

Part II: From Reform to Independence

Reform, Not Freedom

The British government stated many times that in some distant future India would be deserving of freedom. And for a long time the Indian people, believing British sincerity, showed great patience. From the mid-nineteenth century, reform—not independence—was the official agenda of the British government.

from eight to twelve Indian members, was appointed by the Viceroy, but had no authority.

The India Councils Act of 1892 added

more members to both the Viceroy's and provincial governors' legislative councils. These members were recommended by associations of merchants and manufacturers or by large landowners. No council member could propose legislation, call for

**“It is pretty much with colonies
as with children; we protect and
nourish them in infancy; we direct
them in youth, and leave them to
their own guidance in manhood; and
the best conduct to be observed is to
part with them on friendly terms.”**

—A British journalist, 1829

a vote on financial matters, or even debate any important subject.

How did Britain restrict the power of Indians in government?

After the conflict of 1857, the British government took control of India from the East India Company in the Government of India Act of 1858. The Viceroy (instead of a Governor-General) was directly in charge of every section of administration. His consent was necessary for every law or regulation—both central and provincial. A council, ranging

The India Councils Act of 1909 (Morley-Minto Reforms) permitted legislative councils to discuss the budget and introduce bills, but members were not allowed to embarrass the government in any way. The Viceroy could disallow any proposal without explanation. Significantly, this act recognized the concept of separate electorates for Muslims, who were

Identity, Religion, and the British

Throughout the world, individuals tend to have multiple and complex identities. In the United States for example, our identities can include our ethnic origin, our religion, our race, or even what sports team we cheer for or what music we listen to.

In India, under British rule, the nature of identity changed in a way that would ultimately have an important impact on the events leading to independence. In 1871, the British conducted the first all-India census which categorized Indians by their religion. Historians believe that the use of these categories created images, for both the British and Indians, of large communities united by a common definition that transcended all differences. This contributed to the development of political communities and separate electorates. Historians also connect these developments to the growth of religious reform movements among Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs. These movements sought “purer” definitions of religious identity and often worked to remove the influences of other religions from their own practices.

Although religion grew in importance, the formation of identity remained complex. For example, many members of the Unionist party were Muslims, but they also identified themselves as Punjabis, rural leaders, and as landlords.

allowed to elect members of their own religious faith into legislative seats reserved for them. Many Muslim leaders believed that simple democratic elections would favor the Hindu majority and give the Muslims less representation than their numbers deserved.

What were the effects of the Government of India Act of 1919?

In 1917, the British government announced that its future policies would eventually lead to self-governing institutions for India. The government made this announcement during World War I, when the British were desperately seeking Indian support for the war against Germany.

After the war, the Government of India Act of 1919 (Montagu-Chelmsford Report) increased the percentage of the adult male population who could vote. Qualifications for voting included land revenue or past or present service in the armed forces. Ten percent of the adult male population was now eligible to vote. Separate electorates were not only given to Muslims but several other groups including Anglo-Indians (Indians of partial European descent), Indian Christians, Sikhs, landlords, university members, and business leaders.

These officials represented special interest groups rather than the public at large. Within the provinces some of these elected officials actually ran health services, education, and public works. This system gave increased power to the provinces, but British officials kept the most important powers for themselves. For example, the Viceroy could not only override any decisions he did not approve of, but could pass laws by himself. He could even rule without his legislative council for up to six months.

What was the purpose of the Government of India Act of 1935?

The Government of India Act of 1935 intended to create a federation of eleven British provinces and the over five hundred Indian princely states. Once half of the Indian states agreed and the British Parliament approved,

India would form a federation. The central legislature would consist of a Council of State and a House of Assembly. Seats would be allocated by separate electorates for Muslims and other groups. The Viceroy would retain supreme powers and could veto any legislation. He also could take emergency powers as he saw fit, as could the provincial governors with his approval. For the first time, representatives were to be given wide responsibilities in running the day-to-day government of their provinces. In fact, in many ways these provinces would be autonomous.

Why was there opposition to a federation?

There was little chance that half of the princely states, fearful of losing their autonomy, would ever agree to such a federation. Many of the newly elected officials effectively took charge of their provincial governments. This created the suspicion among Indian nationalists that the goal of provincial autonomy was not eventual independence but rather continued dependence on Britain as the real ruler of the central government and, therefore, India.

What did the British government offer during World War II?

In 1942, during World War II, Sir Stafford Cripps, representing the British government, offered Indian leaders what they had dreamed of for so long—eventual independence. According to the plan, immediately after the war, provinces and states would send representatives to create a body that would draft a constitution. The British government would accept the constitution as long as any province or state had the right not to agree to the constitution and, therefore, not be part of the new union. In addition, the constitution would have to guarantee the rights of minorities. During the war, Great Britain would remain in charge of India's defense against Japan, although the government would welcome input from Indian leaders. The British government hoped that India would remain as part of the British Commonwealth (an organization of Great Britain and many of its former colonies),

but India would then have the right to declare independence.

This plan broke down, in part, due to Great Britain's refusal to agree with the Congress Party's demand that the national government become a cabinet government (like in Great Britain) with full powers—not merely a continuation of the Viceroy's weak Executive Council. Congress also wanted an Indian to be Minister of Defense.

Although Cripps failed, he was willing to participate in one more attempt to create a free and united India. That attempt would be the Cabinet Mission of March 1946. The Cabinet Mission would find itself working with four major groups, the Congress Party, the Muslim League, The Unionist Party, and the Sikhs. Although they all wished for an end to British rule, they frequently disagreed with each other about what an independent India would look like. Before you explore the negotiations of the Cabinet Mission, you will examine the history of the Congress Party and the Muslim League. Understanding their history and their interests will help explain the scope of the task facing the Cabinet Mission.

The Congress Party

In December 1885, Allan Octavian Hume, a Scotsman who had once worked for the Indian Civil Service, helped form the Indian National Congress. For the next ten years, Congress met once a year but had no permanent organization. Most members were well-to-do lawyers, journalists, or civil servants who spoke in English (the one language used throughout the country by Western-educated Indians) of the need for reform. Congress considered the India Councils Act of 1892 a victory because Indians could now act as advisers to the Viceroy and provincial governors. One of its major goals was increased access to the Indian Civil Service. These moderates sought gradual constitutional reform within the British Empire.

Other members of Congress, however, were more radical. Their leader, B.G. Tilak, was an educational reformer and founder of the

newspaper *Kesari*, which celebrated India's great past and advocated *swadeshi* (self-reliance). In 1907, Congress split over what tactics to pursue to protest the British government's division of Bengal. Tilak called upon Indians to boycott British goods and not to pay taxes. Moreover, he spoke not only of *swadeshi*, but also of *swaraj*—self rule. The next year he was sentenced to six years' imprisonment. After his conviction, riots in the streets led to sixteen deaths.

When World War I ended in 1918, the British retained the wartime Rowlatt Bills through which people could be arrested and jailed without charges or a trial. This led to protests throughout the country. On April 13, 1919, Brigadier-General Reginald Dyer ordered his troops to fire into a mass meeting held within a walled garden in the city of Amritsar in the province of Punjab. Three-hundred-seventy-nine people were reported killed in ten minutes, and over twelve hundred others wounded. Although Parliament forced Dyer to retire, a British newspaper started a fund in his honor that collected more than twenty-six thousand pounds (worth over one million of today's dollars) from the English public.

Who was Mohandas Gandhi?

From 1920-1922 a new leader of Congress, Mohandas Gandhi, organized additional protests. In his actions, Gandhi, a follower of moderate Congress Party members, more closely resembled the radical Tilak (who died in 1920). A lawyer who had studied in Great Britain, Gandhi had made a name for himself for his work in South Africa helping the Indian community there gain more rights through acts of civil disobedience, which he called *satyagraha*.

Gandhi used this same approach against the British in India. Under his leadership, Congress voted a policy of non-cooperation with the government. Indians returned honorary titles, parents removed their children from government schools, and people withheld taxes, refused to buy British goods, and quit government jobs.

Gandhi reached out to Muslims by lending Congress's support to the caliphate movement. The Ottoman Empire had been defeated in World War I by Great Britain, and Muslims in India were concerned that the caliph, ruler of the Ottoman Empire, would lose his religious and political power. Gandhi hoped that Hindu-Muslim unity in this movement would increase their cooperation in the drive for independence.

But Gandhi did more than shift the emphasis of Congress from constitutional means to *swadeshi*. He also changed it from a small group of India's elite into a mass organization, recruiting thousands of peasants. When the protests turned violent and twenty-two policemen were burned to death by protestors in the town of Chauri Chaura, Gandhi called off this movement.

How did Gandhi and his followers protest the salt tax?

In 1930, Gandhi again led a *swadeshi* campaign. Gandhi chose to protest the salt tax because of its impact on all Indians. Salt was a British monopoly—since 1804 Indians had been prohibited from making their own. In a symbolic act of defiance, Gandhi and a group of followers walked 240 miles from Ahmadabad to Dandi on the Gujarat coast, where he lifted a handful of salt from the sea. Others marched throughout the country; in many



Mohandas Gandhi, referred to as the Mahatma or “Great Soul” by many, rejected Western dress in favor of *Khadi* or homespun as a symbol of Indian independence from Britain.

places rents and taxes were not paid. Terrorist activities occurred as well. As a result, between sixty thousand and ninety thousand protestors were jailed, including Gandhi and the father and son Motilal and Jawaharlal Nehru. When 2,500 of Gandhi's supporters marched on the salt works at Dharasana (May

Satyagraha

Mohandas Gandhi spent much of his life fighting injustice through what he called *satyagraha*. In Sanskrit, *satya* means “truth” and *graha* means “to attain.” *Satyagraha*, often translated as “reaching for the truth,” is civil disobedience characterized by non-violent non-cooperation. For Gandhi this tactic was tied closely to the concept of *ahimsa*—non-violence (more specifically for Gandhi, the love that remains once all violence has ended within oneself).

Gandhi explained, “*Satyagraha* means ‘holding to this truth’ in every situation, no matter how fierce the storm. Because he wants nothing for himself, the true *satyagrahi* is not afraid of entering any conflict for the sake of those around him, without hostility, without resentment, without resorting even to violent words. Even in the face of the fiercest provocation, he never lets himself forget that he and the attacker are one. This is *ahimsa*, which is more than just the absence of violence; it is intense love.”

Gandhi's beliefs held great appeal to his followers and have continued to influence and inspire leaders of social movements around the world.

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21, 1931), government troops used their lathis (long metal-tipped sticks) to beat the marchers mercilessly. Following Gandhi's belief in *satyagraha*, the marchers offered no resistance. One American reporter counted over three hundred protestors injured and two killed.

“...At times the spectacle of unresisting men being methodically bashed into a bloody pulp sickened me so much that I had to turn away. The western mind finds it difficult to grasp the idea of nonresistance.”

—Webb Miller, *The Dharasana Salt Raid*

What did Gandhi blame for rising religious tensions?

In 1931 Gandhi declared that “Congress alone claims to represent the whole of India, all interests. It is no communal organization....” (By “communal” Gandhi meant a particular religious community, such as Hindu or Muslim.) He blamed the British for communal upheavals.

Jawaharlal Nehru also blamed the British for trying to keep Indians divided and believed the real problems of India were not communal but economic. The primary objective of Congress, according to Nehru, was simple: complete independence from Britain.

“There are only two forces in the country, the Congress and the government.... It is the Congress alone which is capable of fighting the government.”

—Jawaharlal Nehru

In 1937, in elections held throughout India under the 1935 Government of India Act, Congress won a stunning victory, gaining nearly half of all seats in the provincial legislatures, including over two dozen Muslim seats. It formed provincial governments in seven of the eleven British provinces. Based on election results, Congress seemed to be the only political organization with the power to deal with the British government.

In 1942, during World War II, Gandhi began his third and final campaign. After the Cripps Mission failed, Gandhi told the British to “Quit India” and again began a protest movement, which he intended to be non-violent. All Congress members of the provincial governments quit. Strikes and boycotts spread, as did acts of violence, including sabotage against railroads and telegraphs. Gandhi and other Congress leaders were jailed for most of the duration of the war.

The Muslim League

Not all Indians agreed with the approach or the goals of the Congress Party. Many Muslims were uneasy with what they felt was the religious element of the Congress Party. Gandhi's strategies were seen by many Muslims to be Hindu-based—for example, his use of fasting and non-violent protest. More than merely pro-Hindu, the Congress Party was seen as anti-Muslim.

Increasing sectarianism led even moderate Muslim leaders to grow wary of working with Congress. Some feared that a representative democracy, like Great Britain's, would not work in India. They believed the Hindu majority would overwhelm the Muslim minority. Some also felt that Muslims had fallen behind Hindus in formal education, which was now based upon English instead of Persian. Muslims also participated far less in commerce, industry, and local government.

To protect their interests, Muslim leaders had formed the Muslim League in 1906. They urged the British government not “...to place our national interests at the mercy of an unsympathetic majority” (i.e., Hindus), but to protect their rights as a minority. In response, the India Councils Act of 1909 recognized the right of Muslims to separate electorates.

“It is certain that the Hindu member will have four times as many [votes] because their population will have four times as many.... [And] how can the Mahomedan (Muslim) guard his interests? It would be like a game of

Religious Tensions

During the latter period of British rule, many communal disturbances occurred between Hindus and Muslims. Muslims resented Hindus' loud musical processions near mosques. Hindus were angered when cows were sacrificed at the yearly Muslim Bakr-Id festival, especially when these animals were led to slaughter through Hindu neighborhoods. In northern India during the 1880s, Hindus formed cow-protection societies. Tilak organized political festivals honoring the Hindu god Ganesh and great hero-king of the past, Shivaji. In 1915 and 1916 more rioting occurred in Bihar over cow sacrifice at the Bakr-Id festival. There were thirty-one serious riots in 1927. In the 1920s the Mahasabha, a Hindu nationalist organization, advanced a *shuddhi* movement, trying to convert Muslims back to Hinduism.

In addition, Indian writers appealing to Hindu nationalism were gaining popularity. From the 1860s to the 1880s, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, an Orthodox Brahman and member of a provincial civil service, wrote novels of historical fiction, serialized in newspapers, which glorified Hindu warriors and treated the Muslim Mughal rulers as tyrants. His novels equated Hinduism with nationalism. The song, "Bande Mataram" ("Hail to thee, Mother"), from the novel *Anandamath* (dealing with a fictional Hindu revolt against Mughal forces allied to the British), later became Congress's national anthem.

dice in which one man had four dice and the other only one."

—Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, founder,
University of Aligarh

Who was Mohammed Ali Jinnah?

One of the Muslims elected to the new Imperial Legislative Council created by the 1909 India Councils Act was Mohammed Ali Jinnah. Like Gandhi, Jinnah had earned a law degree in London and, like Gandhi, he had hoped for cooperation between Hindus and Muslims. In 1916, as a member both of Congress and the Muslim League, he arranged the annual conferences of both parties to be held jointly in Lucknow. There, both parties agreed to separate electorates for Muslims and, in provinces where Muslims were in a minority, a guaranteed number of seats. The Lucknow Pact may well have been the high point of cooperation between Congress and the Muslim League.

Why did Jinnah resign from the Congress Party?

Jinnah's hopes for continued cooperation ended with Gandhi's first *swadeshi* campaign of the early 1920s. Jinnah, who believed in constitutional reform, was deeply disturbed by Gandhi's tactic of appealing to the masses. Jin-

nah also realized that a Hindu mass movement would not necessarily need Muslim support. Jinnah resigned from the Congress Party.

"I will have nothing to do with this pseudo-religious approach to politics. I part company with the Congress and Gandhi. I do not believe in working up mob hysteria."

—Mohammed Ali Jinnah

In 1928 at an all-parties conference, the Congress Party in the (Motilal) Nehru Report called upon Great Britain to grant India dominion status (a self-governing nation within the British Commonwealth). Now a member of the Muslim League and not the Congress Party, Jinnah offered amendments which, he believed, would safeguard the Muslim community. This included the maintenance of separate electorates and that one-third of the seats in the central government be reserved for Muslims (their population was approximately one-quarter of India).

The Congress Party not only refused Jinnah's amendments, but broke the 1916 Lucknow Pact by abandoning the idea of separate electorates. For Jinnah, it was the end of trying to work with the Congress Party.

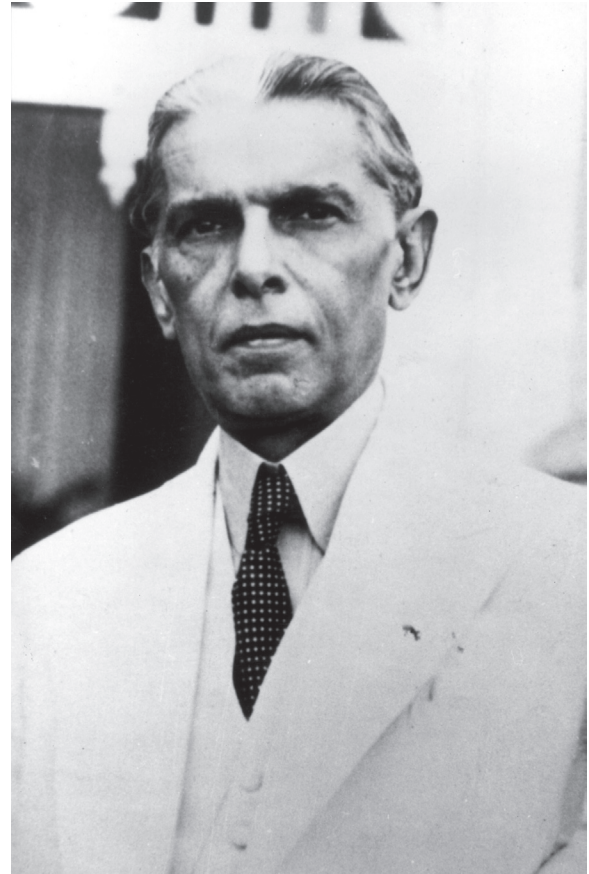
How did the Muslim League react to the results of the 1937 election?

In the 1937 provincial elections, the Muslim League was astonished, not only by the Congress Party's massive victory, but also by its own poor showing against local Muslim parties. Of the 485 Muslim seats available, the League won only 108. It could not even form a government in any of the four provinces that had a Muslim popular majority. (Forming a government entails agreeing with other parties on whom to appoint to various positions and how to govern.) Moreover, the Congress Party was unwilling to form any coalitions in the provinces it controlled. Led to believe that there would be a provincial coalition, Muslims in the United Provinces felt betrayed.

Congress claimed many successes in the provinces it governed. For the Muslim League this was worse than British rule. Congress flags flew everywhere, Gandhi's picture was placed in public buildings, students were given non-religious (e.g., non-Muslim) education. In addition, Congress leaders controlled local political appointments, and Nehru organized a campaign to persuade more Muslim peasants to join Congress.

How did Jinnah reorganize the Muslim League?

Jinnah realized that the Muslim League's



Mohammed Ali Jinnah.

Hulton Archive/Getty Images. Used with permission.

poor showing in the elections was due to Muslim disunity and the League's own lack of organization. Borrowing a page from Gandhi's approach, the Muslim League began a mass

Pakistan—The Birth of an Idea

The 1930 annual meeting of the Muslim League could not muster the seventy-five people necessary for a quorum. Nevertheless, the meeting was historic because of the speech given by its President, Dr. Muhammad Allama Iqbal, a noted poet. While referring to an India "where we are destined to live," he called for Muslims' "centralization in a specific territory." He envisioned this Muslim state to include the Punjab, Northwest Province, Sind, and Baluchistan in northwest India.

Two years later, Choudhary Rahmat Ali, an Indian Muslim studying in England, published a pamphlet entitled "Now or Never." In it he called for a completely separate state for Muslims. Consisting of Punjab, Northwest Frontier (Afghan) Province, Kashmir, Sindh, and Baluchistan, it would be called Pakistan (later Pakistan). In another pamphlet written in 1935, Ali demanded for Muslims their "...sacred right to a separate national existence as distinct from Hindoostan [what Muslims called India minus Pakistan].... Pakistan is not Hindoo soil nor are its people Hindoostani citizens." Few Muslim leaders, including Jinnah, paid any attention to what was referred to as a "student scheme." The results of the elections of 1937 changed all of this.

movement campaign. One hundred seventy new branches of the party were formed. Jinnah worked with local Muslim leaders to build a more powerful political coalition. For example, Sir Sikander Hyat Khan, Punjab's leader—who, although a Muslim, led a coalition Unionist Party—joined the Muslim League and supported Jinnah on the national level, while Jinnah left the Unionist Party alone within the Punjab. Jinnah was after something much bigger than gaining victories in the provinces.

The results of the 1937 elections had revealed the weakness of the Muslim League compared to Congress. Some Muslim leaders began to advance plans to divide India into two federations, which would include voluntary transfers of population. Sir Sikander Hyat Khan, Premier of the Punjab, offered a plan for an Indian federation consisting of seven regions, two of which corresponded to the future Pakistan. When a British official asked Sir Sikaner why he was making this proposal, he replied that it would be better than “something worse”—that “something worse” was Pakistan.

“You have been long enough in Western Punjab to know the Muslims there. Surely you can see that

Pakistan would be an invitation to them to cut the throat of every Hindu bania [money lender].... Pakistan would mean a massacre.”

—Sir Sikander Hyat Khan

What was the significance of the 1940 declaration by the Muslim League?

In 1940 the Muslim League declared its belief that areas in northwest and eastern India, where Muslims formed a majority, “should be grouped to constitute Independent States in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign.” The name “Pakistan” was not used, nor was it clear if the Muslim League meant one Muslim nation or two (note the plural “States”). In fact, for the next seven years Jinnah kept the borders and nature of this Muslim homeland vague.

Not all Muslims supported the Muslim League. The Shia (a minority Muslim sect) feared a Pakistan dominated by the majority sect of Sunnis. Some religious scholars believed that national unity offered a better atmosphere to protect the rights of Muslims and to maintain the presence of Islam in India. Nevertheless, Jinnah and the Muslim League focused upon Pakistan as the best hope for India's Muslims.

During World War II, while Congress leaders were jailed and many of their followers condemned as saboteurs and rebels, the Muslim League grew stronger, carefully avoiding any appearance of disloyalty to the British in their struggle against Japan. The 1942 Cripps Mission, which promised eventual independence to India, also agreed that any province had the right not to accept the new constitution and could actually make its own constitution. Jinnah took this statement to mean the possibility of



“In the eyes of Congress, Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, and Christians were all Indians and entitled to its care.”—Mr. Gandhi

From Dawn, the Muslim League's newspaper.

Pakistan. Shortly after World War II ended, in September 1945, Congress promised not to force any territorial unit to remain in India against its will.

What were the results of the 1946 elections?

New elections were held in 1946. The Muslim League's platform declared "Islam in danger!", condemned Congress, and demanded Pakistan. Unlike previous elections, in which religious appeals were rarely made, the Muslim League tied one's personal faith in Islam with solidarity to a Muslim community.

While Congress gained control of all six Hindu-majority provinces, the Muslim League took every Muslim seat in the Central Legislative Assembly and 442 of 509 Muslim seats in all eleven provinces. It was only able to form provincial governments in Bengal and Sind. In the important province of Punjab, where Muslims were a majority of the population, the Muslim League had gained 75 of the 175 seats, yet was also unable to form a government.

This time there was no question regarding who represented the vast majority of India's Muslims. In determining the nature of India's independence, both the British government and Congress would have to deal with the Muslim League.

Wednesday, January 30, 1946.

DAWN

MUSLIMS OF THE PUNJAB— SWORD-ARM OF PAKISTAN— KEEP THE FLAG OF FREEDOM FLYING



**PUNJAB GOES TO THE POLLS ON AND FROM
FEBRUARY 1 :**

**YOU WANT PAKISTAN --- SAY SO IN THE
BALLOT-BOX**

**A MUSLIM'S Duty Is To Help The Muslim League
SMASH Its Way To Victory—**

FOR

**---Every Muslim Who IS A Muslim Must Help The Muslims
To Be Free**

REMEMBER---

**In The Punjab, Muslims Are Fighting Against A Wicked Ad-
ministration Determined To Prevent A Verdict For Pakistan,
In The Punjab, The Real Fight Is Against An Anti-League Bu-
reaucracy Who Have Their Orders To Misuse Their Powers
Against The League,**

**In The Punjab, It Is A War Between Muslim Fighters For
Freedom and A British Misgovernor Bent On Keeping Pun-
jabees Tied To The Chariot Wheels Of British Imperialism,**

THEREFORE---

BE CAREFUL --- TAKE PRECAUTIONS

HERE ARE SOME WAYS---

- Muslim Advocates And Lawyers Should Be Present At Polling Stations To Keep Polling Officers Under Constant Vigilance
- Every Candidate Must Have His Own Distinctive Seal Ready In Time To Seal Ballot-boxes
- Sources Wherefrom The Seals Were Obtained Should Not Be Disclosed To Anybody
- Every Candidate Should Procure In Time Good Sealing Wax Which Will Stick
- Every candidate must insist that bags in which ballot-boxes are put should be treated as packages and Also Sealed
- Every candidate should arrange to stand guard himself or have constantly guarded by trusty volunteers the treasury offices or other premises where ballot-boxes containing ballot papers are kept until counting.

THIS IS MOST IMPORTANT

**Punjab Muslims! Do Not Be Content With Only Voting For
The Muslim League—See That These Precious Votes Are Not
Tampered With—YOUR ENEMIES ARE UNSCRUPULOUS.**

India and Great Britain: The End of World War II Brings Change

World War II greatly changed the British attitude toward the idea of India's freedom. The fear that an independent India would not pay its debt to Great Britain was no longer valid. Great Britain actually owed India over a billion pounds. Nor was the concern that there were not enough Indian military officers to take over the Indian army from the British. As a result of the war, more than fifteen thousand Indian officers were available. In addition, many British soldiers who returned home from serving in India realized how unpopular their government was among the Indian people. In Great Britain, the Labour Party under Clement Attlee defeated Winston Churchill's Conservatives and took charge of the government.

The British government in London also had new concerns. Wary of the Soviet Union encroaching into South Asia, it wanted a strong united India as a member of the British Commonwealth, working together with Great Britain and other former colonies in a defensive alliance against communism. Partition would weaken India and, therefore, threaten this defensive alliance. The British government also realized that its grip on India was slipping and that its resources were wearing thin. There was a genuine fear that if an agreement could not be fashioned among Congress, the Muslim League, and other groups, the British might face the humiliation of being driven out of India in the blaze of a civil war.

The Labour Party, already sympathetic to the idea of India's independence, faced a great deal of unrest in India. The cold winter of 1945-46 made shortages of food and clothing even worse. Many nationalist leaders, recently released from prison, gave speeches encouraging violent actions to achieve freedom. In Calcutta, demonstrations led to riots in which over thirty people were killed and several hundred injured.

As a result of all these concerns, the British finally were willing to let India go. The central question was not freedom, but what form freedom would take. This would prove terribly difficult to settle, because during the same fifty years that Indians had struggled against Great Britain, they had also struggled among themselves.