

not cause the retreat of the mob, two more volleys had to be fired before the crowd slowly dispersed, driving off some cattle belonging to the village.

While the police were engaged in this affair a few Hindu cultivators got into Softa at another place and tried to set fire to the village. They were, however, driven away by the police after they had inflicted injuries on three or four men. In all 14 persons were killed and 33 were injured. The Punjab Government deputed a judicial officer to enquire into this affair. His report, which was published on 6th July, justified the action of the police in firing on the mob and recorded the opinion that there was no reason to suppose that the firing was excessive or was continued after the mob had desisted from its unlawful aggression. Had the police not opened fire, the report proceeds, their own lives would have been in immediate danger, as also the lives of the people of Softa. Lastly, in the opinion of the officer writing the report, had Softa village been sacked, there would certainly have broken up, within 24 hours, a terrible communal conflagration in the whole of the surrounding country-side.

The riots of Kharagpur, an important railway centre not far from Calcutta, also resulted in serious loss of life. Two riots took place at Kharagpur, the first on the occasion of the Muharram celebration at the end of June and the second on the 1st September 1928, when the killing of a cow served as a cause. In the first riot 15 were killed and 21 injured, while in the second riot, the casualties were 9 killed and 35 wounded. But none of these riots is to be compared with those that raged in Bombay from the beginning to the middle of February, when, as we have seen, 149 persons were killed and well over 700 injured.

During the year 1929-30 communal riots, which had been so conspicuous and deplorable a feature of public life during the preceding years, were very much less frequent. Only 12 were of sufficient importance to be reported to Government of India, and of these only the disturbances in the City of Bombay were really serious. Starting on the 23rd of April they continued sporadically until the middle of May, and were responsible for 35 deaths and about 200 other casualties. An event which caused considerable

tension in April was the murder at Lahore of Rajpal, whose pamphlet *Rangila Rasul*, containing a scurrilous attack on the Prophet of Islam, was responsible for much of the communal trouble in previous years, and also for a variety of legal and political complications. Fortunately, both communities showed commendable restraint at the time of the murder, and again on the occasion of the execution and funeral of the convicted man ; and although feelings ran high no serious trouble occurred.

The year 1930-31 saw the eruption of the Civil Disobedience Movement. It gave rise to riots and disturbances all over the country. They were mostly of a political character and the parties involved in them were the police and the Congress volunteers. But, as it always happens in India, the political disturbances took a communal twist. This was due to the fact that the Muslims refused to submit to the coercive methods used by Congress volunteers to compel them to join in Civil Disobedience. The result was that although the year began with political riots it ended in numerous and quite serious communal riots. The worst of these communal riots took place in and around Sukkur in Sind between the 4th and 11th of August and affected over a hundred villages. The outbreak in the Kishoreganj sub-division of Mymensingh District (Bengal) on the 12th/15th of July was also on a large scale. In addition, there were communal disturbances on the 3rd of August in Ballia (United Provinces) ; on the 6th of September in Nagpur, and on the 6th/7th September in Bombay ; and a Hindu-Christian riot broke out near Tiruchendur (Madras) on the 31st of October. On the 12th of February, in Amritsar, an attempt was made to murder a Hindu cloth merchant who had defied the picketers, and a similar outrage which was perpetrated the day before in Benares had very serious consequences. On this occasion, the victim was a Muslim trader, and the attack proved fatal; as a result, since Hindu-Muslim relations throughout most of Northern India were by this time very strained, a serious communal riot broke out and continued for five days, causing great destruction of property and numerous casualties. Among the other communal clashes during this period were the riots at Nilphamari (Bengal) on the 25th of January and at Rawalpindi on the 31st. Throughout Northern

India communal relations had markedly deteriorated during the first two months of 1931, and already, in February, there had been serious communal rioting in Benares. This state of affairs was due chiefly to the increasing exasperation created among Muslims by the paralysis of trade and the general atmosphere of unrest and confusion that resulted from Congress activities. The increased importance which the Congress seemed to be acquiring as a result of the negotiations with the Government aroused in the Muslims serious apprehensions and had the effect of worsening the tension between the two communities. During March, this tension, in the United Provinces at any rate, became greatly increased. Between the 14th and 16th there was serious rioting in the Mirzapur District, and on the 17th, trouble broke out in Agra and continued till the 20th. There was also a communal riot in Dhanbad (Bengal) on the 28th, and in Amritsar District on the 30th ; and in many other parts of the country, the relations between members of the two communities had become extremely strained.

In Assam, the communal riot which occurred at Digboi in Lakhimpur District, resulted in deaths of one Hindu and three Muslims. In Bengal, a communal riot took place in the Asansol division during the Muharram festival. In Bihar and Orissa there was a certain amount of communal tension during the year, particularly in Saran. Altogether there were 16 cases of communal rioting and unlawful assembly. During the Bakr-i-Id festival a clash occurred in the Bhabua sub-division of Shahabad. Some 300 Hindus collected in the mistaken belief that a cow had been sacrificed. The local officers had succeeded in pacifying them when a mob of about 200 Muhammedans armed with lathis, spears and swords, attacked the Hindus, one of whom subsequently died. The prompt action of the police and the appointment of a conciliation committee prevented the spread of the trouble. The Muharram festival was marked by two small riots in Monghyr, the Hindus being the aggressors on one occasion and the Muslims on the other. In the Madras Presidency there were also several riots of a communal nature during the year and the relations between the communities were in places distinctly strained. The most serious disturbance of the year occurred at Vellore on the 8th of June, as a result of the passage of a Muslim procession with Tazias

near a Hindu temple; so violent was the conflict between members of the two communities that the police were compelled to open fire in order to restore order; and sporadic fighting continued in the town during the next two or three days. In Salem town, owing to Hindu-Muslim tension a dispute arose on the 13th of July, as to who had been the victor at a largely attended Hindu-Muslim wrestling match at Shevapet. Another riot occurred in October at Kitchipalaiyam near Salem town; the trouble arose from a few Muslims disturbing a street game played by some young Hindus. Hindu-Muslim disturbances also arose in Polikal village, Kurnool District, on the 15th of March, owing to a dispute about the route of a Hindu procession, but the rioters were easily dispersed by a small force of police. In the Punjab there were 907 cases of rioting during the year as compared with 813 in 1929. Many of them were of a communal character, and the tension between the two principal communities remained acute in many parts of the Province. In the United Provinces, although communal tension during 1930 was not nearly so acute as during the first 3 months of 1931, and was for a while overshadowed by the excitement engendered by the Civil Disobedience Movement, indications of it were fairly numerous, and the causes of disagreement remained as potent as ever. In Dehra Dun and Bulandshahr there were communal riots of the usual type, and a very serious riot occurred in Ballia city as a result of a dispute concerning the route taken by a Hindu procession, which necessitated firing by the police. Riots also occurred in Muttra, Azamgarh, Mainpuri and several other places.

Passing on to the events of the year 1931-32, the progress of constitutional discussions at the R. T. C. had a definite reaction in that it bred a certain nervousness among the Muslim and other minority communities as to their position under a constitution functioning on the majority principle. The first session of the Round Table Conference afforded the first "close-up" of the constitutional future. Until then the ideal of Dominion Status had progressed little beyond a vague and general conception, but the declaration of the Princes at the opening of the Conference had brought responsibility at the Centre, in the form of a federal government, within definite view. The Muslims, therefore, felt

that it was high time for them to take stock of their position. This uneasiness was intensified by the Irwin-Gandhi settlement, which accorded what appeared to be a privileged position to the Congress, and Congress elation and pose of victory over the Government did not tend to ease Muslim misgivings. Within three weeks of the "pact" occurred the savage communal riots at Cawnpore, which significantly enough began with the attempts of Congress adherents to force Mahomedan shopkeepers to observe a *hartal* in memory of Bhagat Singh who was executed on 23rd March. On 24th March began the plunder of Hindu shops. On the 25th there was a blaze. Shops and temples were set fire to and burnt to cinders. Disorder, arson, loot, murder, spread like wild fire. Five hundred families abandoned their houses and took shelter in villages. Dr. Ramchandra was one of the worst sufferers. All members of his family, including his wife and aged parents, were killed and their bodies thrown into gutters. In the same slaughter Mr. Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi lost his life. The Cawnpore Riots Inquiry Committee in its report states that the riot was of unprecedented violence and peculiar atrocity, which spread with unexpected rapidity through the whole city and even beyond it. Murders, arson and looting were widespread for three days, before the rioting was definitely brought under control. Afterwards it subsided gradually. The loss of life and property was great. The number of verified deaths was 300; but the death roll is known to have been larger and was probably between four and five hundred. A large number of temples and mosques were desecrated or burnt or destroyed and a very large number of houses were burnt and pillaged.

This communal riot, which need never have occurred but for the provocative conduct of the adherents of the Congress, was the worst which India has experienced for many years. The trouble, moreover, spread from the city to the neighbouring villages, where there were sporadic communal disturbances for several days afterwards.

The year 1932-33 was relatively free from communal agitations and disturbances. This welcome improvement was doubtless in some measure due to the suppression of lawlessness generally and the removal of uncertainty in regard to the position of the Muslims under the new constitution.

But in 1933-34 throughout the country communal tension had been increasing and disorders which occurred not only on the occasion of such festivals as Holi, Id and Muharram, but also many resulting from ordinary incidents of everyday life indicated, that there had been a deterioration in communal relations since the year began. Communal riots during Holi occurred at Benares and Cawnpore in the United Provinces, at Lahore in the Punjab, and at Peshawar. Bakr-i-Id was marked by serious rioting at Ayodhya, in the United Provinces over cow sacrifice, also at Bhagalpore in Bihar and Orissa and at Cannanore in Madras. A serious riot in the Ghazipur District of the United Provinces also resulted in several deaths. During April and May there were Hindu-Muslim riots at several places in Bihar and Orissa, in Bengal, in Sind and Delhi, some of them provoked by very trifling incidents, as for instance, the unintentional spitting by a Muslim shopkeeper of Delhi upon a Hindu passer-by. The increase in communal disputes in British India was also reflected in some of the States where similar incidents occurred.

The position with regard to communal unrest during the months from June to October was indicative of the normal, deep-seated antagonism between the two major communities. June and July months, in which no Hindu or Muhammedan festival of importance took place, were comparatively free from riots, though the situation in certain areas of Bihar necessitated the quartering of additional police. A long-drawn-out dispute started in Agra. The Muslims of this city objected to the noise of religious ceremonies in certain Hindu private houses which they said disturbed worshippers at prayers in a neighbouring mosque. Before the dispute was settled, riots occurred on the 20th July and again on the 2nd September, in the course of which 4 persons were killed and over 80 injured. In Madras a riot, on the 3rd September resulting in one death and injuries to 13 persons, was occasioned by a book published by Hindus containing alleged reflections on the Prophet. During the same month minor riots occurred in several places in the Punjab and the United Provinces.

In 1934-35 serious trouble arose in Lahore on the 29th June as a result of a dispute between Muslims and Sikhs about a mosque

situated within the precincts of a Sikh temple known as the Shahidganj Gurudwara. Trouble had been brewing for sometime. Ill-feeling became intensified when the Sikhs started to demolish the Mosque despite Muslim protests. The building had been the subject of prolonged litigation, which has confirmed the Sikh right of possession.

On the night of the 29th June a crowd of 3 or 4 thousand Muslims assembled in front of the Gurudwara. A struggle between this crowd and the Sikhs inside the Gurudwara was only averted by the prompt action of the local authorities. They subsequently obtained an undertaking from the Sikhs to refrain from further demolition. But during the following week, while strenuous efforts were being made to persuade the leaders to reach an amicable settlement, the Sikhs under pressure of extremist influence again set about demolishing the mosque. This placed the authorities in a most difficult position. The Sikhs were acting within their legal rights. Moreover the only effective method of stopping demolition would have been to resort to firing. As the building was full of Sikhs and was within the precincts of a Sikh place of worship, this would not only have caused much bloodshed but, for religious reasons, would have had serious reactions on the Sikh population throughout the Province. On the other hand, inaction by Government was bound to cause great indignation among the Muslims, for religious reasons : and it was expected that this would show itself in sporadic attacks on the Sikhs and perhaps on the forces of Government.

It was hoped that discussions between leaders of the two communities would effect some rapprochement, but mischief-makers inflamed the minds of their co-religionists. Despite the arrest of the chief offenders, the excitement increased. The Government's gesture in offering to restore to the Muslims another mosque which they had purchased years ago proved unavailing. The situation took a further turn for the worse on the 19th July and during the following two days the situation was acutely dangerous. The Central Police station was practically besieged by the huge crowds, which assumed a most menacing attitude. Repeated attempts to disperse them without the use of firearms failed and the troops had to fire twice on the 20th July and

eight times on the 21st. In all 23 rounds were fired and 12 persons killed. Casualties, mostly of a minor nature, were numerous amongst the military and police. As a result of the firing, the crowds dispersed and did not reassemble. Extra police were brought in from other Provinces and the military garrisons were strengthened. Administrative control was re-established rapidly, but the religious leaders continued to fan the embers of the agitation. Civil litigation was renewed and certain Muslim organisations framed some extravagant demands.

The situation in Lahore continued to cause anxiety up to the close of the year. On the 6th November, a Sikh was mortally wounded by a Muslim. Three days later a huge Sikh-Hindu procession was taken out. The organisers appeared anxious to avoid conflict but nonetheless one serious clash occurred. This was followed by further rioting on the next day. But for the good work of the police and the troops, in breaking up the fights quickly, the casualties might have been very large.

On the 19th March 1935 a serious incident occurred in Karachi after the execution of Abdul Quayum, the Muslim who had murdered Nathuramal, a Hindu, already referred to as the writer of a scurrilous pamphlet about the Prophet. Abdul Quayum's body was taken by the District Magistrate, accompanied by a police party, to be handed over to the deceased's family for burial outside the city. A huge crowd, estimated to be about 25,000 strong, collected at the place of burial. Though the relatives of Abdul Quayum wished to complete the burial at the cemetery, the most violent members of the mob determined to take the body in procession through the city. The local authorities decided to prevent the mob entering, since this would have led to communal rioting. All attempts of the police to stop the procession failed, so a platoon of the Royal Sussex Regiment was brought in to keep peace. It was forced to open fire at short range to stop the advance of the frenzied mob and to prevent itself from being overwhelmed. Forty-seven rounds were fired by which 47 people were killed and 134 injured. The arrival of reinforcements prevented further attempts to advance. The wounded were taken to the Civil Hospital and the body of Abdul Quayum was then interred without further trouble.

On the 25th August 1935 there was a communal riot at Secunderabad.

In the year 1936 there were four communal riots. On the 14th April there occurred a most terrible riot at Firozabad in the Agra District. A Muslim procession was proceeding along the main bazar and it is alleged that bricks were thrown from the roofs of Hindu houses. This enraged the Muslims in the procession who set fire to the house of a Hindu, Dr. Jivaram, and the adjacent temple of Radha Krishna. The inmates of Dr. Jivaram's house in addition to 11 Hindus including 3 children were burnt to death. A second Hindu-Muslim riot broke out in Poona in the Bombay Presidency on 24th April 1936. On the 27th April there occurred a Hindu-Muslim riot in Jamalpur in the Monghyr District. The fourth Hindu-Muslim riot of the year took place in Bombay on the 15th October 1936.

The year 1937 was full of communal disturbances. On the 27th March 1937 there was a Hindu-Muslim riot at Panipat over the Holi procession and 14 persons were killed. On the 1st May 1937 there occurred a communal riot in Madras in which 50 persons were injured. The month of May was full of communal riots which took place mostly in the C. P. and the Punjab. One that took place in Shikarpur in Sind caused great panic. On 18th June there was a Sikh-Muslim riot in Amritsar. It assumed such proportions that British troops had to be called out to maintain order.

The year 1938 was marked by two communal riots—one in Allahabad on 26th March and another in Bombay in April.

There were 6 Hindu-Muslim riots in 1939. On the 21st January there was a riot at Asansol in which one was killed and 18 injured. It was followed by a riot in Cawnpore on the 11th February in which 42 were killed, 200 injured and 800 arrested. On the 4th March there was a riot at Benares followed by a riot at Cassipore near Calcutta on the 5th March. On 19th June there was again a riot at Cawnpore over the Rathajatra procession.

A serious riot occurred on 20th November 1939 in Sukkur in Sind. The riot was the culmination of the agitation by the Muslims to take possession, even by force, of a building called Manzilgah

which was in the possession of Government as Government property and to the transfer of which the Hindus had raised objections. Mr. E. Weston—now a judge of the Bombay High Court—who was appointed to investigate into the disturbances gives* the following figures of the murdered and the wounded:

Taluka.	Murders committed.		Persons injured.		Persons subsequently died from injuries.	
	Hindus.	Mdns.	Hindus.	Mdns.	Hindus.	Mdns.
Sukkur Town ...	20	12	11	11	1	...
Sukkur Taluka ...	2	2	23	...	5	...
Shikarpur Taluka ...	5	...	11	...	2	...
Garhi Yasin Taluka ...	24	...	4	...	...	...
Rohri Taluka ...	10	...	3	...	...	...
Pano Akil Taluka ...	6	...	1	...	...	...
Ghorki Taluka ...	1	...	1	...	...	...
Mirpur Mathclo Taluka ...	...	...	1	...	...	...
Ubauro Taluka ...	4	...	3	1	1	...
	142	14	58	12	9	...

Of the many gruesome incidents recorded by him the following may be quoted :

“The most terrible of all the disturbances occurred on the night of the 20th at Gosarji village which is eight miles from Sukkur and sixteen from Shikarpur. According to an early statement sent by the District Magistrate to Government, admittedly incomplete, 27 Hindus were murdered there that night. According to the witnesses examined the number was 37.

“Pamanmal, a contractor of Gosarji states that at the time of satyagraha the leading Hindus of Gosarji came in deputation to the leading zemindar of the locality Khan Sahib Amirbux who was then at Sukkur. He reassured them and said he was responsible for their safety. On the 20th Khan Sahib Amirbux was at Gosarji, and that morning Mukhi Mahrumal was murdered there. The Hindus went to Khan Sahib Amirbux for protection

* Report of the Court of Inquiry appointed under section 3 of the Sind Public Inquiries Act to inquire into the riots which occurred at Sukkur in 1939, p. 65. The total of 142 Hindus under ‘murdered’ seems to be a mistake. It ought to be 72.

and were again reassured, but that night wholesale murder and looting took place. Of the 37 murdered, seven were women. Pamanmal states that the following morning he went to the Sub-Inspector of Bagerji, which is one mile from Gosarji, but he was abused and driven from the thana. He then went to Shikarpur and complained to the panchayat, but did not complain to any officer there. I may mention that the Sub-Inspector of Bagerji was afterwards prosecuted under section 211, Indian Penal Code, and has been convicted for failure to make arrests in connection with murders at Gosarji.

“As Khan Sahib Amirbux, the zemindar, who was said to have given assurance of protection to the Hindus of Bagerji, was reported to be attending the Court, he was called and examined as a Court witness. He states that he lives half a mile from Gosarji village. The Sub-Inspector of Bagerji came to Gosarji on the 20th after the murder of Mchrumal, and he acted as a mashir. He says that the Hindus did not ask for help and there was no apprehension of trouble. On the night of the 20th he was not well, and he heard nothing of the murders. He admits that he had heard of the Manzilgah evacuation. Later in his evidence he admits that he told the villagers of Gosarji to be on the alert as there was trouble in Sukkur, and he says he had called the panchayat on the evening of the 19th. He went to Gosarji at sunrise on the 21st after the murders. He admits that he is regarded as the protector of Gosarji.”

Mr. Weston adds* :—

“I find it impossible to believe the evidence of this witness. I have no doubt that he was fully aware that there was trouble in Gosarji on the night of 20th and preferred to remain in his house.”

Who can deny that this record of rioting presents a picture which is grim in its results and sombre in its tone? But being chronological in order, the record might fail to give an idea of the havoc these riots have caused in any given Province and the paralysis it has brought about in its social and economic life. To give an idea of the paralysis caused by the recurrence of riots in a Province I have recast the record of riots for the Province of Bombay. When recast the general picture appears as follows :

Leaving aside the Presidency and confining oneself to the City of Bombay, there can be no doubt that the record of the city is the blackest. The first Hindu-Muslim riot took place in 1893. This was followed by a long period of communal peace which lasted upto 1929. But the years that have followed have an appalling Story to tell. From February 1929 to April 1938—a period of nine

* Ibid., pp. 66-67.

years—there were no less than 10 communal riots. In 1929 there were two communal riots. In the first, 149 were killed and 739 were injured and it lasted for 36 days. In the second riot 35 were killed, 109 were injured and it continued for 22 days. In 1930 there were two riots. Details as to loss of life and its duration are not available. In 1932 there were again two riots. The first was a small one. In the second 217 were killed, 2,713 were injured and it went on for 49 days. In 1933 there was one riot, details about which are not available. In 1936 there was one riot in which 94 were killed, 632 were injured and it continued to rage for 65 days. In the riot of 1937, 11 were killed, 85 were injured and it occupied 21 days. The riot of 1938 lasted for 2½ hours only but within that time 12 were killed and a little over 100 were injured. Taking the total period of 9 years and 2 months from February 1929 to April 1938 the Hindus and Muslims of the City of Bombay alone were engaged in a sanguinary warfare for 210 days during which period 550 were killed and 4,500 were wounded. This does not of course take into consideration the loss of property which took place through arson and loot.

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Such is the record of Hindu-Muslim relationship from 1920 to 1940. Placed side by side with the frantic efforts made by Mr. Gandhi to bring about Hindu-Muslim unity, the record makes most painful and heart-rending reading. It would not be much exaggeration to say that it is a record of twenty years of civil war between the Hindus and the Muslims in India, interrupted by brief intervals of armed peace.

In this civil war men were, of course, the principal victims. But women did not altogether escape molestation. It is perhaps not sufficiently known how much women have suffered in communal hostilities. Data relating to the whole of India are not available. But some data relating to Bengal exist.

On the 6th September 1932 questions were asked in the old Bengal Legislative Council regarding the abduction of women in the Province of Bengal. In reply, the Government of the day stated that between 1922 to 1927, the total number of women

abducted was 568. Of these, 101 were unmarried and 467 were married. Asked to state the community to which the abducted women belonged, it was disclosed that out of 101 unmarried women 64 were Hindus, 29 Muslims, 4 Christians, and 4 non-descript: and that out of 467-married women 331 were Hindus, 122 Muslims, 2 Christians and 12 non-descript. These figures relate to cases which were reported or if reported were not detected. Usually, about 10 p.c. of the cases are reported or detected and 90 p.c. go undetected. Applying this proportion to the facts disclosed by the Bengal Government, it may be said that about 35,000 women were abducted in Bengal during the short period of five years between 1922-27.

The attitude towards women-folk is a good index of the friendly or unfriendly attitude between the two communities. As such, the case which happened on 27th June 1936 in the village of Govindpur in Bengal makes very instructive reading. The following account of it is taken from the opening speech* of the Crown counsel when the trial of 40 Mahomedan accused began on the 10th August 1936. According to the prosecution :

“There lived in Govindpur a Hindu by name Radha Vallabh. He had a son Harendra. There lived also in Govindpur a Muslim woman whose occupation was to sell milk. The local Musalmans of the village suspected that Harendra had illicit relationship with this Muslim milk woman. They resented that a Muslim woman should be in the keeping of a Hindu and they decided to wreak their vengeance on the family of Radha Vallabh for this insult. A meeting of the Musalmans of Govindpur was convened and Harendra was summoned to attend this meeting. Soon after Harendra went to the meeting, cries of Harendra were heard. It was found that Harendra was assaulted and was lying senseless in the field where the meeting was held. The Musalmans of Govindpur were not satisfied with this assault. They informed Radha Vallabh that unless he, his wife and his children embraced Islam the Musalmans did not feel satisfied for the wrong his son had done to them. Radha Vallabh was planning to send away to another place his wife and children. The Musalmans came to know this plan. Next day when Kusum, the wife of Radha Vallabh, was sweeping the courtyard of her house, some Mahomedans came, held down Radha Vallabh and some spirited away Kusum. After having taken her to some distance two Mahomedans by name Laker and Mahazar raped her and removed

* This is an English version of the report which appeared in the *Savadhan*, a Marathi weekly of Nagpur, in its issue of 25th August 1936.

her ornaments. After some time, she came to her senses and ran towards her home. Her assailants again pursued her. She succeeded in reaching her home and locking herself in. Her Muslim assailants broke open the door, caught hold of her and again carried her away on the road. It was suggested by her assailants that she should be again raped on the street. But with the help of another woman by name Rajani, Kusum escaped and took shelter in the house of Rajani. While she was in the house of Rajani the Musalmans of Govindpur paraded her husband Radha Vallabh in the streets in complete disgrace. Next day the Musalmans kept watch on the roads to and from Govindpur to the Police Station to prevent Radha Vallabh and Kusum from giving information of the outrage to the Police.”

These acts of barbarism against women, committed without remorse, without shame and without condemnation by their fellow brethren show the depth of the antagonism which divided the two communities. The tempers on each side were the tempers of two warring nations. There was carnage, pillage, sacrilege and outrage of every species, perpetrated by Hindus against Musalmans and by Musalmans against Hindus—more perhaps by Musalmans against Hindus than by Hindus against Musalmans. Cases of arson have occurred in which Musalmans have set fire to the houses of Hindus, in which whole families of Hindus, men, women and children were roasted alive and consumed in the fire, to the great satisfaction of the Muslim spectators. What is astonishing is that these cold and deliberate acts of rank, cruelty were not regarded as atrocities to be condemned but were treated as legitimate acts of warfare for which no apology was necessary. Enraged by these hostilities, the editor of the *Hindustan*—a Congress paper—writing in 1926 used the following language to express the painful truth of the utter failure of Mr. Gandhi’s efforts to bring about Hindu-Muslim unity. In words of utter despair the editor said* :

“There is an immense distance between the India of to-day and India a nation, between an uncouth reality which expresses itself in murder and arson and that fond fiction which is in the imagination of patriotic if self-deceiving men. To talk about Hindu-Muslim unity from a thousand platforms or to give it blazoning headlines is to perpetrate an illusion whose cloudly structure dissolves itself at the exchange of brick-bats and the desecration of tombs and temples. To sing a few pious hymns of peace and goodwill *a la Naidu*..... will not benefit the country. The President of the Congress has been improvising on the theme of Hindu-

* Quoted in “Through Indian Eyes” columns of the *Times of India*, dated 16-8-26.

Muslim unity, so dear to her heart, with brilliant variations, which does credit to her genius but leaves the problem untouched. The millions in India can only respond when the unity song is not only on the tongues of the leaders but in the hearts of the millions of their countrymen."

Nothing I could say can so well show the futility of any hope of Hindu-Muslim unity. Hindu-Muslim unity upto now was at least in sight although it was like a mirage. Today it is out of sight and also out of mind. Even Mr. Gandhi has given up what, he perhaps now realizes, is an impossible task.

But there are others who notwithstanding the history of the past twenty years, believe in the possibility of Hindu-Muslim unity. This belief of theirs seems to rest on two grounds. Firstly, they believe in the efficacy of a Central Government to mould diverse set of people into one nation. Secondly, they feel that the satisfaction of Muslim demands will be a sure means of achieving Hindu-Muslim unity.

It is true that Government is a unifying force and that there are many instances where diverse people have become unified into one homogeneous people by reason of their being subjected to a single Government. But the Hindus, who are depending upon Government as a unifying force seem to forget that there are obvious limits to Government acting as a unifying force. The limits to Government working as a unifying force are set by the possibilities of fusion among the people. In a country where race, language and religion do not stand in the way of fusion, Government is most effective as a unifying force. On the other hand, in a country where race, language and religion put an effective bar against fusion, Government can have no effect as a unifying force. If the diverse people in France, England, Italy and Germany became unified nations by reason of a common Government, it was because neither race, language nor religion obstructed the unifying process of Government. On the other hand, if the people in Austria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Turkey failed to be unified, although under a common Government, it was because race, language and religion were strong enough to counter and nullify the unifying power of Government. No one can deny that race, language and religion have been too dominant in India to permit the people of India to be welded into a nation by the unifying force of a common

Government. It is an illusion to say that the Central Government in India has moulded the Indian people into a nation. What the Central Government has done, is to tie them together by one law and to house them together in one place, as the owner of unruly animals does, by tying them with one rope and keeping them in one stable. All that the Central Government has done is to produce a kind of peace among Indians. It has not made them one nation.

It cannot be said that time has been too short for unification to take place. If one hundred and fifty years of life under a Central Government does not suffice, eternity will not suffice. For this failure the genius of the Indians alone is responsible. There is among Indians no passion for unity, no desire for fusion. There is no desire to have a common dress. There is no desire to have a common language. There is no will to give up what is local and particular for something which is common and national. A Gujarati takes pride in being a Gujarati, a Maharashtrian in being a Maharashtrian, a Punjabi in being a Punjabi, a Madrasian in being a Madrasian and a Bengali in being a Bengali. Such is the mentality of Hindus, who accuse the Musalman of want of national feeling when he says "I am a Musalman first and Indian afterwards". Can any one suggest that there exists anywhere in India even among the Hindus an instinct or a passion that would put any semblance of emotion behind their declaration "*Civis Indianus sum*", or the smallest consciousness of a moral and social unity, which desires to give expression by sacrificing whatever is particular and local in favour of what is common and unifying? There is no such consciousness and no such desire. Without such consciousness and no such desire, to depend upon Government to bring about unification is to deceive oneself.

Regarding the second, it was no doubt the opinion of the Simon Commission :

"That the communal riots were a manifestation of the anxieties and ambitions aroused in both the communities by the prospects of India's political future. So long as authority was firmly established in British hands and self-government was not thought of, Hindu-Muslim rivalry was confined within a narrower field. This was not merely because the presence of a neutral bureaucracy discouraged strife. A further reason was that there was little for members of one community to fear from the predominance of the other. The comparative absence

of communal strife in the Indian States today may be similarly explained. Many, who are well acquainted with conditions in British India a generation ago, would testify that at that epoch so much good feeling had been engendered between the two sides that communal tension as a threat to civil peace was at a minimum. But the coming of the Reforms and the anticipation of what may follow them have given new point to Hindu-Muslim competition. The one community naturally lays claim to the rights of a majority and relies upon its qualifications of better education and greater wealth ; the other is all the more determined on those accounts to secure effective protection for its members, and does not forget that it represents the previous conquerors of the country. It wishes to be assured of adequate representation and of a full share of official posts."

Assuming that to be a true diagnosis, assuming that Muslim demands are reasonable, assuming that the Hindus were prepared to grant them—and these are all very big assumptions—it is a question whether a true union between Hindus and Muslims can take place through political unity, resulting from the satisfaction of Muslim political demands. Some people seem to think that it is enough if there is a political unity between Hindus and Muslims. I think this is the greatest delusion. Those who take this view seem to be thinking only of how to bring the Muslims to join the Hindus in their demands on the British for Dominion Status or Independence as the mood of the moment be. This, to say the least, is a very shortsighted view. How to make the Muslims join the Hindus in the latter's demands on the British is comparatively a very small question. In what spirit will they work the constitution? Will they work it only as aliens by an unwanted tie or will they work it as true kindreds, is the more important question. For working it as true kindreds, what is wanted is not merely political unity but a true union of heart and soul, in other words, social unity. Political unity is worth nothing, if it is not the expression of real union. It is as precarious as the unity between persons, who without being friends become allies of each other. How very precarious it always is, is best illustrated by what has happened between Germany and Russia. Personally, I do not think that a permanent union can be made to depend upon the satisfaction of mere material interests. Pacts may produce unity. But that unity can never ripen into union. A pact as a basis for a union is worse than useless. As its very nature indicates, a pact is

separative in character. A pact cannot produce the desire to accommodate, it cannot instil the spirit of sacrifice, nor can it bind the parties to the main objective. Instead of accommodating each other, parties to a pact strive to get, as much as possible, out of each other. Instead of sacrificing for the common cause, parties to the pact are constantly occupied in seeing that the sacrifice made by one is not used for the good of the other. Instead of fighting for the main objective, parties to the pact are for ever engaged in seeing that in the struggle for reaching the goal the balance of power between the parties is not disturbed. Renan spoke the most profound truth when he said :

“Community of interests is assuredly a powerful bond between men. But nevertheless can interests suffice to make a nation ? I do not believe it. Community of interests make commercial treaties. There is a sentimental side to nationality ; it is at once body and soul; a Zollverein is not a fatherland.”

Equally striking is the view of James Bryce, another well-known student of history. According to Bryce,

“The permanence of an institution depends not merely on the material interests that support it, but on its conformity to the deep-rooted sentiment of the men for whom it has been made. When it draws to itself and provides a fitting expression for that sentiment, the sentiment becomes thereby not only more vocal but actually stronger, and in its turn imparts a fuller vitality to the institution.”

These observations of Bryce were made in connection with the foundation of the German Empire by Bismarck who, according to Bryce, succeeded in creating a durable empire because it was based on a sentiment and that this sentiment was fostered

“....most of all by what we call the instinct or passion for nationality, the desire of a people already conscious of a moral and social unity, to see such unity expressed and realize under a single government, which shall give it a place and name among civilized states”.

What is it that produces this moral and social unity which gives permanence and what is it that drives people to see such unity expressed and realized under a single government, which shall give it a place and a name among civilized states ?

No one is more competent to answer this question than James Bryce. It was just such a question he had to consider in discussing the vitality of the Holy Roman Empire as contrasted with the

Roman Empire. If any Empire can be said to have succeeded in bringing about political unity among its diverse subjects it was the Roman Empire. Paraphrasing for the sake of brevity the language of Bryce :—The gradual extension of Roman citizenship through the founding of colonies, first throughout Italy and then in the provinces, the working of the equalized and equalizing Roman Law, the even pressure of the government on all subjects, the movements of population, caused by commerce and the slave traffic, were steadily assimilating the various peoples. Emperors, who were for the most part natives of the provinces, cared little to cherish Italy or even after the days of the Antonines, to conciliate Rome. It was their policy to keep open for every subject a career by whose freedom they had themselves risen to greatness. Annihilating distinctions of legal status among freemen, it completed the work, which trade and literature and toleration to all beliefs but one were already performing. No quarrel of race or religions disturbed that calm, for all national distinctions were becoming merged in the idea of a common Empire.

This unity produced by the Roman Empire was only a political unity. How long did this political unity last? In the words of Bryce :

“Scarcely had these slowly working influences brought about this unity, when other influences began to threaten it. New foes assailed the frontiers ; while the loosening of the structure within was shown by the long struggles for power which followed the death or deposition of each successive emperor. In the period of anarchy after the fall of Valerian, generals were raised by their armies in every part of the Empire, and ruled great provinces as monarchs apart, owning no allegiance to the possessor of the capital. The breaking-up of the western half of the Empire into separate kingdoms might have been anticipated by two hundred years, had there not arisen in Diocletian a prince active and skilful enough to bind up the fragments before they had lost all cohesion, meeting altered conditions by new remedies. The policy he adopted by dividing and localizing authority recognized the fact that the weakened heart could no longer make its pulsations felt to the body’s extremities. He parcelled out the supreme power among four monarchs, ruling as joint emperors in four capitals, and then sought to give it a fictitious strength by surrounding it with an oriental pomp which his earlier predecessors would have scorned. . . . The prerogative of Rome was menaced by the rivalry of Nicomedia, and the nearer greatness of Milan.”

It is, therefore, evident that political unity was not enough to give permanence and stability to the Roman Empire and as Bryce points out that “the breaking-up of the western half (of the Roman Empire) into separate kingdoms might have been anticipated by two hundred years, had the barbarian tribes on the border been bolder, or had there not arisen in Diocletian a prince, active and skilful enough to bind up the fragments before they had lost all cohesion, meeting altered conditions by new remedies”. But the fact is that the Roman Empire which was tottering and breaking into bits and whose political unity was not enough to bind it together did last for several hundred years as one cohesive unit after it became the Holy Roman Empire. As Prof. Marvin points out* :

“The unity of the Roman Empire was mainly political and military. It lasted for between four and five hundred years. The unity which supervened in the Catholic Church was religious and moral and endured for a thousand years.”

The question is what made the Holy Roman Empire more stable than the Roman Empire could ever hope to be ? According to Bryce it was a common religion in the shape of Christianity and a common religious organization in the shape of the Christian Church which supplied the cement to the Holy Roman Empire and which was wanting in the Roman Empire. It was this cement which gave to the people of the Empire a moral and social unity and made them see such unity expressed and realized under a single government.

Speaking of the unifying effect of Christianity as a common religion Bryce says :

“It is on religion that the inmost and deepest life of a nation rests. Because Divinity was divided, humanity had been divided, likewise ; the doctrine of the unity of God now enforced the unity of man, who had been created in His image. The first lesson of Christianity was love, a love that was to join in one body those whom suspicion and prejudice and pride of race had hitherto kept apart. There was thus formed by the new religion a community of the faithful, a Holy Empire, designed to gather all men into its bosom, and standing opposed to the manifold polytheisms of the older world, exactly as the universal sway

* *The Unity of Western Civilization* (4th Ed.,) p. 27.

of the Caesars was contrasted with the innumerable kingdoms and city republics that had gone before it....”*

If what Bryce has said regarding the instability of the Roman Empire and the comparatively greater stability of its successor, the Holy Roman Empire, has any lesson for India and if the reasoning of Bryce that the Roman Empire was unstable because it had nothing more than political unity to rely on, and that the Holy Roman Empire was more stable, because it rested on the secure foundation of moral and social unity, produced by the possession of a common faith, is valid reasoning and embodies human experience, then it is obvious that there can be no possibility of a union between Hindus and Muslims. The cementing force of a common religion is wanting. From a spiritual point of view, Hindus and Musalmans are not merely two classes or two sects such as Protestants and Catholics or Shaivas and Vaishnavas. They are two distinct species. In this view, neither the Hindu nor the Muslim can be expected to recognize that humanity is an essential quality present in them both, and that they are not many but one and that the differences between them are no more than accidents. For them Divinity is divided and with the division of Divinity their humanity is divided and with the division of humanity they must remain divided. There is nothing to bring them in one bosom.

Without social union, political unity is difficult to be achieved. If achieved, it would be as precarious as a summer sapling, liable to be uprooted by the gust of a hostile wind. With mere political unity, India may be a State. But to be a State is not to be a nation and a State, which is not a nation, has small prospects of survival in the struggle for existence. This is especially true where nationalism—the most dynamic force of modern times—is seeking everywhere to free itself by the destruction and disruption of all

* The Christian Church did not play a passive part in the process of unification of the Holy Roman Empire. It took a very active part in bringing it about. “Seeing one institution after another falling to pieces around her, seeing how countries and cities were being severed from each other by the eruption of strange tribes and the increasing difficulty of communication the Christian Church,” says Bryce, “strove to save religious fellowship by strengthening the ecclesiastical organization, by drawing tighter every bond of outward union. Necessities of faith were still more powerful. Truth, it was said, is one, and as it must bind into one body all who hold it, so it is only by continuing in that body that they can preserve it. There is one Flock and one Shepherd.”

mixed states. The danger to a mixed and composite state, therefore, lies not so much in external aggression as in the internal resurgence of nationalities which are fragmented, entrapped, suppressed and held against their will. Those who oppose Pakistan should not only bear this danger in mind but should also realize that this attempt on the part of suppressed nationalities to disrupt a mixed state and to found a separate home for themselves, instead of being condemned, finds ethical justification from the principle of self-determination.

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