times ahead for all in this country, but I feel you will keep your head and your feet and not be swept away by emotion or sentiment or hate or envy. You know that if I can help you or any of the family I will always do my very best. I have many 'God-children' as we call them in England, but none who have the place in my heart that Hassan and Shahnaz hold and now – little Chootu. God keep them safe and happy and free from hate.

This is not goodbye, only a letter of thanks.

We shall meet again soon, I hope. You know that for so long as I am here this house is yours so do not hesitate to use it. Thank you again for the lovely rug – it was naughty of you to give it to me, but I love it all the same.

Yours  
AUCHINLECK

**'The British are a just people. They have left India in exactly the same state of chaos as they found it.'**  
**So said a Magistrate (*The Making of Pakistan* by Richard Symonds).**

PART I

*The Background*

## *The Political Stalemate*

It is helpful to start by explaining the historical and political developments that were taking place in the Indian subcontinent when I went to Delhi in 1946. To this end I have prefaced my diary with several essays, each dealing with a specific topic which was of particular concern at the time. Some of these naturally overlap but it would, I felt, be more confusing to try and weave them together. Those readers already familiar with the situation in India immediately after the Second World War may prefer to skip these introductory essays.

To put the facts in their historical perspective I shall go back to the years when India was ruled by several dynasties of Muslim kings. Last among these were the Moghuls. After a few centuries they were ousted by the English. Eventually the British Empire was firmly established in the sub-continent.

In 1857 the Muslims raised the standard of freedom against their rulers and were crushed by the British who took all possible measures to ensure that the Muslims did not raise their heads again. It also became part of their policy to encourage the Hindus in every way and use them for extending British rule. For example, in 1867, in the United Province, steps were taken to replace Urdu as the main language. Following this, *Band-e-Matram*, a Hindu religious song, was adopted by the Hindus as the future National Anthem of India.

British rule in India was a mixture of pageantry, generosity and benignity, but was based on the principle of 'divide and rule'. Nevertheless they brought law and order to India.

In 1882, at Aligarh, Syed Ahmad Khan propounded the 'Two Nation Theory' as a permanent solution to the problems of the subcontinent, inhabited, as it was, by two different nations with widely disparate cultures. By implication he suggested the division of the subcontinent into Muslim and non-Muslim areas. Gradually this two-nation theory gained ground.

The All-India Congress was formed by the Hindus in 1885 and not supported by the Muslims. It pleaded for self-rule by the Indians.

At the beginning of the century Gandhi appeared on the Indian scene and advocated *Swaraj* (home rule) for India. In 1906 the Muslim League was formed, and in 1916 agreed to work with the Congress towards Indian independence.

Certain reforms were announced by the British in 1917, but these were not acceptable to the Indians. At the end of the First World War the Indians as a whole expected that some type of Home Rule would be given to them. When this was not forthcoming, they resorted to political agitation in various parts of the country. This resulted in the Amritsar massacre of 13th April, 1919. The action taken was extremely severe but it did check further incidents. During 1920 and 1921 *hartals* (strikes) and boycotts became the order of the day. The words '*swaraj*' and 'non-cooperation' had already been introduced by Gandhi and had caught on, although Maulana Hasrat Mohani opposed the use of the word '*swaraj*', saying that it was ambiguous and did not mean total independence.

In 1921 the Muslim League supported the Congress Non-Cooperative Movement while the Hindus reciprocated by taking part in the Khilafat Movement. In the same year the agitation came to a head in the Mupillas rebellion in Malabar which was ruthlessly put down. Later certain reforms were introduced and the agitation gradually died down.

In 1927 the British Government sent a Commission to India under Sir John Simon to investigate the possibility of further reforms. On their return they suggested holding a Round-Table Conference. This was held in London in 1931 and was attended by all the prominent leaders including Gandhi and Jinnah, the leader of the Muslim League. There was wide difference of opinion between the two.

As a result of the Second Round Table Conference in 1932, an Act, later known as the 'Government of India Act 1935', received the Royal Assent in August, 1935. It came into force on 1st April, 1937 and provided for separate electorates, the separation of Sind from Bombay, weightage for the Muslims in provinces where they were in a minority, and certain safeguards for minorities as a whole. The Muslim League was allotted one-third of the seats. Seats were also reserved for the Indian States. Nehru called the Government of India Act 'a Charter of Slavery'.

At this stage Gandhi became extremely active, even though he had officially retired from the Congress. He often claimed that he was both a Hindu and a Muslim at heart. To prove this, at his prayer meetings he arranged for readings from the Holy Quran as well as from the Bhagvat Gita. But his appeal to the Hindu masses remained just as strong. With all his fads of fastings, drinking goat's milk and observing days of silence, he was pre-eminently a Hindu. Interestingly enough, when he preached non-violence the results were just the opposite.

Gandhi had a tendency to prefer dreams to facts and ideals to reality. By 1937 his fatal self-deception had done serious damage to national unity in

India and eventually became the cause of the split between the Hindus and the Muslims. Gandhi had a low opinion of Jinnah and maintained that he had no following. On the other hand Jinnah was extremely suspicious of all Gandhi's actions and movements. He called him a 'Hindu Revivalist'.

Nineteen thirty-seven was a crucial year for the subcontinent. Elections were held in January and February. Jinnah advocated that the Muslims must stand together and warned the Congress not to interfere in the elections for Muslim seats, so that the Muslims were not divided. In March the Congress passed a resolution which said that they had entered the legislature not to cooperate but to combat the Act, and asked for complete independence for India.

After the elections the Congress formed the Government in the predominantly Hindu provinces – Bombay, Madras, Central Province, United Province, Bihar and Orissa – but refused to include any representative of the League. Jinnah had hoped that the Hindus and the Muslims would be able to work together. He pleaded for Hindu/Muslim unity, but this phase petered out very quickly. The Congress was not in favour of forming coalition ministries. Both Gandhi and Nehru urged the Muslims to stop looking upon themselves as a separate body and offered them absorption rather than partnership. They maintained that the Muslims must become members of the Congress party. Jinnah, however, felt that the Congress was out to establish a 'Hindu Raj' just for the Hindus.

In Punjab Sikandar Hayat formed the Ministry and said there could be nothing worse than the establishment of Pakistan, which he dubbed as 'Jinnahistan' and told the League to keep out of Punjab. This was the beginning of the double rôle played by politicians in the Punjab which carried on up to Partition in 1947.

The Congress having committed the fatal error of not including the Muslim League in the provincial ministries, it was now obvious that the Hindus were not prepared to work side by side with the Muslims. This had long-range consequences and became the prime cause of the creation of Pakistan. Jinnah said, 'Muslims can expect neither justice nor fair play under the Congress Government . . . There is no hope for the Muslims in a Federal Government which is dominated by the Hindus'. He further said, 'All hopes are wrecked on the rocks of Congress Fascism'. Previously Jinnah had been described by the Congress as 'the Ambassador of the Hindu-Muslim unit' but now a new chapter opened, characterized by confrontation rather than cooperation.

The Congress then launched a mass contact movement among rural Muslims to enrol them into the Congress Party. The Muslim League reacted by proclaiming that Islam was in danger and consequently made much headway, absorbing many minor Muslim parties. Nehru had underestimated the strength of the Muslims and the power of Jinnah. However, the future course of events was becoming clearer to him.

In 1938 Nehru declared that the League was a fascist organization and was following Hitler's Nazi policies. Gandhi and Jinnah tried to effect a reconciliation, but the Congress committee condemned the negotiations. In order to increase the influence of the Hindus the Congress introduced the Wardha Education Scheme in the Provinces which increased the influence of the Hindi language. The League maintained that it was not in the interest of the Muslims of the subcontinent and rejected it.

The Viceroy appealed to Jinnah to give the Federal scheme a trial, but Jinnah was opposed to any Federal objective and began working on other constitutional schemes. At the same time he formed a Committee under the Rajah of Pirpur to report on the working of the Congress Ministries in the Provinces. This report showed the anti-Muslim nature of the Congress Provincial governments.

By 1939 the League alone spoke for the Muslims and Jinnah was their undisputed leader. He declared that the Muslims were irrevocably opposed to any federal scheme, and stressed the fact that India comprised two separate nations and therefore should be two states. The Congress provincial ministries resigned in October, 1939, and the League observed 22nd December as the 'Day of Deliverance' from the tyranny, oppression and injustice of Congress rule.

Nineteen hundred and forty, with Britain at war with Germany, was a crucial year for India. On 23rd March the Pakistan Resolution was passed by the All India Muslim League Committee at Lahore, demanding the partition of the subcontinent and the establishment of Pakistan. It also made it quite clear that the Muslim League was the only body qualified to speak for the Muslims. The Sikh leader, Master Tara Singh, said, 'If the Muslim League wants to establish Pakistan they will have to pass through an ocean of Sikh blood'. In the province of Sind Allah Baksh disputed Jinnah's claim and said that he did not speak for the Sindhi Muslims.

L. S. Amery, the Secretary of State for India, announced that the attainment by India of full and equal partnership in the Commonwealth of Nations was the goal of the British policy. Thereupon the Viceroy, the Marquess of Linlithgow, offered India the following:

- 1) After the war a body would be set up to work out the constitution;
- 2) The enlargement of the existing Viceroy's Executive Council by the inclusion of political appointments;
- 3) The setting-up of a War Advisory Council.

Both the Congress and the League rejected these offers. The Governor-General's Council was reconstituted and included eight Indians and three British members and the C-in-C. A National Defence Committee was set up but was given consultative status only.

At this stage Gandhi appealed to all Britons to practice non-violence and

lay down their arms. He advocated individual *satyagrahas*.\* He was arrested on 31 October and sentenced to four years' imprisonment. Immediately after his arrest a Civil Disobedience Movement on an individual basis was launched.

By this time the Congress had realized that the Muslims would not be satisfied with anything other than the establishment of Pakistan. In their heart of hearts they conceded the principle of partition of the subcontinent.

The Civil Disobedience Movement continued in 1941 for some time but with no effect. By the end of December all political prisoners had been released. On 1st July the then General Sir Archibald Wavell was appointed C-in-C of the Indian Army.

By now HMG realized that something must be done towards the attainment of self-rule for India. Winston Churchill decided to send Sir Stafford Cripps to India to recommend constitutional changes and present them to the political leaders before implementation.

Cripps arrived on 22nd March, 1942, and carried with him a draft Declaration. Churchill purposely selected Cripps, a member of the Labour Party, in order to effect his 'Waterloo'. He knew very well that Cripps was incapable of bringing about a settlement because of his Congress leanings.

The Declaration said:

- 1) Immediately on the cessation of hostilities steps are to be taken to set up an elected body charged with the task of framing a constitution for a fully self-governing Indian Union within the Commonwealth. The composition of the elected body was also stated.
- 2) Any province or provinces or States can stay out of the proposed Indian Union and form separate Unions of their own and would have the same status as the Indian Union.
- 3) An Interim Government would be formed immediately but control over Defence would rest with the C-in-C who was to be the War Member. However, an Indian representative would be allowed to look after the ancillary department of the Defence Ministry.
- 4) The British obligations and interests in India were to be settled by a Treaty freely negotiated between HMG and the constitution-making body.

The purport of this proposal was described by Cripps as 'complete and absolute self-determination and self-government for India'. The Viceroy said that it was a solemn pledge by HMG, while Gandhi maintained that it was 'Balkanization' of the subcontinent. Nehru wanted the Defence Member to be an Indian, in place of the C-in-C, who he was prepared to accept as an advisor. Wavell told Nehru if that was his stand then there was

\*Literally 'defiance'. The term was to describe the deliberate courting of arrest.

nothing further to be discussed. The lone voice among the Congress leaders who advised acceptance of the proposal was that of Rajagopalachari.

However, the Congress, who wanted Independence forthwith and the future of the Muslims to be settled later, rejected the proposal. If the Congress had accepted, the League would have followed suit and a Coalition Government might have been formed and a working relationship between the Hindus and the Muslims would have emerged. Cripps's proposal was the last chance of forming a National Government and the last opportunity for keeping India in one piece. The dream of a United India came to a sad end, due to the lack of wisdom, foresight and statesmanship of the Congress High Command, who failed to appreciate the situation and the opportunity it offered. The blunders which the Congress made between 1937 and 1942 damaged them immensely, damage from which they never recovered. This series of mistakes made the establishment of Pakistan unavoidable. Even the British admitted that there was no other solution. It was a great triumph for Jinnah. Later, Amery announced that the Mission had failed.

Soon after, the Congress Working Committee passed a resolution calling for non-cooperation and for 'non-violent resistance to the invaders' and Gandhi announced that the British should leave India to God. If that was too much, then leave her to anarchy. He said again that as long as the British stayed in India as a third party there would be no solution. He appealed to every Briton to leave India. The Congress advocated a mass Civil Disobedience Movement against the British and said, 'The Jews practised passive resistance and that is what India should do against the British'. Gandhi wrote to Hitler to embrace all mankind irrespective of race, colour and creed. Rajagopalachari resigned from the Congress. On 8th August the All India Congress Committee approved the Quit India Resolution. It amounted to an open insurrection on a nationwide basis at a time when the British had their backs to the wall.

Gandhi believed that the resolution would lead to serious negotiations with the Viceroy. He miscalculated. The Government immediately arrested all the leaders during the night with the result that the Congress could not put its plan into full operation and it went off at half-cock. They did not expect such a quick reaction and it took the wind out of their sails. During August and September there were disturbances throughout the country and in many places the railway lines were ripped up. Troops that were meant for the forward areas had to be used for safe-guarding installations and keeping the lines of communication open.

The Muslim League kept out of the agitation and took no action which would embarrass the Government. In fact they deplored the action of Congress in no uncertain terms and thus gained the sympathy of HMG and that of the Government of India. They improved in strength and influence.

In February, 1943, Gandhi began a fast in prison. This was his usual tactic. Soon after, three members of the Viceroy's Council resigned to show

their sympathy with Gandhi. The Government issued a White Paper on the disturbances of 1942, making the Congress responsible for them. On 20th October, 1943, Field-Marshal Wavell became the Viceroy of India and General Auchinleck the C-in-C.

On 17th February, 1944, Field-Marshal Wavell, while addressing a session of the Central Legislature, announced that the Cripps offer was still open. At this stage Rajagopalachari, who was now back in Congress, accepted the 'recognition of Right of Separation of certain areas from the United India'. This was the result of a meeting between him and Jinnah. On 6th May Gandhi was released from prison on medical grounds. Soon afterwards he asked for immediate independence for India. He also met Jinnah and together they produced a formula. Gandhi did not accept the two-nation theory and maintained that after the war a Commission should be appointed to demarcate contiguous areas where the wishes of the people could be obtained by ballot. After this it might be possible to consider the establishment of two separate States. He went further to suggest that between the two States a treaty on common interests could be drawn up. He saw no reason why the two nations could not live in peace and recommended that a mechanism should be worked out to give the suggestions a practical shape. The formula was shortlived and nothing much came out of it. Later Gandhi described the establishment of Pakistan as an 'untruth'. Thereupon Jinnah asked that all the six Provinces should be included in the future Pakistan.

On 23rd March, 1945, Wavell went to the United Kingdom for consultations with HMG and was accompanied by V. P. Menon. On 14th June, in a broadcast, Wavell presented his proposal for advancing India towards self-government and announced the holding of a Conference for all the leaders. The Conference was held at Simla from 25th June to 14th July, but it failed as the League claimed the right to nominate all the Muslim members of the Executive Council. The following month, on 26th July, a Labour Government came into power in Britain. Wavell was again summoned to London and on his return announced his plan for self-government for India. The plan included:

- 1) the holding of elections for Provincial and Central Assemblies;
- 2) the establishment of a constitution-making body;
- 3) the restoration of Provincial autonomy;
- 4) the reformation of the Viceroy's council.

After the Japanese surrender on 14th August, 1945, the political climate became intense and activities increased all round.

In November the Indian National Army trials began, which gave a very favourable handle to Congress to outwit the British and they took full advantage of it, as will be discussed later.

In late December the results of the elections to the Central Legislature were announced. The League captured all the Muslim seats. In the provinces they won 446 seats out of a total 495. Their only failure was in the North-West Frontier Province. In Punjab they achieved great success, winning 79 Muslim seats while the Unionists retained only ten. This was the end of the Unionist Party. The results went to reinforce Jinnah's claim that he was the leader of Muslim India. If the Congress had recognized this fact earlier a great deal of bad feeling would have been avoided and the Congress and the League could have worked together.

Early in 1946 the Labour Government, in a further effort to resolve the stalemate, decided to send a Parliamentary delegation to India with a view 'to salvaging goodwill towards India'. The delegation toured the subcontinent, met people of all shades of opinion and submitted their reports to Clement Attlee, the Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister was anxious to safeguard the interests of the retiring as well as of serving Indian soldiers, sailors and airmen. He wanted special monetary and other benefits granted to them, hoping that by such measures he would ensure their loyalty to the Crown.

Auchinleck had already informed him that the reliability and morale of the Indian Forces would best be secured by a firm and explicit declaration by His Majesty's Government to the effect that, while HMG maintained its intention to grant self-government to India by constitutional methods, it would not hesitate to put down any armed insurrection, by force if necessary. In such an event the leaders would be punished and the troops acting in the execution of their duties would be protected at that time and thereafter.

The Prime Minister was informed that the Viceroy and the C-in-C were doing all they could to foster loyalty by taking the following steps:

- a) When the units returned from active service to their home stations, welcome parades and tea parties were arranged. Indian officers and other ranks who had been decorated for gallantry received official welcomes and special parades were held in their honour. The returning prisoners of war were met and entertained at Bombay by the Governor. A Victory Celebration Week was to be held at Delhi in March. Three Victoria Cross Parades had been held at which the Viceroy has personally decorated the recipients. These were attended by large crowds.
- b) The pay had been considerably increased since the beginning of the war but any further increase was not contemplated.
- c) A great deal of attention had been paid to the welfare of the Indian troops and they would receive amenities on the same scale as the British troops.
- d) Grants of land had been made for good service and gallantry.
- e) Every effort was being made to counteract the distorted version of events in India, particularly the false reports published in the Press on the