

## BOTH ARE MAKING SERIOUS MISTAKE

“A large gathering of his followers and admirers was present at the Victoria Terminus to accord a reception to the Hon. Dr. Bhimrao R. Ambedkar, Labour Member, in the Viceroy’s Executive Council, on his arrival by the Poona Express on Tuesday evening.\*

Upon alighting on the platform Dr. Ambedkar was profusely garlanded by representatives of several Scheduled Castes and other Associations.

A Procession was then taken out in his honour which wended its way from the Station to Rajgrah at Dadar.”<sup>1</sup>

“The Hon. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, in an interview with a Representative of *The Times of India* on Wednesday,\*\* stated that nothing but failure was expected of the Gandhi-Jinnah talks. “They did not meet each other, he said,” with empty minds, but it is equally true that neither had an open mind.”

The failure, in the opinion of Dr. Ambedkar, was due to among other causes, the obstinacy of both Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Jinnah, and the fundamental faults of the formula of Mr. Rajagopalachari. He added that no settlement of the Indian question could be considered complete without the consent of the Scheduled Castes. Neither Mr. Gandhi nor Mr. Jinnah was entitled to speak for them.

“I cannot believe,” observed Dr. Ambedkar in his interview, “that Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Jinnah met to bring about a communal settlement. The adoption of Gujarati by Mr. Gandhi as a medium of communication with Mr. Jinnah when he asked for an interview was enough to make me feel that the talks would fail. Mr. Jinnah was too elated by the receipt of the letter to understand its implication. By writing it Gujarati, Mr. Gandhi, in his inimitable way, told Mr. Jinnah that he was only a Lohana, whose mother-tongue was Gujarati.

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\* The 3rd October 1944.

\*\* The 4th October 1944.

1. : The Bombay Chronicle : dated 4th October 1944.

Similarly, Mr. Jinnah knew that the formula of Mr. Rajagopalachari was different from the Lahore resolution of the Muslim League. Mr. Jinnah knew that Mr. Gandhi was seeing him in his personal capacity. Mr. Jinnah also knew that Mr. Gandhi was not going to him as a representative of Hindus. All these circumstances were quite contrary to the conditions upon which Mr. Jinnah was insisting before his debacle in Lahore.

### **Leaders' Obstinacy**

"Failure was inevitable. If it was inevitable because of the obstinacy of the two men, it was also inevitable because of the fundamental faults in the C. R. formula. The formula is bad because it tied up the communal question with the political question. No political settlement, no communal settlement on which the formula proceeds. The formula did not offer a solution. It invited Mr. Jinnah to enter into a deal. It was a bargain—"If you help us in getting independence, we shall be glad to consider your proposal for Pakistan."

"The second fault in the C. R. formula relates to the machinery for giving effect to any agreement that may be arrived at. The agency suggested in the C. R. formula is the provisional Government.

"By consenting to the establishment of a provisional Government, the Muslim League would have executed its promise to help the Congress to win independence. But the promise of the Congress to bring about Pakistan would remain executory. Mr. Jinnah, who insists, and quite rightly, that the promises should be concurrent, could never be expected to agree to place himself in such a position.

"The second difficulty which Mr. Rajagopalachari has overlooked is what would happen if the provisional Government failed to give effect to the Hindu part of the agreement. Who is to enforce it? The provisional Government is to be a sovereign government; not subject to any superior authority. If it was unwilling to give effect to the agreement the only sanction open to the Muslims would be rebellion. To make the provisional Government the agency for forging a new Constitution for bringing about Pakistan nobody will accept. It is a snare and not a solution. The only way of bringing about constitutional changes will be through an Act of

Parliament embodying provisions agreed upon by the important elements in the national life of British India. There is no other way.

“There is a third fault in the C. R. formula. It relates to the provision for a treaty between Pakistan and Hindustan to safeguard what are called matters of common interest such as defence, foreign affairs and customs. Here again Mr. Rajagopalachari does not seem to be aware of obvious difficulties.

“One does not mind very much that the talks failed. What one feels sorry for is that the talks failed without giving us a clear idea of some of the questions about which Mr. Jinnah has been observing some discreet silence in his public utterances, though he has been quite outspoken in his private talks.

### **Questions to be clarified**

“These questions are :—

(1) Is Pakistan to be conceded because of the resolution of the Muslim League ?

(2) Are the Muslims, as distinguished from the Muslim League, to have no say in the matter ?

(3) What will be the boundaries of Pakistan ? Whether the boundaries will be the present administrative boundaries of the Punjab and Bengal or whether the boundaries of Pakistan will be ethnological boundaries ?

(4) What do the words subject to such territorial adjustments as may be necessary which occur in the Lahore resolution mean ? What were the territorial adjustments the League had in mind ?

(5) What does the word ‘finally’ which occurs in the last part of the Lahore resolution mean ? Did the league contemplate a transition period in which Pakistan will not be an independent and sovereign State ?

(6) If Mr. Jinnah’s proposal is that the boundaries of eastern and western Pakistan are to be the present administrative boundaries, will he allow the Scheduled Castes, or, if I may say so, the Non-Muslims in the Punjab and Bengal to determine by a plebiscite whether they wish to be included in Mr. Jinnah’s Pakistan, and

whether Mr. Jinnah would be prepared to abide by the results of the plebiscite of the Non-Muslims elements in the Punjab and Bengal ?

(7) Does Mr. Jinnah want a corridor running through the U. P. and Bihar to connect up Eastern Pakistan to Western Pakistan ? It would have been a great gain if straight questions had been put to Mr. Jinnah and unequivocal answers obtained.”

After stating that the question of Pakistan was not an academic one and that discussion on it would have to be resumed. Dr. Ambedkar said : “the correspondence that passed between Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Jinnah suggests that Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Jinnah regard the Hindus and the Muslims as two necessary and proper parties to an agreement about Pakistan. It also suggests that Mr. Jinnah wants to have Pakistan with the provincial boundaries as they are and that without giving any say to the Non-Muslims in the Pakistan areas.

“I am bound to state that in proceeding on these assumption both Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Jinnah are making a serious mistake. Besides the Hindus and Muslims, the Seheduled Castes are a third necessary party. They are a necessary party to the dispute. Mr. Gandhi, nor the Congress, nor the Hindu Mahasabha is entitled to speak for them. Mr. Jinnah must know that he cannot be allowed to walk away with so large a population of the Scheduled Castes without their consent.

“As I am concerned in the question of Pakistan I must state my position that the Seheduled Castes could not be allowed to be included in Pakistan without their express consent either in the western zone or in the eastern zone, that consent being given expressly and in most positive terms such as a free referendum of their own.”<sup>1</sup>

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1. : The Times of India : dated 5th October, 1944.