

Article 5

The Unveiling of the Freedom Movement of India, Part II

“How easy it is, treachery. You just slide into it.”

- Margaret Atwood, *The Year of the Flood*

By resigning from the Provincial Ministries in 1939, the Congress had put itself outside the political pale. Jinnah now emerged strong and powerful, very much in the good books of the Viceroy. This was a *great* impediment in the Congress goal of total control of free India.

In 1940 the Muslim League dared make a formal demand for Pakistan. Perhaps at this time it occurred to the Congress High Command, that there *was* one way to get rid of Jinnah—by giving him Pakistan. For no sooner did the League make a demand of Pakistan, than the Congress began to push the Pakistan scheme—subtly, but surely—themselves!

The Pakistan Plant takes firm root . . .

In March 1940, the Muslim League made a formal demand for Pakistan. And by May 1940, Gandhi started talking with a forked tongue.

While researching Gandhi I have noticed he has a remarkable talent for expressing two opposing ideas and making them seem reasonable. The unpleasant point is made in a negative form and the one intended to be applauded, quoted, and publicized is made very positively. I am giving a prime example of it below:

“‘As a man of nonviolence,’ he [Gandhi] observed, ‘I cannot forcibly resist the proposed partition if the Muslims of India really insist upon it.’”

That’s the negative form, and a euphemistic way of really saying he will accept Pakistan—for the Muslims in India were most certainly insisting upon it! In the next sentence he says:

“‘But I can never be a willing party to the vivisection. . . .’”¹

How very pure and emphatic this sentence sounds, especially when unhampered by the preceding one. How very much has this been quoted! Though, even in that there is a catch, for he can claim to be an “unwilling” party to the vivisection. There’s his out.

See how it is?

¹ *Mahatma Gandhi*, Dhananjay Keer. Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1973; page 682.

The Pakistan plan was now insidiously being spoken off in an agreeable way. Check out what Gandhi has to say— openly published in his *Harijan* —to an Englishman.

“While answering an Englishman, Gandhi replied in *Harijan* of May 4, 1940: ‘I would any day prefer Muslim rule to British rule. . . . The partition proposal had altered the face of Hindu-Muslim problem. . . .’ And he granted that “Pakistan cannot be worse than foreign domination.””

And Keer further asks, as a comment on this flimflaming of Gandhi’s:

“Was it an explanation of his stand or a direction for the Muslim leaders to draw up their plans?”²

By 1942, Congress was done with these oblique references to accepting Pakistan. Jinnah and the Muslim League were becoming a big hindrance in their path. Viceroy Linlithgow was not entertaining their demands, especially ones that aimed at giving Congress sole power in free India. The Congress High Command now made a drastic, treacherous move.

“The Working Committee of the Indian National Congress proclaimed emphatically by a resolution at Delhi in April 1942, ‘that the Congress could not think in terms of compelling the people of any territorial unit to join the Indian Union against their declared and established will.’

This historic resolution brought into bold relief the fact that the Congress favoured the provinces with the right of self-determination or secession and such secession was called by the Muslims ‘Pakistan.’

Dealing with Congress resolution four years later, Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya had to admit: ‘It is evident that the passage concedes the division of India into more than one State and gives the go-by to the Unity and integrity of India.’”³

Pakistan resolution was now passed by the Congress Working Committee, and that in April 1942—five years before Partition and independence.

The All-India Congress Committee, though, was as yet clueless re this treacherous resolution of their Working Committee. Now the Congress High Command had to ensure that the A.I.C.C. too accepted the Pakistan resolution. Rajagopalachari set to work to do the deed.

“On 23 April 1942 Rajagopalachari managed to get two resolutions passed by the Congress members in the Madras legislature. The first recommended to the All-India Congress Committee (which was about to meet in Allahabad) that Congressmen should acknowledge the Muslim League’s claim for separation,

² *Mahatma Gandhi*, Dhananjay Keer, Page 682-683.

³ *Veer Savarkar*, Dhananjay Keer. Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1966; page 307.

should the same be persisted in when the time came for framing the constitution of India . . . The resolution urged that ‘to sacrifice the chances of the formation of a national government for the doubtful advantage of maintaining a controversy over the unity of India is the most unwise policy’ and that it had become necessary to choose the lesser evil. . . . **The Muslim League was naturally jubilant at its ideal of Pakistan having been brought down at last from the clouds of speculation to the level of practical politics . . .**

The All-India Congress Committee, meeting in Allahabad on 29 April, rejected his resolution by an overwhelming majority and adopted a counter-resolution ‘that any proposal to disintegrate India by giving liberty to any component State or territorial unit to secede from the Indian Union or Federation will be detrimental to the best interests of the people of the different States and provinces and the country as a whole and the Congress, therefore, cannot agree to any such proposal.’”⁴

The Congress members were not in favor of their High Command’s sellout of the Motherland. They stated so, unequivocally, in *their* resolution.

But the Congress High Command who were absolute dictators of the Congress (and had disregarded and overturned resolutions, plus schemed so many times before to get their way) were not about to let their Delhi resolution of acceding Pakistan—upon which depended their getting total power in free India (or so they believed)—be swept away.

“Upon this Dr. Sayyid Abdul Latif of Hyderabad asked Maulana Azad whether Jagat Narayan’s resolution had in any way modified or affected the Delhi resolution of the Working Committee. Maulana Azad in his letter of August 6, 1942, replied: ‘No part of the Delhi resolution to which you refer has in any way been affected or modified by any subsequent resolution of the A.I.C.C.’

To the same question of Dr. Latif, Jawaharlal Nehru also replied that Babu Jagat Narayan’s ‘resolution does not in any way override the Delhi Working Committee resolution.’”⁵

So the Congress Working Committee resolution acceding Pakistan reigned supreme—as affirmed by the Congress dictators on August 6, 1942.

Note the date, August 6, 1942, when the Congress dictators declared this.

- Quit India Movement was launched on August 8, 1942.

⁴ *Transfer of Power*, V. P. Menon, page 139.

⁵ *Mahatma Gandhi*, Keer, page 700.

Though it was a most hollow, doomed-for-failure Movement, the Congress High Command must surely not have known that? They must have expected to gain some form of independence.

- Hence their rush to pass the Pakistan resolution . . . ?
- Had India (in the most unlikely chance) gained independence then, Congress had paved the way to hack India into pieces in 1942.

There was also an interesting factor exposed in the United India resolution:

“Another revealing feature of the Akhand Hindustan [united India, made by the A.I.C.C.] resolution was that all the Muslim members of the A.I.C.C. opposed it in the Allahabad meeting of the A.I.C.C. and issued a joint statement in regard to it.”⁶

Note that all the Muslim members of the All-India Congress Committee—just like their High Command—were in favor of Pakistan too. And they, along with a significant number of other Muslims who voted for the Muslim League, did *not* move bag-and-baggage to Pakistan after partition.

- They, the Hindu-Muslim problem, and an Indian Muslim League party remained behind in India even after Partition.

All that glitters is not gold . . .

While the Congress Working Committee was busy getting its Pakistan resolution passed, what was Gandhi saying?

“‘I consider,’ Gandhi declared in *Harijan* of May 24, 1942, ‘the vivisection of India to be a sin.’”

In *Harijan* of May 31, 1942, he said: “No third party should decide our fate. It should be reason or the sword.” And he had already said that “if I can carry the Congress with me, I would not put the Muslims to the trouble of using force.”

And one has already seen how indeed the Mahatma of the Indians carried—by hook or by crook—the Congress with him. Check out below what he had written to Jinnah *on the very day* he launched the Quit India Movement.

⁶ *Mahatma Gandhi*, Keer, page 700.

“On August 8, 1942, he had written to Jinnah and to a Muslim businessman in Bombay that he had no objection to Britain handing over power to the Muslim League subject to certain provisos.”⁷

In addition, his mouthpiece, Rajagopalachari, was encouraging the idea of accepting Pakistan among the people.

“The fact was that Rajagopalachari was doing his utmost by his propaganda to enable the Muslim League to translate Gandhi’s proposition into action.”⁸

As if it wasn’t enough that the Pakistan scheme was being heavily promoted by the Congress, their “Quit India” challenge to the British was not at all what it appeared on the surface is either. Britain must “Quit India” but leave behind her army. Can one call this “independence”?

“But this was a strange solution. It implied that the civil Government would be in the hands of Indians, and there would be some form of British military rule over India, a remedy worse than the disease,” writes Keer in his biography of Gandhi (page 704,) adding:

“It was given to Rajgopalachari again to expose the fallacy in Gandhi’s stand. In a letter to Gandhi Rajagopalachari said: ‘Your proposal that while the civil power may be withdrawn the British and Allied forces may continue in India in anticipation of a treaty with a problematical provisional Indian Government will only lead to the exercise of all Government functions by military forces. This will happen if only for their own safety and effective functioning. They are further likely to be urged towards this step by local chieftains and suffering people. This would be the reinstallation of the British Government in the worst form.’”⁹

Today, almost everywhere, Quit India Movement is touted as a wonderful call by Gandhi for the freedom of India.

- Can promoting the Pakistan scheme and keeping British military rule be an agenda of any true call of freedom for India?

No.

Why then is the truth forced to wear this mask? Have people lost the ability to look beyond the hollow words of propaganda?

Nurturing the Pakistan Plant:

In 1943, this is how the position stands:

⁷ *Ibid*, page 708.

⁸ *Mahatma Gandhi*, Keer, page 701

⁹ *Ibid*, page 704.

“In 1939, when the war broke out, Jinnah could claim only a nominal hold on the Punjab. But by this time all the other provinces which he claimed for Pakistan, namely Assam, Sind, Bengal, and the North-West Frontier Province, had come under the control of League ministries.”¹⁰

Jinnah and the Muslim League were in a very strong position, both with the British and the Muslims in India. On an aside, I want to mention that Savarkar, too, had against all odds developed the Hindu Mahasabha into a party of some standing.

The Congress was not in a very good position politically. It is at this time Nehru was indiscreet enough to record his frustrations in his diary.

Nehru wrote in his jail diary on December 28, 1943: "Instinctively I think it is better to have Pakistan or almost nothing if only to keep Jinnah far away and not allow his muddled and arrogant head from (sic) interfering continually in India's progress"¹¹

Yes, most certainly, the Pakistan scheme had become very attractive to the Congress High Command.

Rajgopalachari (Rajaji) had been heavily promoting the Pakistan scheme everywhere. He had been corresponding with Jinnah over it too.

“It should be noted here that Rajgopalachari met Gandhi in the Aga Khan palace during his fast and he [Gandhi] blessed the scheme adopted by Rajagopalachari. Soon after Rajagopalachari offered it to Jinnah who did not pay much attention to it at this stage, in April 1943. . . . The crafty politician, Rajagopalachari, kept Gandhi's approval of his scheme a secret. Neither did the Mahatma reveal it to anybody. He was conceiving Pakistan.”¹²

How shocking that the Mahatma of the Indians who publicly swore the vivisection of India was a sin, should *secretly* plot to commit this sin himself. How very many of the Mahatma's lofty principles are sacrificed in this one act.

By 1944, the whole ugly story was spilled out into the open by all the three main participants: Gandhi, Rajaji, and Jinnah.

“In one of his telegrams sent to Mr. Jinnah and now released to the press, Rajaji said, ‘Mr. Gandhi, though not vested with representative or special capacity in this matter, definitely approved of my proposals and authorized me to approach

¹⁰ *Transfer of Power*, V. P. Menon, page 148.

¹¹ *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*; First Series; Vol.13; page 324.

¹² *Mahatma Gandhi*, Keer, page 716.

you on that basis. The weight of his opinion would most probably secure Congress acceptance.’

Mark the secret promise of the truth-seeker, Gandhi, who abhorred secrecy in any matter. Read this further confession of Rajaji in his statement of July 16, 1944, issued from Panchgani in which he said: **‘It is now *two years* since I started work, even though I had secured Gandhi’s unqualified support to the scheme and it conceded all that the Muslim League had ever demanded in its resolution of 1940.’** Mark the words ‘two years.’¹³

Note the actions of the Mahatma, the “Father of the Nation”:

- A secret pact conceding all that the Muslim League demanded—Pakistan.
- A pact made in the year *1942*—the year the Mahatma launched the Quit India Movement.

In 1944, the Congress desperation to gain control in India—and not getting anywhere with either Jinnah or the Viceroy—led Gandhi to come right out in the open. The duped Indians should not have remained duped anymore.

What were Gandhi’s concessions to Jinnah and the Viceroy?

“Gandhi gave an interview in the first week of July to Stuart Gelder of the *News Chronicle*, London . . . the interview was published in *The Times of India* of July 11. On the previous day *The Times of India* had published a statement issued by Rajagopalachari in which he had said: ‘The public will note from the correspondence now published that I had secured Gandhiji’s personal approval even during his fast in February-March last year for the formula I am releasing.’ . . .

In his interviews Gandhi told Stuart Gelder that he had no intention of offering civil disobedience. It was his purpose not to hinder but help the war effort. . . . He would be satisfied with a national Government in full control of the civil administration . . . He also said he had approved the proposals submitted to Jinnah by Rajagopalachari, if the Muslim League would endorse the demand for independence.

He further said that he regarded the Rajaji formula as being consistent with national integrity and his own opinion with the spirit of the Congress resolution. . . .

¹³ *Veer Savarkar, Keer, 352-353*

Commenting on this, 'Candidus' observed in *The Times of India*: 'The past week also witnessed the revelation that Mr. Gandhi, who a couple of years ago was stoutly opposed to a division of the country, is now agreeable to the principle of Pakistan. It is a reversal of his original approach that partition of India would be a 'sin'. He now concedes the principle of Pakistan, division of India.'"¹⁴

This bold move on the part of Gandhi was a shock to the Congress members, but quite in keeping with Gandhi's frequent claims of "carrying the Congress with himself," they did nothing to oppose.

"When the scheme was out, there was a flutter for a while among the Congress circles and press; but they were stunned to see that their holy father Gandhi was acting as the Godfather to the unholy scheme of portioning their Motherland and thereafter they culpably kept silent on the nefarious move."¹⁵

Gandhi's next move was to actually have long "talks" with Jinnah to concede Pakistan to him.

The Pakistan Plant grows . . .

Gandhi crossed all limits when he went personally to Jinnah and tried to bring him round to his way of thinking for three weeks. But Jinnah was a wily bird, and more than a match for Gandhi's scheming.

"The lengthy correspondence and prolonged talks between Gandhi and Jinnah took place for three weeks. Gandhi paid nineteen visits to Jinnah without receiving a single one in return, even observed his usual silence on Sundays and returned everyday with an unpleasant face from there! Yet Jinnah gained much. He got the Congress moral leader committed to the principle of the division of India. On September 24 Gandhi wrote to Jinnah: 'If the vote is in favour of separation, it shall be agreed that those areas shall form a separate State as soon as India is free from foreign domination and can therefore be constituted into two Sovereign Independent States.'

Gandhi had declared on several occasions that Pakistan was a sin, a denial of God and an untruth. He had asked the protagonists of Pakistan to vivisect him before they vivisected India. But now he conceded the principle of vivisection of India and to undo the work of centuries."¹⁶

But Jinnah didn't seem to be budging, so Gandhi went further.

¹⁴ *Mahatma Gandhi*, Keer, pages 723-724.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 353.

¹⁶ *Mahatma Gandhi*, Keer, page 727.

“Immediately on the acceptance of that agreement by the Congress and the League, the two would decide upon a common course of action for the attainment of India’s independence. The League would however be free to remain out of any direct action to which the Congress might resort and in which it might not be willing to participate.”¹⁷

The Mahatma of the Indians himself had publicly conceded Pakistan to Jinnah’s demands. In fact he was practically pushing it on him! But Jinnah was no fool. He knew well that it was the British who had the power to grant his demands; all he needed was a concrete public acceptance of Pakistan from the Mahatma (which, but naturally, meant the acquiescence of the Congress.)

That goal was now achieved. And Jinnah didn’t need to agree to a thing!

“On September 27, Jinnah announced that it had not been possible to reach an agreement, but added: ‘We trust that this is not the final end of our efforts.’ Gandhiji commented that failure to reach an agreement was no cause for disappointment. ‘The breakdown is only so called. It is an adjournment *sine die*.’”¹⁸

As V. P. Menon writes in his *Transfer of Power* (page 163):

“In these circumstances Gandhiji’s move was calculated only to strengthen Jinnah’s hands and further the cause of the Muslim League.”

What would be Gandhi’s next move?

The Machiavellian Scheme . . .

Now that Jinnah was not ready to agree to anything based on promises to be fulfilled after independence, something more definite was required. At this point Gandhi cooked up the Bhulabhai-Liaquat Pact in 1945.

I have already given the details of this Pact and the circumstances around it in the earlier Article, so won’t repeat it here. But the features of this Pact, as drafted by Gandhi, were quite diabolical:

- Congress and the Muslim League would share the government seats fifty-fifty, with 20% reservation for all others considered as minorities. A direct stab in the heart of Mother India.
- No elections.

¹⁷ Transfer of Power, V. P. Menon, page 165.

¹⁸ Adjournment sine die from the Latin "without day," meaning "without assigning a day for a further meeting or hearing."

This was the basis on which Bhulabhai Desai and Jinnah would form a Government. This was the deal that Bhulabhai submitted to Viceroy Wavell.

In this deal, however, Gandhi had overreached himself. Nehru and Sardar, livid at being sidelined from being top dogs in the Government, took the unprecedented step to squash this Pact in the Working Committee of the Congress. Gandhi quickly washed his hands off both the Pact and Bhulabhai. But the deed was done. Wavell, the new Viceroy, had taken this Pact to London and returned with a proposal based on it.

Wavell was quite a different kettle of fish from Linlithgow. He was not concerned with fairness to all the parties and also had a decided partiality toward the Muslims. He held a Conference in Simla to disclose the proposal he had brought back. Representatives of all parties except the Hindu Mahasabha were invited to the Conference. He assumed that the Congress represented the Caste Hindus.

This move prevented the Hindu Mahasabha from having any say in the matter of the proposals. The fate of India would be in the hands of the treacherous Congress and the Muslim League, both hell-bent on partition. The Hindu Mahasabha made massive protests against the unjust Simla Conference all over India and even in Simla itself.

The proposal that Wavell had brought back, though based on the Bhulabhai-Liaquat Pact, differed in one very significant way from it.

- There was the same fifty-fifty sharing of seats, not between the Congress and the League, but between Hindus and the Muslims.

This put a dent in the aspirations of both the Congress and the League. The league wanted to be the only representatives of the Muslims. The Congress, of course, wanted to be the only representatives of all! They not only wanted Congress members for the Hindu seats, but for the Muslim and other minority seats as well—and quite shamelessly angled for it with Wavell.

- It is evident that no matter what sacrifice India would have to suffer, the Congress did not *once* waver from their goal of total control, ever.

What with the protests of the Hindu Mahasabha and the dissatisfaction of the Congress and the League at not attaining their goals, the Simla Conference was a failure.

Desperate, Wavell announced that elections would be held by end of December 1945 at the Central and later on at the Provincial level to decide which parties would play a part in governing free India. Winners of the election would negotiate the final deal of independence with the British.

- This was not a good moment for the Congress. An open election meant the power in free India could very well slip through their fingers.

- Savarkar's Hindu Mahasabha stood a very good chance of capturing the Hindu seats.
- The Muslim seats were as good as in the League's hands.

But the Congress High Command, master schemers of dastardly acts that they were, found their way out of this bind.

The Pakistan Plant Blossoms . . .

I am not going to give a detailed description of the trickery and dastardly acts that Congress committed to win the elections. It is *very* well covered in my novel *Burning for Freedom*. I shall just mention it in bullet points.

The Congress High Command was quick to realize that a curtain would have to be dropped on their Pakistan ambition. Indians did *not* want their country to be hacked to pieces. The industrialists supporting the Congress poured money into their coffers for the election campaign. It was in their interest that Congress win the election too. They had already invested a lot of money in the Congress, if the power went to the Hindu Mahasabha, their investment would go down the drain.

The Congress adopted these tactics:

- They made passionate avowals of rooting for a united India. Pakistan would be accepted only over their dead body.
- They went all out to support the Indian National Army soldiers, and they defended them at their trials. The Indians loved the Congress for this.
But up until the election the Congress was calling these patriots traitors. Now it suited them to champion their cause.
- They bribed, threatened, or sabotaged the Hindu Mahasabha candidates. Their schemes got the Hindu Mahasabha president to withdraw himself from the elections.
Savarkar was completely incapacitated by ill health and could do nothing to campaign for Hindu Mahasabha in the elections. So this Congress foul play was entirely successful.

Result was that Congress won the Hindu seats in a landslide, and the Muslim seats went to the Muslim League. Now the fate of India was in the hands of these two and there was not much anyone else could do prevent them hurting India.

A Reprieve . . . !

After the WWII, Britain was left in such dire straits that it was imperative for her to find some solution to the Indian problem and get out of India. Prime Minister Atlee sent a delegation of Ministers to resolve the issues of India. After studying the situation well, the delegation came to one, and only one, conclusion.

“The delegation were therefore unable to advise the British Government to transfer power in India to two entirely separate sovereign States.”¹⁹

There was hope for a united India yet! I have put the Cabinet Mission Plan proposal in a nutshell in my novel.

“An agreement being impossible, the Cabinet Mission announced a plan: formation of a Union of India, embracing all the provinces and Princely States, which would deal with the foreign affairs, defense, and communications along with the power to raise the finances required for them; provinces to be divided into three sections—effectively representing what could be West Pakistan, Hindustan, and East Pakistan; a provincial autonomy to be established by vesting all other subjects and residuary powers in the provinces; a Constituent Assembly to be formed to map out the constitution of free India; and an Interim Government to be formed immediately for the day-to-day running of the country in the transition period, while a permanent deal was negotiated with Britain.”²⁰

The delegation left, and it was up to Wavell now to get the Congress and the Muslim League to agree to the Cabinet Mission Plan. This was, of course, easier said than done. But after much argument and putting forth of reservations, both the Congress and the League decided to accept the Cabinet Mission Plan in spirit (though with reservations.)

“Jinnah proposed to hold out his hand of ‘co-operation’ to the Congress. The Congress, too, accepted the plan of May 16 as it stood, and declared its willingness to join the Constituent Assembly with a view to framing the constitution of a free, united and democratic India.”²¹

“The Congress and the Muslim League had indeed accepted the long-term plan . . . hereafter it was not to be so much a struggle to wrest power from the British, as a dispute as to how that power, once inherited, should be shared by the parties concerned.”²²

Pakistan scheme was off the table . . . ! For the first time in the last ten years, the dreaded vivisection of India was shelved.

Plucking the Fruit of the Pakistan Plant . . .

In 1946, the scene was all set to save India from being hacked. It was a very, very delicate juncture in Indian history, a very critical moment. It was time to tread with great caution.

¹⁹ *Transfer of Power*, V. P. Menon, page 264.

²⁰ *Burning for Freedom*, Anurupa Cinar, page 280.

²¹ *Mahatma Gandhi*, Keer, page 746.

²² *Transfer of Power*, V. P. Menon, page 279.

- **So who upset this applecart?**

On July 6, 1946, Nehru gave a speech before the Congress Working Committee. Read what R. C. Majumdar has to say about it in his *HFMI, Vol. III* (pages 770-774).

“In winding up the proceedings of the Committee, Nehru made a long speech explaining the position of the Congress *vis-à-vis* the Cabinet Mission plan. He said ‘that as far as he could see, it was not a question of the Congress accepting any plan, long or short. It was merely a question of their agreeing to enter the Constituent Assembly, and nothing more than that. They would remain in that Assembly so long as they thought it was for India’s good and they would come out when they thought it was injuring their cause. ‘We are not bound by a single thing except that we have decided for the moment to go to the Constituent Assembly.’

Later, speaking at a press conference on 10 July, Nehru qualified his statement. He admitted that the Congress was bound by the procedure set down for election of members to the Constituent Assembly. But then he added: ‘What we do there we are entirely and absolutely free to determine.’ . . . **If Nehru were determined to scare away Jinnah he could not have devised a better or more ingenious plan.**

In view of the importance of Nehru’s statement and its tragic consequences of putting ‘Hindus and Muslims back in two fuming and suspicious camps,’ it would not be improper to refer to the views of two Englishmen, both intimate friends of Nehru, and one of whom was the author of what Nehru regarded as his best biography. **Leonard Mosley says:**

‘Did Nehru realize what he was saying? He was telling the world that once in power, the Congress would use its strength at the Centre to alter the Cabinet Mission Plan as it thought fit. . . . In the circumstances, Nehru’s remarks were a direct act of sabotage.’

“In 1937 his [Nehru’s] outright rejection of Jinnah’s offer of Congress-League Coalition Ministry ruined the last chance of a Hindu-Muslim agreement. His observations in 1946 destroyed the last chance—though a remote one—of a free united India.”²³

When everything was set for a happy ending for India, Nehru chose to ruin India’s chances of unity. For years the Congress had been trying to get Jinnah out of their hair. And now when it

²³ HFMI, Vol. III, page 770.

appeared they would be stuck with him, for in the final reckoning he had put aside his Pakistan demand, they chose to incite him to demand it again.

There is a very good word to describe this action of Nehru's—"stabotage,"²⁴ a deliberate stab-in-the-back sabotage—of India's chance of unity.

- This is the action that dropped the gavel on the go-ahead of the Pakistan scheme.
- This is the action that led directly to Jinnah's calling out for Direct Action.
- This is the action that led to the horrendous killing, raping, and looting of Hindus.
- This is the action that led to the civil war in India, the wholesale violence particularly in the Punjab and Bengal.

India paid a very heavy price, indeed, for the aspirations of the Congress High Command.

Mother India Hacked . . .

Lord Mountbatten entered India's political scene on March 17, 1947. With that, the final hour of reckoning was here. India was buried in a bloodbath, the leaders of the various parties and the Princes were not coming to any agreement, and Britain's need to get out of India was urgent.

Already, in March 1947, the Working Committee of Congress had suggested the partitioning of Punjab and Bengal. Under these circumstances, it was not surprising that Mountbatten's solution to the problem was partitioning India. Yet there was perhaps one last chance to save India.

"Savarkar knew that the last moment to be or not to be had come. On May 29, 1947, in a fervent and forlorn appeal to the Congressite, Savarkar urged them not to betray the electorates and India by agreeing to a scheme involving vivisection of the Motherland. He reminded them that they had not been elected to the legislatures on the issue of partition and their Constituent Assembly had also no right *ab initio* even to consider such a proposal. Hence he urged upon them to resign their seats and posts and to seek re-election on the clear-cut issue of Pakistan or a United India, if they were for the partition of India. Savarkar further suggested to the Congress leaders that they might demand a plebiscite to decide such a momentous issue involving the life and death of the nation and the destiny of future generations."²⁵

But "when the wordy Congress democrats were reeling in the drunken joy of party and personal power"²⁶ were they going to heed these words? When the power they had so assiduously chased

²⁴ This is a word coined by author Dr. Judith Briles.

²⁵ Veer Savarkar, Keer, page 381.

²⁶ *Ibid*, page 382.

at the cost of India's integrity, at the cost of the lives of so many Indians, was now within their grasp, were they going to give it up?

No.

“The Congress leaders were now well prepared for their final consent to the onslaught on the unity of India. In a written message read out after the usual daily prayer-meeting in Delhi, Gandhi declared on June 9, 1947, that he was not opposing the Congress acceptance of the new British plan.

But who got the Congress committed to that resolution? History would record that all these Congress brand nationalist leaders were at one in coercing the Hindus to accept Pakistan. . . . Sardar Patel's support to the partition of India was a complete transfer scene from sword to surrender. . . .

Gandhi put an ultimatum before the A.I.C.C. he threatened them either to accept the resolution conceding Pakistan or to replace the old tried Congress leaders. He advised them to accept the plan of Pakistan and added that it was their duty to stand by their leaders. . . . To the Congress leaders their prestige was more important than the destinies of the nation and the fate of the millions. That was an unfortunate characteristic of the Congress leadership.

‘What other country has witnessed such a betrayal?’²⁷

A Recap:

I am going to recap in words of various authors this whole sorry tale of betrayal:

- “Lord Linlithgow, who was in favour of the unity of India, once said that “the Hindus have made the mistake of taking Jinnah seriously about Pakistan and as a result have given substance to the shadow.”
- “In the last week of September 1945, at a meeting of the All-India Congress Committee in Bombay, Sardar Patel even demonstratively chastised a Muslim member, one Mr. Mians, in these words: ‘If you say that the Muslim League is a nationalist organization, why are you to be found in the Congress at all? Ever since the Congress abandoned unadulterated nationalism the mischief had grown. That was when the Congress accepted separate communal electorates. There have since been a series of mistakes. From minority representation we travelled to the fifty-fifty parity principle.’²⁸

²⁷ *Ibid*, page 382-384.

²⁸ Veer Savarkar, Keer, page 368.

- “It has been pointed out more than once in the three volumes of this work that there were fundamental differences between the Hindus and Muslims of India which stood in the way of their fusing into one nation, as this term is generally understood.
- “This was emphasized by the separate electorate, originally devised by Minto, but later accepted by the Congress. Since then the Congress had, in practice if not in theory, recognized the two-nation theory. . . .
- “As far back as 1934 the Congress pledged itself to reject any scheme of solving communal problem *vis-à-vis* Indian Constitution which was not agreed to by the Muslims.”²⁹
- “In 1937 his [Nehru’s] outright rejection of Jinnah’s offer of Congress-League Coalition Ministry ruined the last chance of a Hindu-Muslim agreement.”³⁰
- “In 1942 Gandhi wrote in *Harijan* that if the vast majority of Muslims want to partition India they must have the partition; and in 1944 he actually carried on negotiations with Jinnah on this basis.
- “In 1945 the Congress Working Committee passed a resolution that it could not think ‘of compelling the people in any territorial unit to remain in an Indian union against their declared and established will.’
- “The eminent Hindu leader Rajagopalachari actually suggested the idea of Pakistan as the only basis for a peaceful settlement of the Hindu-Muslim problem and
- “Even Nehru conceded the possibility of Pakistan in January, 1946.
- “Early in March, the Working Committee of the Congress itself suggested the partition of the Punjab, and (therefore also of) Bengal, on communal basis.”³¹
- “In 1937 his [Nehru’s] outright rejection of Jinnah’s offer of Congress-League Coalition Ministry ruined the last chance of a Hindu-Muslim agreement. His observance in 1946 destroyed the last chance—though a remote one—of a free united India.”³²

Just a thought: What exactly did India achieve by partition?

- Was the Hindu-Muslim problem solved? No.
- Did the violence end? No.
- Did Congress have free rein? Yes.

²⁹ HFMI, Vol. III, page 801.

³⁰ Ibid, page 770.

³¹ Ibid, page 801.

³² Ibid, page 770.

In the next article, the last one in this series, I shall give illustrations that throw light on some of Gandhi's not-so-saintly character traits and his penchant for not doing as he preaches unto others.

Anurupa Cinar

Author, *Burning for Freedom*