

CHAPTER-II

FOREIGN POLICY OF INDIA FROM 1947 TO 1949

First World War and Second World War are important events in the History of the world. The victory won by the Soviet Union in World War II, the appearance of several socialist states in Europe and Asia, the deepening crisis of the colonial system of imperialism and the achievement of political independence by India and a number of other countries-all these marked the beginning of a new era in world history.

On August 15, 1947, a government formed by Nehru began to function in what was known as the Dominion of India. It expressed the interests mainly of the national bourgeoisie. The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Home Affairs and the affairs of states, Vallabhbhai Patel, speaking at a luncheon for big industrialists, given by the Indian monopolist Goenka, described some Indian government members in the following words “When I ask you to bury the past and not to bother at all about it, I should also like to remind you that our Finance Minister belongs to your own class He knows his own mind, is able, clever and efficient. Our Commerce Minister is also an experienced industrialist. Dr. Shyam Prasad Mookerjee, the Minister for Industry and supply, is not a Congressman, but an able, painstaking and conscientious public servant. I am quite certain that all these Ministers would like to secure your cooperation in making India industrially great”.¹

It should be added to this description of the class composition of the government that Patel himself, who was for many years one of the most influential leaders of the Congress party, was also a director of a number of business concerns² and was an intimate friend of G.D. Birla, one of the biggest Indian monopolists.

It should also be noted that Sardar Baldev Singh, the Minister for Defence and a big Lahore capitalist, was one of the big Hindu and Sikh industrialists who had left the districts that became part of Pakistan when India was partitioned in 1947, abandoning their property. This certainly influenced his position on such an important question as the policy of the Indian Union towards Pakistan. Shanmugam Chetty, the Minister for Finance, was closely connected with Indian princes. John Matthai, who succeeded Chetty in that important office in September 1948, was closely associated with the Tata family of Indian monopolists. Rafi Ahmed Kidwai, the Minister for Communications, was a big landowner from the United Provinces.³

Of the 14 Cabinet Members, only Chetty, Matthai, B.R. Ambedkar (leader of the All India Scheduled Castes Federation and the Minister of Justice) and S.P. Mookerjee

(representing in the government the religious-communal party of Hindu Mahasabha) did not belong to the Indian National Congress and were included in the government by Nehru at the insistence of Mahatma Gandhi, to make the government more representative.⁴

Long before Nehru became Prime Minister, Rabindranath Tagore, the famous Indian author, had said, referring to Nehru's activities as a leader of the Congress party, that he was "greater than his deeds and truer than his surroundings"⁵ By this Tagore implied that the necessity of reckoning with the surroundings prevented Nehru from accomplishing his plans fully as he had conceived them. To understand how the surroundings influenced Nehru when he took decisions on foreign policy matters, one must first have a clear picture of the distribution of forces in the government of the dominion.

It is a fairly widespread notion that Indian foreign policy was Nehru's "private monopoly". Assenting to this opinion of Nehru's role in shaping and carrying out Indian foreign policy, Professor Hiren Mookerjee, a leader of the parliamentary group of the Communist Party of India, adds : "None of his colleagues, howsoever resistant to some of his ideas could challenge his authority in this sphere." George Patterson, an English expert on Asian affairs, writes that while Nehru and Patel "were administratively 'sovereign' in different spheres. policy matters were a joint prerogative except in foreign affairs, where Nehru's word was rarely, if ever, challenged".⁶ At the same time Patterson notes that the "struggle for pre-eminence between the idealistic Pandit Nehru and the pragmatic Sardar Patel continued after Independence over several issues, and from 1947 to 1950 India was in fact ruled by a 'duumvirate'."

And Krishna Menon, the distinguished Indian diplomat and public figure, who was a trusted aide of Nehru and who had ample opportunity to observe the state of things in the government, considers that in 1947 India was ruled by a "triumvirate", namely, Nehru, Patel and Gandhi.⁷

Here we have three different views on Nehru's role in the formulation of the Indian Union's foreign policy. It seems to us that neither Patel nor, least of all Gandhi intervened in the formulation and declaration of general foreign policy principles by Nehru. But when it came to the government's practical moves, whether concerning Pakistan or Kashmir or any other major foreign policy issue, both Gandhi and Patel not only tried to Influence Nehru, but also interfered in the carrying out of foreign policy measures.

The Indian Prime Minister and his Deputy could not be more unlike. Nehru hated dictatorship and was a humanist dedicated to the ideas of social progress. Patterson gives the following description of the two men: “Nehru was charming, mild, courteous, generous to a fault, sensitive, impulsive and emotional. Patel was dour and ruthless, unimaginative and practical, blunt in speech and action, cool and calculating. Nehru was the voice of Congress, disliking the political intrigues, lobbying at manipulations. Patel was the organiser of Congress, a master of machine politics who revelled in political manoeuvres”.⁸

But, of course, it was not the dissimilar personalities of the two men alone that accounted for their different approach to political questions. The main thing was that they expressed the interests of different sections of Indian society. “Nehru commanded the loyalty of the radicals and Patel the loyalty of the conservatives. Nehru was the idol of the working-class, the majority of the Westernised intelligentsia, the youth and the minorities. Patel was leader of the business interests, the orthodox Hindus, senior civil servants and most of the party functionaries”.

This is an important point, for it enables us to understand the distribution of forces in the government of the dominion. We have no access to routine official documents and as for the Constituent Assembly records and press reports, if they afford a glimpse of the differences between Nehru and Patel,⁹ they say nothing at all about the views on foreign policy matters of the other government members who abstained from making public statements on such questions.

From the above-quoted observation one may infer that whenever differences arose in the government Patel was supported by representatives of Indian big business, namely, by Defence Minister Baldev Singh and Finance Minister J. Matthai, who were connected with Indian princes, by K.C. Neogy, the Minister for Commerce, Gopala swami Ayyangar, the Minister for Railways and Transport, by S.P. Mookerjee, the Minister for Industry and Supply, and a representative of the Hindu Mahasabha, the party of militant Hinduism, by R.A. Kidwai, the Minister for Communications, who was a big landowner, and by B.R. Ambedkar, the Minister for Justice, who was closely connected with the Indian Civil Service.

This supposition is confirmed by the fact that these ministers resigned from the government soon after Patel’s death in December 1950. Only S.P. Mookerjee signed

somewhat earlier in April 1950. The rest of the government members, who had sided with Nehru when there was disagreement, continued to work with him.

Patel and his supporters in the government were not the only ones who tried to bring pressure to bear on Nehru. Several people attempted at different times to influence Nehru's decisions on certain questions. They were: Governor-General Lord Mountbatten, Nehru's sister Vijayalakshmi, Pandit (the first Indian Ambassador to Moscow in 1948 and subsequently to Washington and London), Dr.S.Radhakrishnan (Indian Ambassador to the USSR in 1949-51. subsequently Vice President and President of India), Maulana AbulKalam Azad, a leader of the National Congress party, K.M. Panikkar (who was Indian Ambassador to China), and V.K. Krishna Menon.¹⁰

Special mention must be made of Mountbatten, Brecher, a well-known scholar in his field, had every reason to think that Mountbatten, as well as V.L. Pandit, had tried to influence Nehru with a view to strengthening India's relations with the West. But in the summer of 1948 Mountbatten left India being succeeded on June 20, 1948, as Governor-General by Chakravarti Rajagopalachari, one of the oldest Congress leaders.

When we speak of the pressure which Patel and his supporters in the government, and Mountbatten, V.L. Pandit and others sought to bring to bear on Nehru, we have in mind the general direction of foreign policy and Nehru's decisions on major issues. Much, however, also depends on who carried out policy and in what manner. S.V. Bharathi, a noted Indian publicist, writes that Nehru left organisational matters to his senior officials, and that insufficient control and blind faith in the people who enjoyed his confidence were Nehru's chief weak points.¹¹

In the early years of India's independence, G.S. Bajpai, Secretary General of the Ministry of External Affairs and Common wealth Relations, was put in charge of the execution of foreign policy. Bajpai was not merely an administrator but also an adviser, especially during the talks on the Kashmir issue, both in the United Nations and on the spot-in India and Pakistan. Bajpai was an Indian Civil Service veteran, who was so loyal to the British that they had sent him in 1921-22 to the Washington Conference for Limitation of Armaments to "represent India".¹²

But despite all that, Indian foreign policy, as we shall see further on, became more and more independent with every year and was directed at consolidating India's

foreign policy positions and preserving peace. This was furthered to no small extent by the fact that along with the pressure exerted on Nehru with a view to bringing India closer to the West, there was the influence of Parliament, of political parties and the press, i.e., pressure exerted by the national bourgeoisie and other classes of Indian society interested in the consolidation of independence and in securing peaceful conditions necessary for the elimination of India's age-old underdevelopment. Nehru himself was a true patriot, to whom the future of the Indian people was of the greatest concern. He saw the principal aim of his life in making country really independent, ridding it of the deep-seated evils of the past and leading it along the path of progress.

As to the role played by Parliament in determining the country's foreign policy, there are two views on the matter. "The more caustic critics stated that Parliament was becoming 'no more than Pandit Nehru's durbar'¹³ that Nehru-aided on occasions, perhaps, by a handful of confidants-really makes policy, or that the major decisions are made in the Working Committee of the Congress Party, almost without exception on the initiative of the Prime Minister and in his presence ... that Parliament plays a role as a rubber-stamp".¹³

The other view, expressed by Krishna Menon, seems more correct. In the Indian Parliament, besides members' questions, weekly question time; etc., five or six debates on foreign affairs are held every year. Since the government had a majority in Parliament such debates were not likely to alter the decisions of the government on general foreign policy problems. However, the- importance of the debates on foreign policy was determined by three factors. Firstly, they were meant for the outside world; secondly, they educated the people and thirdly, they helped to make foreign policy acceptable to all members of Parliament. Menon spoke of Nehru's great respect for Parliament, adding "I believe that Nehru was more sensitive to the opposition than almost any other Prime Minister in the world that I know of. I think it was largely because he knew that the people who were on his side did not represent all opinion".¹⁴

The Constituent Assembly of the dominion was formed of a part of the Constituent Assembly of colonial India, elected in June 1946 the deputies representing the parts of India that formed the Indian Union composed it's Constituent Assembly. Its party composition can therefore be judged from the results of the 1946 election in "Zone A" provinces, i.e. provinces with a predominantly Hindu population. These

provinces had elected 190 deputies including 156 Congress deputies, 17 Muslim League deputies, 4 Englishmen, and 13 representatives of other parties and organisations (among them B.R.Ambedkar and S.P. Mookerjee). Besides the deputies who were elected, even if by indirect procedure, there were another 64 deputies.¹⁵ who, as is well known, were appointed by the princes.

Bearing in mind the composition of the Constituent Assembly, let us look at the status occupied by the National Congress party, the Muslim League Hindu Mahasabha, and the Socialist Party of India (a collective member of Congress until March 1948) in the nation's political life. The position of the Communist Party should also be mentioned. Although it was represented in the Assembly by a single deputy, Sumnath-Lahiri, the party played a significant role in India's political life.

At the time when India achieved independence the Congress party was the largest and most influential political party in the country. Where as in 1946-47 it had 5.5 million members, in 1947-48 it had 10.5 million members, i.e., its membership nearly doubled within a single year. Such rapid growth is often observed when a party becomes the ruling one. In the Case of the Congress party, the growth was due to yet another important circumstance, namely, that it was the Congress party that successfully led the national liberation movement' the movement for the country's political independence. It was mainly this that accounted for the growth of the prestige of the National Congress party among the broad sections of the people.

At the same time, the Congress party expressed the interests of the national bourgeoisie above all. In the period of the struggle for India's liberation the upper bourgeoisie regularly subsidised the party. After Independence had been achieved, a part of the Indian monopolists began to object to giving further support to the Congress party, being opposed to the policy it had adopted of building up the public sector of the economy and to the foreign policy principles it had formulated.¹⁶

But despite the fact that Indian big business played a significant role, exerting pressure of the Congress party and on the government formed by it, this party "cannot be identified with the Indian bourgeoisie or anyone section of it. Embodying the progressive tendencies of the bourgeoisie, the Congress party was for a long time leader of the broad mass of the people and expressed the interests of the masses at a certain

stage of the country's development. Having taken control of the state it even representing the interests of definite classes, had to take account of the interests of all sections of society.¹⁷ This point is of particular importance for an understanding of the foreign policy pursued by the National Congress party.

In the period of the struggle for independence diverse political forces in the Congress party were united by a common goal-liberation of the country from British domination. After the goal had been achieved, however, the struggle within the party intensified, and this weakened the party.

Proposals were advanced as early as autumn 1947 to reorganise the Congress party. First of all it is necessary to turn our attention to Gandhi's "Testament to the Nation". It described the type of organisation which Gandhi thought the Congress party should have. In summarising it, the Times of India wrote: "He would not be averse to disbanding the existing Congress organisation so that a new organisation composed of servants of the people could take its place and truly serve the lakhs of villages in the country and also help the people in the attainment of social, moral and economic independence as well".¹⁸

If Gandhi proposed broad non-party organisation to replace the Congress party, Acharya Kripalani (Chairman of the Congress party until November 1947) expressed a contrary view. He proposed that not only the Congress party be preserved but that its members be armed and undergo military training so that every city, every town and every village would have a disciplined citizen-army, which would be an instrument of service in peace and a guarantee of security in war. Purushottamdas Tandon, a prominent Congress member, went even further by demanding that the Congress party be militarised with the aim of getting back the areas ceded to Pakistan.

A committee consisting of Chairman and Secretaries of provincial Congress bodies was formed to study the various proposals on the reorganisation of the National Congress party. The committee concluded that the Congress must exist as a political party, though in a more compact form than before. Soon a point was introduced in the Congress Rules, prohibiting Congress members from belonging simultaneously to any other political party or religious-communal organisation. As this was expected to cause many to leave the Congress party, the newly adopted Rules provided for the admission of new members to ensure the party's growth.

It is worth noting that although India had a Western-type parliamentary system, the Congress party, unlike most of the bourgeois political parties in the West, did not turn into an appendage of the parliamentary group, thus avoiding the situation in which party work among the masses is conducted mainly during parliamentary election campaigns. After Independence, too, the National Congress party continued to conduct organisational and ideological work among the people, trying to bring under its influence diverse social sections - the industrial workers, peasants, women, the youth and students through all-India organisations that were to carry on their activities under Congress guidance. Following its example, other Indian bourgeois parties tried to do the same.

The second most influential political party in colonial India was the Muslim League which expressed the interests of the Muslim landowners (in the Punjab above all) and the upper commercial and industrial bourgeoisie. After the partition of India on a religious basis, the Council of the Muslim League held a meeting on December 14-15, 1947, in Karachi, at which a decision was adopted to split the party into two parties - the Pakistan Muslim League and the Indian Union Muslim League. Council members and rank-and-file members of the League residing or having taken up residence on the territory of either one or the other of the new states were to form the Council and rank and file of each of the new parties respectively. The Pakistan Muslim League became the ruling party of Pakistan, but the Indian Union Muslim League, which continued as an opposition party, quickly lost its significance as a political party, despite the fact that there were in the Indian Union 43 million Muslims whose interests the League claimed to represent.

The matter was that after the partition of India the Muslim League rank and file who remained in the Indian Union were seized by feelings of general disenchantment and cast into dejection. This was noted by AbulKalam Azad, a Muslim and a leader of the National Congress party, who wrote: "It is strange, but the fact is that these Muslim Leaguers had been foolishly persuaded that once Pakistan was formed, Muslims, whether they came from a majority or a minority province, would be regarded as a separate nation and would enjoy the right of determining their own future. Now, when the Muslim majority provinces went out of India and even Bengal and the Punjab were divided they at last realised that they had gained nothing, but in fact lost everything by

the partition of India. It was now clear to them that the only result of partition was that their position as a minority was much weaker than, before".¹⁹ Thus it came as no surprise that the first meeting of the Council of the Indian Union Muslim League, held on March 10, 1948, in Madras, was attended by only 30 of its 147 members. Following a debate which took place behind closed doors and lasted ten hours, the meeting decided to retain the League organisation which in future was to devote itself principally to religious, educational, social and cultural ends.²⁰

This decision met with no support from the mass of Muslims in the Indian Union because firstly, the new League was the successor of a party whose prestige among the Indian Muslims was thoroughly undermined and, secondly, the Muslims were faced with problems other than that on which the party leaders wanted to concentrate the attention of its members. Soon in the province of Madras ten members of the Muslim League group in the Legislative Assembly left the League. Later groups of League members in, the legislatures of West Bengal, Assam and other provinces left the League. The Muslim League was further weakened until it ceased to exist as an all-India party.

The third most influential among the political parties of India soon after the war was Hindu Mahasabha which expressed the interests of the Hindu landlords and princes. Thus party, founded in 1906 as a counterbalance to the Muslim League which was established shortly before, for many years had hardly any influence. The Indian Year Book, 1945-46 notes, "During the first twenty-five years of its life, the Hindu organisation had to struggle for its existence."²¹ It began to attract public attention only when after the Muslim League had adopted its Pakistan Resolution, it was joined by K.M.Munshi, a prominent National Congress member, who started, in December 1940, a campaign for "Akhand Hindustan".²² During the talks conducted in the spring of 1946 in India by a British Cabinet mission with representatives of the Congress party and the Muslim League, Hindu Mahasabha submitted to it a memorandum demanding independence for a united India that would have a federal structure, which would mean autonomy of the provinces and states under a strong central government.

The influence of Hindu Mahasabha grew sharply during the first months after India's partition. The riots and massacres that accompanied the partition, the migration of millions of dispossessed and embittered Hindu refugees, and the economic hardships

experienced by the country as a whole, created an atmosphere in which many people were ready to listen to the chauvinist anti-Muslim propaganda conducted by Hindu Mahasabha and Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), a militarised organisation associated with it.

RSS, set up in 1925, was a military fascist organisation to which only Hindus were admitted. Since 1941 it has been headed by M.Golwalkar, its “Supreme Leader” who had been with this organisation of “Indian storm troopers” since its birth. The Indian press observed that by the beginning of 1948 RSS had mustered enormous strength and had countless sections from Kashmir to Cape Comorin, with a total membership of two million. The most favourable conditions for the activities of Hindu Mahasabha and RSS were found in refugee camps. There were 150 such camps in India at that time, the largest of which, Kurukshetra, contained 300,000 people. At the beginning of 1948, over 1,200,000 adult refugees were still jobless and without a home.

After India's partition Muslims continued to be killed in many towns and districts of the Indian Union by Hindu fanatics who were incited by anti-Muslim propaganda. As these killings and the burning and wrecking of Muslim homes created chaos in the country and strained relations with Pakistan, Mahatma Gandhi called on the Government and Home Minister Patel above all, to take measures to safeguard Muslim lives and property. On January 12, 1948, Gandhi went on a hunger strike. This enraged Patel²³ while Hindu Mahasabha and RSS leaders began to accuse Gandhi of “betrayal of the sacred cause of the Hindus”, saying that his fast had served to weaken the Hindu front and describing his policy as “suicidal”. On the 20th of January and again on the 30th attempts were made on Gandhi's life, and during the second attempt he was fatally shot.

The reaction to the assassination of Gandhi was different from what its organisers had expected. They had hoped to build up the political positions of extreme chauvinists in the state administration and the country at large. But .as soon as it became known that Gandhi had been assassinated by Vinayak Godse, editor of the Hindu Mahasabha newspaper at Poona and an RSS member, Gandhi's followers, students and artisans above all, began to wreck Hindu Mahasabha and RSS premises and kill their members. Immediately after the assassination of Gandhi “the idealist Nehru, as the political heir of Gandhiji, rose in peoples estimation and the realist and practical Sardar Patel and Dr.Mookerjee got isolated within and outside the Government”.²⁴

Despite statements to the press issued by L.B.Bhopatkar, President of Hindu Mahasabha, and M.Golwalkar, leader of RSS, and despite the resolution passed by the Working Committee of Hindu Mahasabha on February 2, 1948, which Sought to prove that they had nothing to do with Gandhi's assassination, many leading members of Hindu Mahasabha and RSS were arrested. On February 4, 1948, RSS was banned by the Indian government. Hindu Mahasabha, by decision taken by its working committee on February 15, 1948, declared that it would cease to engage in political activities and would hence forth conduct social and cultural work only. This decision adopted on the advice of S.P.Mookerjee (who until the end of 1946 had been President and then Vice President of the party), saved Hindu Mahasabha "from the wrath of the party in power. It continued to exist."²⁵

After a few months most of those arrested were released and on August 7, 1948, the Working Committee of Hindu Mahasabha convened in Delhi to consider the question of resumption of political activities. In December 1948 Hindu Mahasabha began to demand that the ban on RSS be lifted and this end was soon achieved. But Hindu Mahasabha had so irrevocably compromised itself by the assassination of Gandhi that it could not have hoped to restore its former influence. In May 1949 it stated in the party programme that it "disapproves of India's decision to remain in the commonwealth", that "land should belong to the State" and "the minimum requirements of land for a family as a unit should be fixed", that "all key industries should be nationalised", and so on.²⁶ But such statements which were made for demagogic purposes did nothing to increase the party's popularity.

In May 1951, shortly before the first general elections in India, a new religious communal party, Bharatiya Jan Sangh, was formed with the aim of uniting all Hindu chauvinists. Its organiser, S.P.Mookerjee, had left Hindu Mahasabha in November 1948. That the new party was a successor to Hindu Mahasabha can be seen from the fact that it took over from the latter its militarised organisation RSS.

It should be pointed out that both in Parliament and in Indian public life Hindu Mahasabha (and later Jan Sangh) derived their strength from the support of their sympathisers in the National Congress party and other bourgeois political parties, and in public organisations in India.

Whereas the overt and covert supporters of Hindu Mahasabha in the National Congress party were not organised, matters were different with the Socialists who were affiliated with the Congress party and were known as “Congress Socialists”. They expressed mainly the interests of the urban petty bourgeoisie and the upper crust of the working class. In the early years after the war there was growing friction between the Congress leaders and the Socialists. The latter boycotted the elections to the Constituent Assembly in June 1946 and the sole Socialist member, Damodar Swarup Seth, was elected because he happened to be chairman of a Congress provincial committee at the time.

After Gandhi’s assassination the Socialist leaders, J. Narayan, R.M. Lohia and K. Chattopadhyaya, held a press conference at which they demanded the resignation of the government and declared their readiness to serve in the new government now that the country was faced with a political crisis.

The Socialist leaders’ move had wide repercussions. They were sharply attacked by all Indian bourgeois newspapers which considered their statement harmful to the national interests.

In January 1948 the Executive Committee of the Socialist Party adopted a decision, which was kept secret pending approval by the party congress, on withdrawing from the National Congress party. The congress, held in March 1948, endorsed the decision. The object of the Socialists was to win to their side those who were disenchanted with the National Congress party and ultimately establish a two-party system in India. At the same time, Acharya Narendra Deva, one of the Socialist party leaders, in addressing the congress, called on his-party to join efforts with the National Congress party for the purpose of abolishing the Communist party. The government of the National Congress party was criticised at the conference for its “totalitarian tendencies”, for its inconsistent policy on the labour question and its attitude towards the princes.

The total membership of the Socialist party in 1949 was 12360. The Socialists attributed the small membership to the party’s stipulation that every member should devote at least 14 hours a week to party work.²⁷

But despite its small membership and the fact that it had - only one representative in the Constituent Assembly, the Socialist party exercised a considerable influence on the socialist life of the country. It had the support of miners, railway workers, lockers, textile workers and workers of the sugar industry. Many of the trade unions-of these contingents of the working class were affiliated with the Socialist-led trade union centre, Hind Mazdoor Sabha. The Socialist party had its own organisation of peasants, youth organisation, and so on. One more evidence that it wielded considerable- influence in the country is the fact that it published 21 weeklies in different languages spoken in India.

During World War II, Indian Communists like the Socialists were in the National Congress party, although on the basis of individual, not collective, membership. After Nazi Germany had attacked the Soviet Union and an anti-Hitler coalition was formed, differences of opinion emerged between the Communists and the Congress leadership chiefly on the question of whether India should support Britain's war effort. Congress party members accused Communists of "betraying the country's interests", of being "British spies", etc. Subsequently, Bhulabhai Desai, a well-known lawyer and Congress figure as did later a Congress subcommittee of which Nehru was a member, on looking into the charges made against the Communists, dismissed them: as groundless. The Communists gave full support to the Congress party at the end of the war. But nevertheless they were expelled from the National Congress party, in 1945. The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India however, continued to support the policy of the Congress party and later (until 1948) also of the government which it had formed.

From February 28 to March- 6, 1948, the 2nd CPI Congress which represented the more than 89,000 members of the Party convened in Calcutta. As Ajoy Ghosh, General Secretary of the Party's Central Committee, noted in his article in the newspaper Far a Lasting Peace, For People's Democracy, published on October 19, 1951, the new Communist Party leadership had failed to work out a correct political course, owing to the fact that Leftist sectarian, views had prevailed in the policy and the methods of work, and to a desire to bypass the democratic stage of the revolution. Meanwhile since the spring of 1948, repressive measures against the Communists were launched throughout India, for which Vallabhai Patel, Deputy Prime Minister and

Minister of Internal Affairs was mainly responsible. In a number of provinces a ban was imposed on the activities of the Communist Party and on the publication of most of the Party's 11 weeklies brought out in all the principal languages spoken in India.

All this did enormous damage to the Communist movement in India, and by the start of 1951 CPI membership had dropped to 25,000. It was only after a new draft programme had been worked out in the spring of 1951, which gave priority to the tasks of the struggle against feudalism and charted a course for creating a broad anti-feudal and anti-imperialist front, that the Communist Party of India began to regain its former influence.

But despite the aforementioned errors of the CPI, the Communists' criticism of the foreign policy of the Indian government in 1948-49 and, later on, of its deviations from the declared neutralist policy, evoked sympathy from the public. It should be borne in mind that the CPI had numerous supporters among industrial and farm workers, that it guided the activities of the All-India Trade Union Congress and of the KisanSabha, the All-India Peasants' organisation. The Communist Party also had many sympathisers among the intelligentsia.

After World War II, when a new alignment of international forces had taken place, the young Indian state had the task of formulating its foreign policy and making its first foreign policy moves. In his first address over Delhi radio in September 1946 Nehru stated foreign policy principles which the Indian national government intended to follow, pointing out that India proposed to keep away from the power politics of group of states aligned against one another and to establish friendly relations with all countries.²⁸

Scholars belonging to different trends of thought have given a similar assessment of these principles. Here are two examples. The English author George Patterson writes: "Indian foreign policy arises from a combination of emphasis; anti-colonialism (the result of resentment at British dominance) anti-racialism (British imperialism had racial superiority over-tones) an awareness of 'Asianism' (Asian Nationalistic movements have common bond-strong feelings against the arrogance of the West), and sympathy for divided countries because of her own partition".²⁹

Professor Hiren Mukerjee, a noted figure in the CPI, gives a broader interpretation which is based more on the realities of Indian political life, but which is essentially similar to Patter-son's appraisal. Professor Mukerjee enumerates the following "main pillars" of Indian foreign policy: "ant colonialism... full equality of all races... non-alignment, which meant hostility to none, but a deliberate detachment from competitive power blocs, a determination to judge international issues on their merits and to exercise freedom of action on the basis of such judgement ... recognition of Asia and of Africa, as a newly emerging and vital element in world politics relaxation of international tensions and a peaceful approach for achieving disarmament and settlement of disputes without recourse to violence and war".³⁰

Concerning India's first foreign policy moves, the Indian researcher, K.P. Karunakaran, noted that after August 15, 1947, the Union of India had inherited not only the international status of undivided India and her membership in the UNO but also her foreign policy,³¹ i.e., the foreign policy of the interim government of India formed on September 1, 1946, and called attention to repeated statements by the Indian Prime Minister, that India would not join any political bloc. The Soviet scholar, V.P. Nikhamin, pointed out that even before British rule was abolished, Nehru declared on September 7, 1946, that India would not join groups of states that were aligned against one another.³²

A similar point of view was expressed by nearly all writers on India's foreign policy. The view that Nehru believed from the outset that India should pursue a policy of non-alignment is firmly established in literature dealing with international relations.

Let us now turn to the end of 1945, when there was an unprecedented upsurge of the national liberation movement in India and when the National Congress party was faced with the task of formulating its foreign policy with account taken of the changes that had occurred in the world and inside the- country and of the likelihood that the Congress party would become the country's ruling party, Early statements on India's foreign policy can be found in a number of public speeches by Nehru and particularly in his conversation with B. ShivaRao who had returned from San Francisco where the conference that had drawn up the Charter of the United Nations was held.

At the beginning of the conversation Nehru said that should the United Nations prove ineffective, an Asian Federation was “a possibility in the near future,” with large groups forming in Asia “for their own protection against outside aggression” and against “economic penetration”. For these reasons, as also because of old cultural bonds between Asia and Africa, Nehru predicted with confidence that “a closer union of the countries bordering on the Indian Ocean both for defence and trade purposes” as well as for “cooperation in foreign policy” was almost certain to emerge.

At the end of the conversation Nehru did not speak of the “possibility” of a conference being called for the preliminary discussion of his idea, as he had said at the beginning of the conversation, but of the “likelihood” of such a conference being called, for which his choice of venue was India. Although Nehru said that such a conference would not be opposed to the United States or any other power or group of powers, the idea of an Asian Federation was so clearly anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist that no reservations could conceal it.

What Nehru had said here is significant not only because it represented one of the early attempts to determine new India’s foreign policy line, but also because it contained the important suggestion-concerning a military political alliance of the countries bordering on the Indian Ocean. Nehru as we shall see, soon gave up this idea.

But early in 1946 Nehru tried to carry out his plan for calling a conference. He went to Bombay where he raised 100,000 rupees for organising the conference; during his visit to South-East Asian countries in March 1946 he secured support for his idea from the leaders of Burma and Indonesia, and so on.³³ Later when he was much occupied with political and state matters, Nehru continued to devote attention to the preparations for the conference.

At that time the fight for political independence was still in progress in India and several other Asian countries while the African people were only beginning to wage a national liberation struggle. Thus it was decided; (a) to hold conference of the Asian countries alone and call It an Asian Relations Conference (b) not to hold it at government level but to invite scientists and scholars and representatives of the public; and (c) to ask the Indian Council of World Affairs, a non-governmental body set up three years before, to organise preparations for the conference.

It should be noted that in the early drafts of the conference agenda paramount importance was attached to the question of joint defence of the Asian countries. Early in May 1946, B. Shiva Rao, who was an influential member of the Indian Council of World Affairs, said in a letter to the Conference organisational committee in which he communicated Nehru's ideas concerning the agenda, that it "should not only include but give first place to defence and security problems of the Indian Ocean area", Accordingly, the question of defence was put first on the 8-point preliminary agenda. However, Nehru soon changed his mind and the Council's letter of May 27 1946 which announced the conference agenda, made no mention of defence problems. An explanation for this was later included in the conference records: "Defence questions were excluded because the defence of Asia is bound up with world security and discussions on it would be unreal without the representation of the USA, USSR and Britain." ³⁴

It is understandable that Jansen, an Indian writer on international affairs, should express surprise that Nehru did not see earlier how "unreal" such discussions would be. Jansen. It is understandable that Jansen, an Indian Writer on International affairs, should express surprise that Nehru did not see earlier how "unreal" such discussions would be. Jansen believes that the change in Nehru's views on the matter occurred when "the responsibility of office and power had begun to cast its shadow before".

This is not likely, however, if only because Nehru did not become Vice-Chairman of the Viceroy's Executive Council (in fact, the head of the interim government) until three months later. A more likely explanation is that in May 1946, when an acute struggle was going on over the terms of the "transfer of power to Indian hands", Nehru had hopes of gaining America's support against Britain the old colonial ruler and that it was for the sake of seeing these hopes realised that he gave up his idea of joint Asian defence.

The Asian Relations Conference was held at Delhi from March 23 to April 2, 1947. It was attended by delegations of 28 countries, including representatives of the Central Asian and Transcaucasia Soviet republics, observers sent by the United Nations and the Arab League and by institutes of international (or Pacific) relations of the USSR, Britain, the United States and Australia. Opening the conference, Nehru greeted

all participants, mentioning in particular the delegates from the Soviet Republics of Asia which, he said, “have advanced so rapidly in our generation and which have so many lessons to teach us” Especially forceful was that part of the speech in which Nehru said: “Far too long have we of Asia been petitioners in Western courts and chancelleries. That story must now belong to the past. We propose to stand on our own legs and cooperate with all others who are prepared to cooperate with us. We do not intend to be a plaything of others”.³⁵ The Conference helped to strengthen the solidarity of Asian countries and was a predecessor of the Bandung (or Asian-African) Conference.

An important foreign policy move by India was her co-operation with the Soviet Union at the 1946 UN General Assembly session. As early as September 1946 Krishna Menon after his meeting with the Soviet Foreign Minister, said in Paris that “he saw no reason why the strongest friendship should not form the permanent basis of relations between India and Russia”.³⁶

At the General Assembly session the Indian and Soviet delegations had similar views on such problems as the unanimity of the great powers in the United Nations, withdrawal of British troops from Greece, membership in the United Nations, and so on. In December 1946 the head of the Indian delegation stated that more cooperation had been possible with the USSR than with either Britain or the USA, for “the Soviet approach to most problems had been somewhat more liberal”.³⁷ This cooperation between India and the Soviet Union aroused uneasiness in certain Western circles.

The first steps aimed at determining the foreign policy position of independent India, such as Nehru’s proposal at the close of 1945 on setting up an Asian Federation for joint defence, Nehru’s speech over Delhi radio on September 7, 1946, on the foreign policy of new India, cooperation with the Soviet Union at the UN General Assembly Session in 1946, and the convening of the Asian Relations Conference in March 1947, had been implemented even before the proclamation of political independence. And when that day, August 15, 1947, came, the young state was assailed by such misfortunes that during the early months of its existence as independent country urgent internal problems such as ending religious-communal clashes and the resettlement of refugees pushed everything else into the background.

Foreign policy questions appeared on the agenda of the government of the Union of India only after an undeclared war with Pakistan over Kashmir had started.

The Kashmir Question and Relations with Pakistan

When on August 20, 1947, the Union of India Constituent Assembly session opened, R.K. Sidhwa, an Assembly deputy, asked to be given the floor to make a special statement. On Independence Day, August 15, he said, hundreds of thousands of people gathered at the Fort of Agra to attend the ceremony of the hauling down of the British flag and hoisting of the national flag, A British officer intervened, saying that he would not have the British flag hauled down in the presence of British troops. The gathering calmed down only after an Indian serviceman had managed to hoist the Indian flag. Following Sidhwa another deputy, Balkrishna Sharma, rose and said that Colonel Hilman who was in command of the Kanpur garrison had issued a special order forbidding the ceremony of hauling down the British flag and replacing it by any other.³⁸

Sharma was interrupted by Rajendra Prasad, Chairman of the Constituent Assembly, who said that since the Assembly had met for the purpose of drafting a Constitution and was not yet sitting as the Legislative Assembly of India, it could not consider such questions. He added, however, that he was not quite clear in his mind about it. There was an uproar in the Assembly. The noise and confusion continued until Nehru, speaking “more or less as a layman than as an expert”, said: “It seems to me perfectly clear that this House is obviously a Sovereign body and can do just what it likes.... and has the right to carry on as a Legislative Assembly”. He also said that two or three instances that had been brought to notice regarding the incident at Agra Fort were being enquired into.

These debates in the Constituent Assembly are significant not only because they created a precedent whereby the Assembly took upon itself all legislative functions. They also show how, at an early stage of the existence of the Union of India, the British (in this case officers of no high rank) thought they had a right to interfere in everything. This interference proved disastrous when decisions were taken on the future of some Indian states, Kashmir- in particular. Under the Indian Independence Act adopted by the

British Parliament on July 18, 1947) the rulers of the states occupying a third of the territory of colonial India were to decide independently whether to join the Union of India or retain their former relations with Britain. At the end of May, Mountbatten met 75 most influential princes in order to persuade them to make up their minds before August 15.

The British, who hoped to be able, even after “leaving India”, to retain their troops there and to set up strategic military bases in India, assigned a particular place in their plans to Kashmir. But the Maharaja’s hopes, encouraged by the British, that Kashmir would remain an “independent state” were blasted by the anti-feudal movement of the people of Kashmir. Mass demonstrations against the Maharaja, which had started already in 1946 and proceeded under the slogan “Get out of Kashmir” did not stop after the arrest of Sheikh Abdullah and other leaders of the local National Conference party. Describing the political situation in Kashmir in, the summer of 1947, Vijay Kumar, an Indian student of the Kashmir problem and himself a Kashmiri, wrote: “Military and police methods had only succeeded in deepening the popular resolve for an early overthrow of the rule of autocracy, The National Conference, enjoying large support throughout the Valley, had emerged as the strongest and the most popular organisation of the people”.³⁹

The National Conference of Kashmir (NCK) was close to the Congress party and followed its leadership, but it represented the left wing of the Congress organisations. During the war the more progressive of the NCK members drafted the programme of the party and the future constitution of Kashmir. The latter was published as a brochure entitled “New Kashmir”.

In these circumstances the British were forced to abandon the idea of proclaiming the “independence of Kashmir” and began to support Pakistan, which was more dependent on them at the time and which wanted Kashmir for itself. In June 1947 Mountbatten, who had come to Kashmir for “a rest”, spent four days trying to persuade the Maharaja to ascertain the will of his people by any means and join whichever Dominion his people wished.⁴⁰ This was tantamount to demanding that Kashmir accede to Pakistan as three-quarters of the Kashmir is where Muslims who, in Mountbatten’s view, could wish for nothing better than to become citizens of a Muslim state.

At the same time, as Alastair Lamb, an Australian Orientologist, has pointed out, many Pakistanis still believe that when India was divided the British were “as least keeping the door open for Kashmir's accession to India”. By a decision of the Radcliffe Commission, set up to delimit the border between India and Pakistan in the Punjab, the district of Gurdaspur which had a preponderantly Muslim population was given to India: “Had the whole Gurdaspur district gone to Pakistan, then India would have lost Pathankot and the only practicable road from East Punjab to Jammu”.⁴¹

This might seem to contradict our conclusion about Mountbatten's attempt to have Kashmir accede to Pakistan. But as a matter of fact there is no contradiction, and Lamb writes further: “It is now clear that the Radcliffe award here was in no way related to the Kashmir question; rather, it was based on considerations arising from the division of the waters from certain canals”.

Soon after Mountbatten, the leaders of the National Congress party joined the struggle for Kashmir. Shortly before India's partition Acharya Kripalani and then Mahatma Gandhi visited Kashmir. Before leaving Delhi, Gandhi said that his tour was absolutely non-political and undertaken simply as a formality to redeem a thirty-year-old promise made to late Maharaja PratapSingh.⁴² Gandhi's visit to Kashmir and his conversation with the Maharaja yielded fruit. Gandhi wrote to Patel: “I had an hour with the Maharaja and the Maharani. He agreed that he must follow the people; but he did not to the point, you have evidently to do something about it”.⁴³

Patel and Kripalani began to hold talks with the Maharaja. They tried to persuade him not to yield to threats and intrigues, promising that the NCK would not lead the people against him. Simultaneously they insisted on the release of Sheikh Abdullah assuring the Maharaja that the Sheikh would support him against Pakistan. On September 29, 1947, Sheikh Abdullah and his associates were released from prison. Speaking at a mass meeting at Srinagar three days later, Sheikh Abdullah praised Gandhi and Nehru and was sharply critical of the Muslim League's “two-nation” theory.⁴⁴ Sheikh Abdullah's speech showed that this leader of the NCK, who earlier had fought for making Kashmir an independent democratic republic, now favoured Kashmir's accession to India.

Did this change in Sheikh Abdullah's views reflect the prevalent mood in Kashmir? There are different opinions on this point. PremNath Bazaz, leader of the KisanMazdoor Conference (the Kashmir party of peasants and workers), noted that besides the NCK there were 16 political parties and a large number of associations and groupings in Kashmir which could be divided into three groups on the question of Kashmir's accession either to India or to Pakistan. The first group included such organisations as the Muslim Conference which advocated accession to Pakistan on a religious basis. The second group "Included the KisanMazdoor Conference and the Socialist Party of Kashmir which saw no difference in Kashmir going either way but demanded that the issue be settled democratically by an Impartial and fair plebiscite, The third group included those who, like the Praja Parishad were for Kashmir's accession to India whether the Kashmiris wanted it or not.⁴⁵ Actually the resolutions passed by the KisanMazdoor Conference on September 5 and by the Socialist Party of Kashmir on September 22, 1947 demanded Kashmir's accession to Pakistan. Since the Praja Parishad had Supporters only among the Hindu part of the population of Jammu and enjoyed no influence in the Kashmir Valley, we may conclude that what Bazaz was implying. Is that by far most of the Kashmiris were for accession to Pakistan.

Almost all Indian authors, however, try to prove that the Kashmir supported accession to the Union of India.⁴⁶

While the Congress leaders wanted Kashmir to accede to India the leaders of the Muslim League worked for its accession to Pakistan. In 1944, Mohammed Ali Jinnah, the League President, went to Kashmir and stayed there for two months doing everything he could to strengthen the positions of the Muslim Conference Party which was allied to the Muslim League.

It would be interesting to trace the changes in the Muslims League's position on the status of Kashmir. In a statement issued to the press early in May 1947, the acting chairman of Muslim Conference of Kashmir (who naturally shared the Muslim League's point of view) assured the Maharaja of the support and co-operation of the Muslims forming an 80 per cent majority in the State as represented by their authoritative organisation, the Muslim Conference" and said that the Muslims "would readily acclaim him as the first constitutional king of democratic and independent Kashmir".⁴⁷ In early July 1947 the Dawn, the semi-official organ of the Muslim League,

congratulated the Kashmir government on not having yielded to the pressure of National Congress President A. Kripalani, who has visited Kashmir in order to persuade the Maharaja to the join India. But towards the end of July 1947 an editorial in the Dawn openly demanded Kashmir's accession to Pakistan.⁴⁸

On August 14, 1947, Pakistan signed an agreement, proposed by the Maharaja of Kashmir, undertaking to maintain the status quo-in its relations with Kashmir for one year. On the very next day, August 15, Pakistani agents hoisted the Pakistani flags over the post offices in Kashmir, and the economic blockade of Kashmir by Pakistan followed soon after. Economically Kashmir was vulnerable since it got its supplies of food, fuel and other necessities over the roads lying in districts which later acceded to Pakistan (while the only road leading to Banihal Pass, which lay in the districts having acceded to the Union of India, was usually closed for the greater part of the year).

In September 1947 the Pakistan Governor-General M.A. Jinnah, said that he would like to spend a fortnight in Kashmir. But the Kashmir government objected to the visits on the grounds that conditions in the State “were unsatisfactory” and the visitor “might not have the rest that he wanted”. Then, instead of Jinnah, his private secretary went to Kashmir and during his stay there which lasted several months he tried to stir up hatred for India.

Pakistan sought by various means to bring pressure to bear on Kashmir. On October 19 the Foreign Minister of Pakistan sent a cable to the Premier of Kashmir and on the very next day Governor-General Jinnah sent a cable to the Maharaja, both saying that the Maharaja’s policy ran counter to the will of the people of Kashmir. The cables were probably prompted by reports of the progress made in the Kashmir-India negotiations on the Kashmir question which were being conducted in Delhi by M.C. Mahajan, the newly appointed Prime Minister of Kashmir.⁴⁹

Meanwhile, in Pakistan, detachments of the Pathan tribes, numbering 4,000-5,000 men were moved from the North-West Frontier Province to the border of Kashmir, so as to annex it to Pakistan by force. The invasion of Kashmir started on October 22, 1947. The Pathan troops armed with modern rifles, machine guns and mortars advanced quickly in motor cars towards Srinagar. On October 24 the Maharaja of Kashmir appealed Delhi for help. On October 26th fled with the government to

Jammu taking with him his personal belongings which were loaded into a hundred Lorries. The special administration set up at Srinagar by the National Conference party organised a people's volunteer corps to defend the capital.

Much has been written by historians and politicians in the West about who was responsible for the invasion of Kashmir. This is understandable as the invasion of Kashmir in October, 1947 by the tribes which had acceded to Pakistan marked the beginning of a conflict which poisoned relations between India and Pakistan for many years.

D.F. Karaka, an Indian columnist known for his pro-American sentiments, gives the following interpretation of what led to the invasion of Kashmir. Under British rule, says Karaka, the tribal chiefs of the North-West Frontier Province used to receive from the British about 30 million rupees annually "in return for their goodwill". After India's partition these subsidies were stopped, and Pakistan had no money to pay them. The Pakistani government did expect Muslim tribes to attack a Muslim state. The Pathans, however, "slipped into the habits of lawlessness which came naturally to them" and set out to plunder "the sun-flushed valleys of Kashmir".⁵⁰ Thus, according to Karaka, the invasion of Kashmir had not been organised by anyone; it was to be 'explained by the Pathans' "habits of lawlessness which came naturally to them".

For some months following the invasion, Pakistani official spokesmen emphatically denied that the invaders were getting help from Pakistan. The Foreign Minister of Pakistan told the UN Security Council on January 15, 1948, that the Indian charges were groundless, that the Pathans had no bases in Pakistan and were not trained by the Pakistan army. He said that his government continued to do all in its power to discourage the tribal movement by all means short of war.⁵¹ The Prime Minister of Pakistan, however, said that "it was possible that some Pakistan army personnel, who were on leave, might have participated in the operations."⁵²

Let us now turn to the professedly impartial historians in the West. Lord Birdwood wrote that his "own inquiry in Pakistan" had led to certain conclusions. Firstly "no British officer, Civil or military had any idea of the plans in preparation". Secondly, "certain senior officials were well aware of the intention, and discreetly turned the other way". Finally, the Chief Minister of the Frontier Province, who had

family connections in Kashmir, gave it unqualified assistance “without which the operation might not have been possible”.⁵³ So, if we are to believe Lord Birdwood, the British knew nothing about it.

Josef Korbel, a member of the UN Commission on India and Pakistan, which was set up later, writes that the Pakistani central authorities knew nothing about the invasion, but “the Prime Minister of the North-West Frontier Province, himself a Kashmiri, and his officers did give the tribesmen help”.⁹⁰ So if we are to believe J. Korbel, the Pakistani central authorities too knew nothing about the planned invasion.

Prem Nath Bazaz, a pro-Pakistani political figure in Kashmir while admitting that the invading tribesmen plundered the people burned their houses, killed and raped says at the same time that they did it “despite the' strict orders of their officers”.⁵⁴ Thus Bazaz justifies not only the Pakistani authorities but also the officers.

Michael Brecher cites the correspondents for several British periodicals who reported that there was every evidence that the tribal invasion had strong support and the recruiting was going on inside Pakistan itself, and that there could be no question that encouragement and aid were given to the tribesmen in Pakistan.⁵⁵ But Brecher too failed to shed light on the part played by the imperialists in the invasion.

Nearly all the Indian authors on the subject also conclude that the responsibility for the 1947 invasion of Kashmir lay entirely with Pakistan. This is stated with particular conviction by Sisir Gupta, who adduces new evidence in support of his thesis. Thus, for example he tells that Abdul Razzaque Khan, a Muslim League leader, filed a suit in 1956 against his party from which he sought to recover the 10,480 rupees he had spent in 1947 on transporting volunteers to Kashmir at the League's request, and that Jinnah promised Mountbatten soon after the start of the invasion to call it off if Mountbatten accepted his terms of settlement.⁵⁶

Only Vijay Kumar, an Indian author, writes about the responsibility of the British imperialists for the invasion, citing the following irrefutable proof. He recalls that in a personal letter sent by George Cunningham, the Governor of the North-West Frontier Province, to Rob Lockhart, the British Commander-in-Chief of India, a few days before the invasion, Cunningham warned General Lockhart about the coming invasion of Kashmir by the tribesmen. As Lockhart failed to hand the letter over to the

Indian Government, in whose service he was, and as this important document was destroyed by someone, while Cunningham failed to inform the British government about the coming invasion (or; if he did inform the British government, the latter did nothing), Kumar concludes that Britain encouraged the invasion.⁵⁷

The evidence cited by Kumar might be supplemented with other facts. About two weeks before the invasion started most of the English in Kashmir had been evacuated on the instructions of the British High Commissioner in India. Furthermore, the invading tribes were accompanied by British reporters.⁵⁸

It should be noted that, like the British ruling circles, the United States too was responsible for the 1947 invasion, for one of the commanders of the invading army was Russel K. Haight of the US Office of Strategic Services. B.N. Rau, India's representative in the United Nations, well understood that Haight had not gone to Kashmir on his own initiative and told the Security Council that India could, if she chose, "ask for damages from the United States for losses sustained as a result of Haight's activities".⁵⁹

The Maharaja's appeal for help on October 24 faced the Indian government with the necessity of reaching a decision quickly. Nehru says Madhok, "feared that direct military help to Kashmir would lead to war with Pakistan". That provoked Patel, "who shared the views of Dr.Mookerjee that India must rush her troops to save Kashmir without caring for the consequences. Pandit Nehru had to submit and air-borne Indian troops reached Srinagar just in time ..." ⁶⁰

Was it so indeed? Were there any differences of opinion inside the government or among the Indian political parties on giving military aid to Kashmir? In reality Kashmir's appeal for help met with complete unanimity of opinion on the part of the Indian government and the public. Even Gandhi thought that his non-violence doctrine did not apply in that instance and issued a call to 'do or die'.

How did the-events actually develop? Simultaneously in the Maharaja's appeal for help of October 24, information was received from the Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Indian-and Pakistan armies, Field Marshal Auchinleck, that the tribes were advancing rapidly, However, the situation in Kashmir was discussed by the Indian Government Defence Committee only on the following day. The meeting despite their

fact that another telegram had arrived saying that the invading tribes were only 35 miles from Srinagar,⁶¹ decided, on Mountbatten's instance, to send V.P. Menon, Secretary of the Ministry of States, to Kashmir to see for himself what the situation was and report to the Government. After his trip to Srinagar, Menon told the meeting of the Defence Committee on October 26 that it was urgent to save Kashmir from the invaders.

Mountbatten now began to insist that troops could be sent to Kashmir only when it had acceded to India. Menon flew to Jammu where the Maharaja of Kashmir had fled, and returned with a document on Kashmir's accession to India and a personal letter from the Maharaja to Mountbatten in which the Maharaja again asked that troops be sent to Kashmir without delay and stated that Sheikh Abdullah had been appointed head of the interim government. A request for troops and for Kashmir's accession to India was made also by Sheikh Abdullah who had arrived in Delhi.⁶² Discussion of the question was set for the next day, and on October 27, 1947, the Defence Committee agreed to Kashmir's accession to India and decided to send troops there. On the same day, the first Indian battalion was airlifted to Srinagar and immediately upon landing engaged the superior enemy. It had arrived just in time. "A few minutes later the airfield might well have been in enemy hands".⁶³ As it was, the airfield and Srinagar were successfully defended.

These events convincingly show that by holding back discussion of the situation in Kashmir, Mountbatten had given the invading force, already on the approaches to Srinagar, three days in which to seize the capital of Kashmir. During those crucial three days (October 24-26) the people of Kashmir were defenceless against the invading force.

On the question of Kashmir's accession to India, the Hindu Mahasabha leadership had more than once accused Nehru of having "torpedoed this brilliant decision" to send troops to Kashmir by making the offer of plebiscite to determine the future of Kashmir after "Indian soldiers, had-cleared it of the Pakistani hordes".⁶⁴ Robert Trumbull, a noted American journalist, shared this opinion. He wrote: "Nehru had made it a formal condition of accepting the Maharaja's accession to India that this action should be confirmed after order had been restored, by ascertaining the will of the people of the state. Constitutionally, it was not-necessary to do this for the Maharaja's action legally and irrevocably handed the state over to India ... Nehru's idealistic gesture

was to make Kashmir a powder keg for years to come ...⁶⁵

The question of plebiscite in Kashmir is of great significance and we must ascertain who indeed raised it. The Maharaja's letter of October 26 to Mountbatten, in which he asked that Kashmir be admitted to the Indian Union and that troops be sent to the state; made no mention of any subsequent plebiscite. Mountbatten, in his reply of October 27, after stating that his Government had decided to accept the accession of Kashmir State to the Dominion of India, said as soon as law and order have been restored, the question of the State's accession should be settled by a reference, to the people.⁶⁶ The meaning of Mountbatten's reply is this firstly by adding the second sentence he altered the meaning of the first and now the implication was that Kashmir's accession was merely temporary. Secondly, Mountbatten literally repeated the proposal he had made to the Maharaja during his visit to Kashmir in June 1947, about "ascertaining the will of the people". Thirdly, the British were experienced in falsifying the will of the people having conducted in July 1947 a referendum in the North-West Frontier Province,⁶⁷ that Mountbatten might well be confident that should a referendum be held in Kashmir too it could be made to yield the "required results".

Thus, the idea of a plebiscite came from Mountbatten. In a radio address on November 2, 1947, Nehru merely modified Mountbatten's formula, adding after the word "referendum" the phrase "held under international auspices like the United Nations".⁶⁸ This proposal to hold a plebiscite in Kashmir was communicated by cable on October 31, 1947, to the Pakistani Government, which rejected it. Governor-General Jinnah made a counter proposal which called for joint Pakistani-Indian administration of Kashmir. This was rejected by India. Gururaj Rao, an Indian scholar, observes that "when an offer is made and the same is not accepted within a reasonable time, it automatically lapses".⁶⁹ Therefore the obligation to hold a plebiscite in Kashmir does not follow from the aforementioned declaration of the Indian Government made in November 1947 but from the fact that the Indian Government had subsequently agreed to the resolutions of the UN Commission on India and Pakistan calling for a plebiscite in Kashmir.

The Indian troops which had arrived in Kashmir repulsed the invading force from Srinagar, pressing it back beyond the river Uri and thus halted the invaders' offensive operations. Later Nehru was criticised for not having ordered the army to

clear the entire territory of Kashmir, and it was suggested that “a strong man like Patel, if he had his way, would have done it”.⁷⁰ It was Mountbatten's pressure again that led to the decision to freeze military operations in Kashmir in late 1947 and early 1948. Mountbatten tried to convince the Indian Government that to have Indian troops advance beyond the Uri might provoke a still greater conflict between India and Pakistan.⁷¹ To Nehru, who felt keenly the consequences of India's partition, the very idea of an all-out war with Pakistan which would inflict still greater calamities on the people, was odious. This is what he himself said about the Kashmir question: “We have indeed been over scrupulous in this matter so that nothing may be done in the passion of the moment which might be wrong”.⁷² Meanwhile Mountbatten kept trying to exert pressure on the Indian Government in the matter of Kashmir.

The British newspaper Daily Telegraph reported on December 27, 1947, that Mountbatten, threatening to resign from his office of Governor-General, demanded that India pursue a policy in Kashmir which would not make a clash with Pakistan inevitable and insisted on either outright partition of Kashmir or the immediate reference of the issue to the Security Council. The Indian Government referred the Kashmir question to the Security Council on December 31, 1947. Many years later, in April 1964, shortly before Nehru's death, his daughter Indira Gandhi said in a speech in New York, probably expressing Nehru's own view, that “the Kashmir issue should not have been sent to the UNO”.⁷³

Krishna Menon believed that India should have referred the question to the United Nations under Chapter VII of the Charter, i.e., “Action with Respect to Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace and Acts of Aggression”, rather than under Articles 34 and 35 of Chapter VI, “Pacific Settlement of Disputes”. The error, he explained, was due to the Government implicit faith in the United Nations.⁷⁴ Meanwhile this error enabled the then Chairman of the Security Council, Fernand van Langenhove (Belgium), obviously acting under instructions of Britain and the United States, to turn the “Kashmir issue” into the “India-Pakistan controversy” including therein also the question of the state of Junagadh the question of the division of state property, etc.

The Pakistan representatives persistently denied that the Pakistan Government had in any way helped the invading tribes, On February 6, 1948, Sheikh Abdullah Who had flown in from India, addressed the Security Council on the subject. He said: “I have

fought many battles along with my own men, on the borders of Jammu and Kashmir. I have seen with my own eyes the support given by the Pakistan Government: not only in supplying bases, but in providing arms ammunition direction and control of the tribesmen”.⁷⁵ "The Security; Council resolved to establish a United Nations commission composed of three members, one of India's choice (she named Czechoslovakia), another of Pakistan's choice (she named Argentina), and a third of their mutual choice. Subsequently, the commission came to include also representatives of Colombia, Belgium and the United States. The Modern Review (Calcutta) reported that in 1950, Dr. Oldrich Chyle (Czechoslovakia), a Commission member, showed in his report to the Security. Council that the double game the Western powers representatives were playing hindered a settlement of the Kashmir issue.

Meanwhile Pakistan intensified- her armed intervention in Kashmir. The Pakistan Foreign Minister informed the UN Commission that three regular Pakistani brigades had been fighting in Kashmir since May 1948. Subsequently; hostilities in Kashmir were stopped. In response to the UN Commission's appeal to the sides to abstain from hostilities, the Government of the Union of India issued orders accordingly to its troops in Kashmir. A ceasefire was put into effect on January 1, 1949, but North and West Kashmir continued under Pakistan's jurisdiction, being administered through the Azad Kashmir Government set up by Pakistan.

In the part of Kashmir which was under India's jurisdiction (roughly three-fifths of the territory of the state) the positions of the Sheikh Abdullah Government and the National Conference were growing stronger. The National Conference had increased its membership to 600,000 by May 1948. Its rising popularity was due to the part it played in the struggle against the autocracy, to the fact that it organised resistance to the invading forces, and, above all, to the fact that on coming into office it opened to the people of Kashmir the prospect of freedom from the former tyranny. Under the Maharaja land tax in Kashmir was higher than anywhere else. The Maharaja had also imposed a “special window tax” (which is the reason why windowless houses are still found in Kashmir), a “tax on the hearth” (winters in Kashmir are very cold), a “tax on every wife”, and so forth.⁷⁶

Before looking at the alignment of political forces in India on the Kashmir issue in 1947-1949, we must first have a clear idea as to the attitude of Britain and the United States to the Kashmir question as it influenced the struggle going on in India.

After its plans for Kashmir's accession to Pakistan had aborted, Britain continued to support Pakistan at the first stage of the discussion of the question in the Security Council, and tried to force India either to cede the whole of Kashmir or to consent to its division. For then Britain would be able to retain control of the militarily more important northern districts of Kashmir after they had formally acceded to Pakistan.

The British Government at the same time tried to attain its objectives by taking other steps. The Kashmir question was put on the agenda of the Commonwealth Prime Ministers Conference in October 1948. However, although Pakistan was supported by Britain and the "old Dominions", no settlement was reached. In 1949 Pakistan again demanded that the question be discussed by the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference to be held in April; but this time the British Government declined Pakistan's request. As the main point to be taken up at the Conference was whether India would continue in the Commonwealth, it was essential for Britain to show that she was willing to make concessions to India at the expense of Pakistan.

The concessions, however, did not relate to the northern districts of Kashmir or the roads leading to them for Britain wanted them to remain in Pakistan's possession. From the autumn of 1949 the imperialists had been trying to establish an "anti-communist cordon" in South Asia based on an Indian-Pakistan military and political alliance. Since it was impossible to do this without first settling the Kashmir issue, British Prime Minister Attlee and US President; Truman called on the Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan to resolve the question through the agency of a "neutral" party. Simultaneously the British press set out to persuade India that the Kashmir question was merely a "matter of prestige" to her while it, was vital to Pakistan. However, discussion of the British plans for setting up a "cordon", and of the Kashmir question at the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference held at Colombo in January 1950 yielded no results.

The position of the United States on the Kashmir question largely coincided with Britain's since both wanted above all to use Kashmir as a military base against the USSR. Karunakaran writes that it was the feeling of many in India as well as elsewhere that “one of the underlying factors has been the Anglo-American concern about their bases 'in Palcistan’”.⁷⁷ At the same time, there was a difference of approach between the two countries. Unlike Britain the United States would not be satisfied merely with Kashmir's partition between two 'British dominions. The United States advanced various proposals, including the “establishment of an international administration in Kashmir”, a plebiscite under the supervision of a UN administrator and the setting up of an “independent Kashmir” under US guarantee. The United States was in fact taking over the initiative with regard to the Kashmir question since it came to be discussed in the Security Council, seeking to get control of Kashmir for its own ends, first as a military base spearheaded against the Soviet Union, and secondly, as a means of getting a foothold in that part of the world; ousting Britain.

The imperialists' designs on Kashmir became increasingly clear to its people. Those experienced in diplomacy saw that Kashmir was not a localised issue but one of the “fronts of the cold war” being waged by world imperialism against the USSR and other socialist communist countries. In his conversations with Michael Brecher on Indian foreign policy problems, Krishna Menon said: “Kashmir is a cold war issue; its part of the desire to forge a ring round the Soviet Union, part of the policy of what is called 'containment’”. Menon mentioned Kashmir three times, saying that it was the cold war that made Kashmir an issue.⁷⁸

As mentioned earlier at the start of the conflict, when the Indian Government was deciding whether to send troops to Kashmir, all national Indian political parties supported the decision though for different reasons. Most of the Congress party members shared Nehru's view which has been described as follows: “Beyond the strategic importance which geography gives it, Kashmir embodies in Nehru's eyes the secular spirit which he cherishes. That a State with a Muslim majority should cast its ties with India has always seemed to him a refutation of the two-nation theory on which Pakistan was founded.”⁷⁹ For the leaders of the Hindu Mahasabha the most important thing was to defend the Maharaja of Kashmir, a Hindu, against Muslims. An Indian Socialist leader, R.M. Lohia publicly stated: “The accession of Jammu And Kashmir

State to the Indian Union is the first blow to Pakistan. It is the beginning of Pakistan's end, because Kashmir is a state where 75 per cent of the Muslim population lives, and it elected to join the Indian Union".⁸⁰ To appreciate the ominous undertone of this statement, one should be call that a fortnight before (or a week before Kashmir's accession to India), Lohia had confidently predicted that Pakistan would disappear in the next five years.⁸¹

When it referred the Kashmir question to the United Nations, the Indian Government got no support from the op- position but was sharply criticised by the CPI, the Socialist Party and the Hindu Mahasabha. The last two noted the weakening of India's foreign policy positions, but drew entirely different conclusions from this. Lohia wanted the Government to declare boldly that under no circumstances there shall be any war with Pakistan. The Hindu Mahasabha, on the other hand, adopted a resolution asserting that the Kashmir issue was a threat to India's freedom and demanding a militarisation of India.

When in 1949 Attlee and Truman suggested that the Kashmir question be settled by arbitration and Nehru rejected it, the Government again was supported by all national Indian parties. The Organiser, the semi-official organ of the Hindu Mahasabha, said on September 6, 1949: "Arbitration is no solution of the problem. There can be no arbitration between the burglar and the man whose house has been burgled".⁸² Most of the Indian Muslims, who after the partition constituted a minority in all provinces except Kashmir were also opposed to arbitration. That was why the accession of Kashmir, in which Muslims were a majority to the Union of India, gave the Indian Muslims a certain sense of security.⁸³ Arbitration was supported only by the pro-Pakistan parties in Kashmir. PremNathBazaz, leader of the KisanMazdoor Conference criticised the Indian Government for rejecting arbitration, reminding it that the Indian delegate to the Security Council. Sen, two years before, on August 8, 1947, insisted on Holland's accepting an International Arbitration Commission "to resolve the Indonesian deadlock".⁸⁴

A sharp political struggle developed in India in 1948-49 over the question of the administration of Kashmir. In the Indian part of Kashmir there was a sort of diarchy, with the power of the absent Maharaja steadily dwindling and with the Sheikh Abdullah Government gaining strength. Formally, however, the question of government in

Kashmir was not decided. The forces of foreign and home reaction joined in the struggle against the democratic aspirations of the people of Kashmir. From the very outset all Western proposals on the Kashmir question advanced in the United Nations included the point about establishing a “neutral rule” in Kashmir, handing government over to an “international administration” and so forth. The Canadian Montreal Daily Star said on February 7, 1948: All the conciliation proposals thus far have concentrated the establishment of a neutral regime to govern Kashmir". Pakistani leaders shared a similar view: “Jinnah did not like the plebiscite idea at all, largely because he was convinced that its result would be determined by Sheikh Abdullah Thus Jinnah was not prepared to run the risk of confirming Sheikh Abdullah in power”.⁸⁵

As for the Hindu reactionaries-the Hindu Mahasabha and its Jammu branch, the Praja Parishad, and the chauvinists in the Congress party and in the Indian Government-their position was that the Maharaja should remain in power. In 1949, after the reform of the states had been completed throughout India, the Praja Parishad launched a campaign to have the Maharaja appointed rajpramukh (a constitutional leader performing the functions of Governor). Meanwhile Nehru and his supporters in the Congress Party and the Government, the India Socialists and the greater portion of the public supported Sheikh Abdullah and believed that the National Conference should remain in power in Kashmir in future as well.

In the summer of 1949 the Kashmir National Conference leaders began to urge the Indian Government to take steps to prevent the return of Maharaja Hari Singh to Kashmir. In view of the strong popular opposition in Kashmir to the restoration of the Maharaja's rule and of the state of the international talks on the Kashmir question, Nehru and his supporters took the upper hand in the Government which “advised HariSingh to voluntarily remain in exile. The Maharaja had no choice but to agree. On June 20, 1949 he appointed his son Yuvraj Karan Singh, to carry on all functions of the state' legislative executive and judicial, as, the Regent during the period of his temporary absence from the country”.⁸⁶ The “temporary absence”, as we shall see later, became permanent and thus the appointment of the regent signified a transfer of power which simply did not exist. The power struggle in Kashmir ended in favour of the National Conference whose position had been strengthened during 1949.

An analysis of the struggle over the Kashmir question waged by the internal political forces would be incomplete without account being taken of the presence in India of British and American lobbies striving to influence the Indian Government and Indian public opinion in a direction desirable to the imperialists. B.N.Chakravarty was a prominent figure of the American lobby. He was an experienced, diplomat, and Indian Civil Service official since 1929. In 1948-49 he headed the Indian Mission in Tokyo and was simultaneously a political adviser of ministerial rank attached to MacArthur's staff. In 1953 Chakravarty chaired the neutral nations' commission for the repatriation of prisoners of war in Korea. In his book *India Speaks- to America*, Chakravarty tried to convince the Indian people: that the United States supported Pakistan merely because it believed in the two-nation theory and supposed that should the Kashmir question be settled in favour of Pakistan, the latter would become India's friend.⁸⁷ If Chakravarty cited apparently accurate facts and then gave them a convenient interpretation Karaka, the Indian journalist and publisher of a newspaper mentioned earlier did not bother at all about facts and proofs but uttered such statements as "while India can survive the loss of Kashmir, Pakistan cannot", "if Kashmir were to become part of India, it would be a compelling reason for India to be friendly with Soviet Russia and our whole foreign policy would have to be shaped on an entirely different footing from that of the neutrality", and so on.⁸⁸

Thus one can conclude from the analysis of the internal political struggle in India on the Kashmir question that national Indian political parties supported the Nehru Government in 1947-49 when it fought the intrigues aimed at the seizure of Kashmir and when it was hesitant, then differences arose.

Besides the Kashmir question, there were many other disputed issues between India and Pakistan such as the waters of the irrigation canals in the Indus basin, mutual financial claims, border issues and the situation of religious minorities the Hindus in Pakistan and the Muslims in India.

The Indus basin comprises the Indus River, its tributaries-the Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, Sutlej and Beas, and the Kabul River. The Kabul in It slower reaches runs in Pakistan (the greater part of it is in Afghanistan) and the Beas in India, while the rest of the rivers rise in India and then flow to Pakistan. The India-Pakistan border cuts across the Indus basin in such a way that India had much less possibilities for irrigating her

fields than Pakistan (5 against 21 million acres respectively). Of the total discharge of the rivers in the Indus basin (168 million acre-feet) India received, according to Indian figures, 9 and Pakistan 66 million acre-feet of water. The rest was lost through seepage or wasted for want of dikes and canals. After the boundary had been delimited, the more important head installations of the irrigation canals went to East Punjab, i.e., to the Indian Union. The Indian Independence Act of July 18, 1947, contained no provisions on the supply of water to West Punjab (Pakistan) from East Punjab (the Indian Union). In December 1947 the provincial governments of West and East Punjab concluded an agreement under which they would maintain the status quo in water supply until March 31, 1948.

When the term of the agreement had expired and as the authorities of Western Pakistan took no steps to conclude another on April 1, 1948, East Punjab stopped feeding water into the irrigation canals running to West Punjab. This precipitated a crisis in India-Pakistan relations which continued nearly throughout the month of April. On April 29, the Prime Ministers of Pakistan and India exchanged telegrams, as a result of which agreement was reached on holding talks on the issue at the forthcoming Inter-Dominion Conference and the Indian Minister gave orders to resume the supply of water to West Punjab. At the Conference the Indian Union and Pakistan signed, on March 3-4, 1948, an agreement on the waters of the Indus basin.

Notwithstanding the agreement, Pakistan and India continued to clash over the distribution of water from the irrigation canals, blaming each other for being left without water, until a new agreement was signed in 1960.

At India's partition many other issues also had to be settled. They related to the monetary system, distribution of the funds of the Reserve Bank, division of stores at the military depots, and division of the sum of £1,160 million sterling which Britain owed India for the foodstuffs, raw materials and war materials that it obtained from India during World War II. The Indian interim government set up a committee on partition consisting of the Viceroy and four Executive Council members. After August 15, 1947 the committee was reorganised into a Partition Council which consisted of two Cabinet members from each of the Dominions under the chairmanship of the Governor-General of the Union of India. Lord Mountbatten. It was decided that both states would have a common monetary system for the period until March 31, 1948, during which time the

Indian state printing house at Nasik would print the notes and the mints at Calcutta and Bombay make the coins for Pakistan. It was also agreed that a sum of 200 million rupees should be made available to Pakistan as a non-repayable subsidy.⁸⁹

In May 1948 representatives of India and Pakistan, meeting at Karachi, signed an agreement on reciprocal deliveries under which Pakistan was to supply raw jute and cotton to mills in India and India was to export iron, steel and coal to Pakistan. The purpose of the agreement was to lessen the adverse economic consequences of the partition which left Indian mills without raw materials as the latter were grown in areas that went to Pakistan. But the agreement did not work because of financial frictions arising from Pakistan's refusal in September 1949 to devalue the Pakistani rupee when Britain and then India and other sterling zone countries devalued their currencies.

A source of acute conflict between India and Pakistan was their mutual claims for refugee property. The cost of Hindu property left behind in Pakistan was estimated at Rs.38, 000 million and of Muslim property left behind in the Indian Union at Rs.3, 800 million. This conflict, as was the constant tension between India and Pakistan generally was-aggravated by the presence of numerous groups of refugees who concentrated in towns. In India feeling ran high over the issue. As Das Gupta, an Indian scholar, has noted, "the Indians attach as much importance to it as the Pakistanis do to Kashmir".⁹⁰

An atmosphere of hostility prevailed in the Hindustan Peninsula owing to bitter border disputes. The Indian Union and Pakistan interpreted differently the so called Radcliffe Award (i.e. the demarcation line in the Punjab set by the British at India's partition in 1947) so that some populated areas and irrigation installations at the western border as well as the border between Kutch (the Indian Union) and Sind (Pakistan) came under dispute. Differences over the border in its northern part (in the Punjab) concerned small areas, the largest of them not exceeding a few thousand hectares, but they had important economic implications because the border, as mentioned earlier, cut irrigation systems in two, and thus the dispute over borders involved a struggle for control of the head installations of the systems. A somewhat larger disputed area (3,500 square miles) was a part of the Rann of Kutch, an uninhabited salt marsh east of the mouth of the Indus.

On the eastern border there were petty disputes over the boundary between East Pakistan and the Indian provinces of Assam and West Bengal and the territory of Tripura. The illegal border crossings in the disputed section as and minor border clashes were used by the chauvinist elements to strain relations between. India and Pakistan still further.

The situation, of religious minority groups in both countries presented a known problem. As said earlier, there were massacres of Muslims in the Indian Union which had started at the time of India's division on a religious basis and which continued until January 1948 (massacres of Hindus occurred in Pakistan). In India these massacres were incited by the Hindu Mahasabha, RSS and other Hindu reactionaries. There were also many militant Hindu reactionaries in the Congress party. For instance, P. Tandon, a prominent Congress party figure, said at a rally held in Jubbalpore on the occasion of the first anniversary of independence: "Muslims in India will have to win the confidence of their fellow countrymen and Government not by words but by deeds. They must stop looking to Pakistan for inspiration and make India's culture their own".⁹¹ Although he did not openly call for suppression of Muslims in India, Tandon's words clearly implied that Muslims were, at best, second-class citizens.

Hindu chauvinists were also found among Congress leaders and in the Government. This can be seen in Patel's speech in the Subjects Committee of the INC Congress at Jaipur in December 1948. He said that India could not allow the flow of refugees from Pakistan to continue and war Betbat if such conditions were not created as were suitable for the Hindus to live in East Pakistan, then Pakistan must give up some territory for settlement of refugees. There was not Hindu or Sikh left in Pakistan, he continued, in East Bengal there were still about 15 million Hindus; the Indian Government had assumed the responsibility for settling the refugees from West Pakistan, but the refugees from East Bengal must go back. Patel suggested, threateningly. enough, that the only solution that could be found peacefully was that a part of East Pakistan be carved out and handed over to India for rehabilitation of refugees.⁹² In the light of this speech, Patel's statement at a mammoth meeting two days later hardly sounded convincing. He said: "It is our determined resolve that we will not allow RSS or any other communal organisation to throw the country back on the path of slavery or disintegration".

Meanwhile Nehru and his supporters in the Government and Congress tried to build a secular state to counteract militant Hinduism and create conditions in India in which different religious communities could coexist peacefully. Krishna Menon, who took this position, told Brecher: "As for this two-nation theory we never accepted it. We accepted the Partition and Pakistan merely as an ad hoc practical arrangement".⁹³

One may infer from this that the religious minority groups in Pakistan were in a still more difficult situation. The two-nation theory was a basic principle of the ruling Muslim League, and oppression of the Hindus in Pakistan was made into government policy.

In the disputes between India and Pakistan in 1947-48 over the situation of the religious minority groups, the matter did not boil down to speeches at rallies and in Parliament or to press polemics. Oppression of religious minority groups caused constant migration (the number of refugees varied) in both directions. And each wave of refugees arriving in India or Pakistan provoked hostile reaction on the part of the majority, sparking off new clashes between religious communities and sending a fresh wave of refugees in the opposite direction.

At the Inter-Dominion Conference held in Calcutta on April 15-18, 1948, India and Pakistan reached the following agreement: "The responsibility for protecting the lives and property of minority communities and for ensuring that they receive justice and that their civic rights are fully safeguarded rests on the Government of the Dominion in which the minorities reside".⁹⁴ This agreement, however, like all other talks on the situation of different minorities, eased tensions only temporarily.

It would be hard to find another two countries in the world which had held so many talks and signed so many agreements as the Indian Union and Pakistan did. How did India-Pakistan relations stand by the end of the period under review, i.e., by 1950?

First, it is necessary to point out that Indo-Pakistani relations were largely determined by a unity of the internal political forces in India with respect to Pakistan. Many Congress leaders at that time believed that the partition of India and the existence of Pakistan as a separate state were temporary. This view was reflected in Circular No. 28(a) signed by Shankarrao Deo, General Secretary of the Indian National Congress party, sent to all Congress organisations on July 21, 1947, i.e., before Pakistan came

into being. The letter stated: "This separation, we hope and believe, is temporary and short-lived".⁹⁵ The resolution of the Congress Working Committee of July 19-20, 1947, said: "The Committee believe that the destiny of India will yet be realised and that, when passions have cooled, a new and stronger unity based on goodwill and cooperation will emerge".

Nor was it the INC alone that supported the theory of Pakistan's "automatic collapse." As said earlier, R.M. Lohia, an Indian Socialist leader, predicted that Pakistan would disintegrate within five years, As for the Hindu Mahasabha and other militant Hindu organisations, their leaders insisted that Pakistan be "abolished" and the partition "undone as early as possible".⁹⁶ General Secretary of the Hindu Mahasabha, A. Lahiri, on the second day after Gandhi had been assassinated by a member of that party, urged the Indian Government to disown all the commitments to Pakistan and resume unfettered action against it or to let others form a government.

The only political party that openly opposed the "collapse of Pakistan" theory was the Communist Party of India. The Pakistan question was given much attention by the 2nd CPI Congress in March 1948. The Congress disproved the idea which was spread by some Congress party members that Pakistan was going to collapse, while at the same time refuting the notion held by the Muslim League that "Pakistan was an advance towards the so-called Muslim freedom from Hindu domination".⁹⁷ But the leftist sectarian errors made by the CPI with respect to other problems of India and the mass persecution of Indian communists that started soon after the 2nd Congress hindered their fight against the bourgeois views on Pakistan.

Despite serious internal difficulties, Pakistan set about building the country. Her international position became stronger.⁹⁸ Since the autumn of 1949 the Indian statesmen and political leaders who had expected Pakistan to collapse began to speak of the Pakistan menace to India. Tara Singh, leader of the Akali, a Sikh party, said in October 1949 that war with Pakistan was in sight. But that can be regarded as a piece of anti-Pakistan demagoguery to which Singh often resorted. It was quite a different matter when Krishna Menon, the former Defence Minister, began to speak about the danger of the possible seizure of India by Pakistan. "My belief", he said, "Is- that the Pakistani leaders looked upon Pakistan as a first instalment, thinking in terms of the English doctrine 'take what you can and fight for more'. They never seem-to have accepted the

Partition as final, as we did. Their main approach to the problem was that India was a Muslim country historically; the British had taken it away from them; now the British had gone away and it should-be handed over to them".¹⁴⁴

The Hindu-and Sikh chauvinists insisted on the militarisation of India, but, despite pressure both inside and outside the Government, Nehru decided to' take a major step towards easing tensions in Hindustan. Through the Pakistan High Commissioner in Delhi. India offered to sign a joint declaration with Pakistan on renouncing war as a means of settling disputes. In his address to' the Indian Parliament on January 31, 1950, Rajendta Prasad, who had just taken the office of the President of the Republic, said that both the Government of India and the Government of Pakistan "should make a solemn declaration for the avoidance of war as a method for the settlement of any disputes between them", and that the two sides should resort "to negotiation, mediation, arbitration or reference to some international tribunal in order to settle such disputes".¹⁰⁰ The Pakistan Government declined the proposal, with the result that relations between India and Pakistan became further strained and by 1950 they were worse than when the two young states had just emerged.

The Indian Union and the British Commonwealth

The British ruling circles had hoped that British troops would remain in both India and Pakistan in order to' protect British interests there and to' help carry out Britain's imperialist plans in that part of the world. When the bill on the transfer of power to India was discussed in the British Parliament it, July 1947, Prime Minister Attlee confidently stated that the British Government's jurisdiction over any British armed force remaining on the territory of each of the Dominions could not be affected by the Independence Bill.

But the Indian people did not accept such a situation. The presence of British troops on Indian soil infringed on India's national interests and was resented by the Indian people. The Indian Government succeeded in having the troops withdrawn, and on February 28. 1948, the last of the British military units stationed in India left the country from the port of Bombay. However, many high commanding posts in the Indian armed forces continued to be filled by Englishmen for some years after. A week before the transfer of power took place The Indian News Chronicle reported that 16 of the 20

British major-generals and 260 of the 280 brigadier-generals "consented" to continue in service in the Indian and Pakistan armies.

It wounded the Indians' national pride to have Mountbatten, an Englishman, for Governor-General and so it was decided that he should be replaced by Rajagopalachari, an Indian.

The withdrawal of British troops from India-and the replacement of an Englishman by an Indian in the office of Governor-General did not of course mean that India had thereby attained full statehood. Nehru wrote as far back as 1936: "the whole conception of Dominion status seems to me to be an acceptance of the basic fabric of British imperialism"¹⁰¹ for many years previously the Indian people had rejected Dominion status promised by Britain and fought for full independence. This idea had such wide support in India that the Dominion status granted in 1947 was regarded by all politically-minded Indians as a temporary thing. But if India should reject Dominion status, what should her relations be with Britain?

In 1947-49 a sharp debate was under way in India on whether she should remain in the British Empire (renamed the British Commonwealth of Nations in 1948) or whether it should leave it. Professor Rajan (India) wrote that before World War II there were three main objections to India's maintaining any form of association with the metropolitan country and the Commonwealth. The first objection arose from the widespread belief in India "that Dominion Status under the terms of the Statute of Westminster, 1931, was not equivalent to Poorna Swaraj or complete independence, which was the goal of the Indian National Congress laid down at the end of December 1929".¹⁰² The second objection of Indian leaders to continued membership in the Commonwealth was that the latter "was an association of nations bound by racial and cultural ties." The third objections were of a "psychological character. Far too many Indians [the leaders of the nationalist movement especially] ... retained too fresh and bitter memories of the cruelties, indignities and humiliations suffered by the country as a whole as well as individual Indians under British rule". Although Professor Rajan, in citing these objections referred to the period before World War II (evidently out of diplomatic considerations), they fully applied to the post-war period as well. In a conversation with M. Brecher, Krishna Menon said that he had always supported India's continued membership in the Commonwealth. When he was asked whether Nehru had

shared that point of view (in 1948), Menon replied: "Sub-consciously, yes I think it is true that at one time I was the only person who wanted it"¹⁰³ If Menon had influenced to some extent Nehru's decision for India to remain in the Commonwealth, Mountbatten had tried even harder to influence Nehru in that direction¹⁰⁴ It is safe to say that Mountbatten left India only after he, and thus the British Government had made sure that India would remain subservient to Britain. As W. Norman Brown, an American Ideologist has pointed out, "Severance of relations by India was sure to be a serious blow to the Commonwealth. It would deprive the Commonwealth of nearly two-thirds of its population and a large part of its area, diminish its economic power, and impair its prestige in Asia and the world".¹⁰⁵

But to explain India's decision to remain in the Commonwealth by the desire of anyone individual would be objective. G.V. Plekhanov, a prominent figure in the international socialist movement, wrote: "Marx observes that ideas 'were worsted' every time they did not coincide with the real economic interests of that social stratum which at the particular time was the bearer of historical progress.... It is only the understanding of those interests that can give the key to understanding the course of historical development."¹⁰⁶

What, then, were the real economic interests of the Indian bourgeois system with which the idea of India's leaving the Commonwealth failed to coincide?

First of all there was India's strong economic dependence on Britain which could be ended only by drastic measures such as nationalisation of British property in India. But the Indian bourgeoisie could not be expected to carry out such measures. Further, in terms of her currency reserves India was tied to the sterling zone within which Indian foreign trade was mostly conducted. Lastly, the Indian bourgeoisie pinned its hopes for the country's industrial development largely on the sterling balances. Apart from these economic considerations, there were also military considerations namely, that the Indian army was equipped with British-made weapons and still depended on Britain for military supplies and personnel training.

The Constituent Assembly session on March 8, 1948, clearly showed how strong the opposition was to India's continued membership in the Commonwealth. Although a general debate on Indian foreign policy had been expected, one of the four points

suggested for the agenda, namely, the question of relations with Britain. was moved to first place, the other three problems being relations with Pakistan and the Kashmir question; the situation of Indians in the Union of South America and in other parts of the British Empire; and India's relations with the United Nations. Professor N.G.Ranga a prominent Congress party member, pointing out that India's relations with Britain were uncertain, called on the Government to issue a statement as soon as possible on the proclamation of India as an independent republic. Another Congress party member, Santhanam, said that the important thing was to establish closer relations with India's neighbours."¹⁰⁷ Kamath, a Socialist said that India should associate with countries which could be of help to her and suggested that she should try to create a bloc together with the USSR and China. Kunzru, an independent, alone spoke for closer relations with the Anglo-American bloc.

In concluding the debate Nehru, who felt that the opposition feelings ran high assured the Assembly that India's future relations with Britain would be decided by the Constituent Assembly. He also said: "Whatever the final decision might be, it is quite certain, I believe, that India would be a completely independent and sovereign republic and denied reports that negotiations with Britain were under way.

During the latter half of 1948 the question of India's relations with Britain was carefully studied by the Indian Government. The turning point was reached at the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference in October 1948 in London, the first to be attended by the Prime Minister of the Indian Union at which he discussed with Attlee India's relations with British Nehru later said that he had realised then that "membership in the Commonwealth meant independence plus, not independence minus".¹⁰⁸

After the decision had been reached at the conference that India should remain in the Commonwealth, there was still a prolonged struggle ahead to overcome opposition to this decision in India. The question of India's continued membership in the Commonwealth was to be brought up at the 55th Congress of the INC at Jaipur in December 1948. When this became known, more than a fortnight before the meeting" Professor ShibbanlalSaksena, a member of the Constituent Assembly and the All India Congress Committee (AICC), proposed the following draft resolution: "This session of the Indian National Congress resolves that India shall have the status of a completely sovereign independent State like America and Russia, and shall sever all links with the

British Commonwealth of Nations in accordance with the pledge of purna swaraj or complete independence which has been reaffirmed by the nation from year to year since 1929 when the Congress at Lahore defined swaraj in Article 1 of the Congress constitution to mean complete Independence.

A resolution passed by the Congress Working Committee prior to the Congress indicated that even in that small body consisting of 21 members appointed by the chairman of the Congress party there was strong opposition to India's continued membership in the Commonwealth. The resolution stated that India wished to maintain such relations with other countries as did not hinder her freedom of action and independence and that the Congress would welcome India's free association with the independent nations of the Commonwealth for their common weal and the promotion of world peace.¹⁰⁹

After being passed by the Working Committee, the resolution was sent on for discussion to the Subjects Committee, a 600-member organisational political body into which, just before the conference, the AICC was transformed. Of this number, 120-150 belonged to the so-called old guard, the leading group which had formed round Gandhi and which had existed for over 30 years while the rest represented the higher category of the 'party membership, being full members (under the party rules endorsed by the AICC in April 1948 there were two other categories, the rank-and-file and the competent). Although the Committee consisted, therefore, of Congress members who were completely devoted to the leadership and well-disciplined, the draft resolution of foreign policy (which included the aforementioned statement on association with the nations of the Commonwealth) was sharply criticised' In spite of the fact that there were 14 different resolutions to discuss, many speakers who took the floor focused attention on the suggestion for India's continued membership in the Commonwealth and proposed amendments of a negative kind. A discussion followed, as a result of which two amendments were withdrawn and the others were rejected by the Committee, and the resolution was passed.

At the open session on December 18, 1948, attended by almost 4,000 delegates and 200,000 guests, the resolution on foreign policy was to be proposed by G.B. Pant. He told the meeting that India had established contacts with all the countries of the world, something which she could not have done "as long as she was ruled by

foreigners". He said that India "did not intend to join any bloc", that on the contrary, "India's object would be to maintain cordial and cooperative relations with all nations" and even suggested the formation of a "Federation of Asia for raising the standard of the oppressed and the weak". He did not say a word about India's membership in the Commonwealth¹¹⁰. At that open meeting there could, of course, be no question of a serious discussion of foreign policy principles. The resolution on Indian foreign policy containing the vague phrase about "free association with the independent nations of the Commonwealth" was approved without debate.

Despite their different comments on the decision to remain in the Commonwealth, all Indian newspapers of various leanings except the National Herald, disapproved of it.

Of the opposition parties the Socialist Party was the first to react to the Jaipur reselection. Ten days after the Jaipur Congress, the National Executive of that party adopted a resolution on the question of the Commonwealth of Nations saying that, not only India should not join any bloc, but steps should be taken to create a "third force" for averting another world war. If the purpose of this resolution was, as it might seem, to register opposition to India's membership in the Commonwealth, its alternative proposal, in effect, weakened this opposition. From statements made by Right-wing Socialist leaders it was clear that they wanted to set up a bloc with the participation of Indonesia, Malaya and other South-East Asian countries. But, as the newspaper Indian Nation noted at the time, such a bloc would be too weak to offset the great powers and, moreover, it seemed rather improbable that it could be set up at all as the South-East Asian countries would not ally themselves with India in a bloc which, as the Socialists conceived it, was to be spearheaded against the Soviet Union.

The meeting of the National Congress party at Jaipur, the critical comments of the entire Indian press concerning the decision on the "free association" of India with the Commonwealth nations, the reaction to this decision from one of the opposition parties—all had clearly demonstrated the strong anti-British feelings of the Indian people. It was one thing to have a vaguely worded decision passed by a meeting of the AICC, and quite another to have a treaty on India's membership in the Commonwealth a treaty that had been signed, ratified. This could be done only if Indian public opinion were persuaded that being in the Commonwealth would not prevent India from pursuing an

independent foreign policy and proclaiming herself an independent sovereign republic. While long talks and consultations were held and legal investigations and discussions were conducted for the implementation of the second objective, the international conference on Indonesia which convened in January 1949 at Delhi demonstrated the independent character of Indian foreign policy.

The Indonesian people had been fighting for more than two years against Holland's attempts to restore colonial rule in Indonesia by armed force. In January 1948, with the aid of a "good offices" committee comprising the United States, Australia and Belgium, the young Indonesian Republic was forced to accept the Renville Agreement which, above all, met the interests of the colonialists. However, in less than a year Holland began to find the agreement unsatisfactory. On the night of December 19, 1948, Holland, breaking the agreement, launched a new war against the Indonesian Republic. Jogjakarta, the capital was seized by Dutch paratroopers and President Sukarno, Prime Minister Hatta and other members of the Indonesian Government were arrested and interned on a solitary island. Prime Minister of Burma U Nu turned to Nehru with the proposal to call a conference of Asian states in defence of Indonesia." Ten days later, on Nehru's instructions. Invitations to attend the conference were sent out.

Nehru's decision on convening the conference was probably influenced by the following considerations:

1. Holland's fresh aggression against the Indonesian Republic had evoked wide-spread indignation among the Asian peoples. (This can be seen from the fact that most of the countries invited to attend the conference responded promptly and in three weeks' time the conference was convened.)
2. The fact that India emerged as the initiator of the conference put the Nehru Government in the van of the struggle against the colonialist policies of the Western powers, the more so since for many the memory was still fresh of the moves made by the Soviet Union in 1945-48 in the UN Security Council and elsewhere denouncing the Dutch aggression against Indonesia, which was 'perpetrated with the support of the United States and Britain, and demanding that it be halted at once.
3. Long-standing cultural and religious ties existed between India and Indonesia.

4. Nehru had been a friend of Mohammed Hatta, the Prime Minister of the Indonesian Republic, ever since their first meeting at the Oppressed Nations' Congress in 1927 at Brussels.

When the US and British ruling circles began to show anxiety in connection with the proposed Conference on Indonesia the Indian Government issued the following explanation: "The United Kingdom and United States attitude-the initial nervousness was the result of apprehension that after this first meeting the Asian countries might learn to work together in matters of common interest and thus break away from the tutelage of Western powers. The exchange of views with both governments has secured their general goodwill. Had the conference designed to discuss or devise something hostile to the United Kingdom we should not have invited Australia and New Zealand".

The Conference on Indonesia took place in Delhi on January 23, 1949. It was attended by India, Afghanistan, Australia, Burma, Ceylon, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Pakistan the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Yemen, and by observers from Kuomintang China, Nepal, New Zealand and Thailand. At the opening of the Conference, Nehru, in the presence of the diplomatic corps and newsmen, made a short speech saying that the conference should concentrate on the Indonesian problem so as to "supplement the efforts of the Security Council, not to supplant that body".¹¹¹ To prepare the draft resolution, the conference set up an editing commission consisting of representatives of India, Australia, Ceylon and Pakistan, all Commonwealth members.

On January 22 the Conference approved the draft resolution submitted to it by the chairman of the Commission, Bajpai, who was Secretary-General of the Indian Ministry of External Affairs. The Conference condemned the Dutch aggression and insisted on the release of the arrested members of the Government of the Indonesian Republic and other political prisoners, withdrawal of Dutch troops from Jogjakarta and then from Indonesia 'at large, transfer of power by January 1, 1950, to the United States of Indonesia and settlement by negotiation of its relations with Holland.¹¹² The resolution was conveyed at once by cable to the Security Council which showed by its decision of January 28, 1949, how little the Western powers at that time heeded the opinion of the Asian countries expressed in 'the resolution of the Indonesia Conference. The only point to which the Security Council paid attention was the demand to free' the

captured members of the Government of the Indonesian Republic Besides this recommendation, the Security Council envisaged the establishment of a UN mediating commission, and made the utterly unrealistic proposal that Indonesia should be granted independence not later than May 1, 1960.

Much of the time at the Conference on Indonesia was taken up by a discussion, initiated by Nehru, on setting up a permanent organisation of Afro-Asian countries. During the discussion representatives of Australia, Ceylon and Iran said that the invitations to attend the conference had mentioned the Indonesian question alone and that they were not authorised to take decisions on other problems. The delegates from Burma, Syria and Yemen, on the other hand maintained that their governments would not have agreed to take part in the conference if they had thought that it would not promote co-operation in future on all problems. Most persistent of all was the Philippines representative Brig. Gen. Romulo, who called for the establishment of an "Asian anti-Communist front" and who saw his wish fulfilled six years later when SEA TO was set up.

The discussion ended with the adoption of a rather brief and vague resolution which said that "participating Governments should consult among themselves in order to explore ways and means of establishing suitable machinery for promoting consultation and cooperation within the framework of the United Nations" Commenting on this resolution, the Delhi correspondent of an American newspaper said: "The only actual Asian bloc today is that which may exist in the minds of Western observers."

The Conference on Indonesia elicited conflicting comments. Lawrence K. Rosinger, an American scholar, expressing the opinion of the US ruling circles (in December 1949 he was appointed head of the US delegation to the India-US conference in Delhi), wrote: "None of the resolutions was as strong as had been expected, and Indonesian hopes that the Conference would call for sanctions and offer aid against the Dutch were not realised: Particularly noteworthy was the absence of any threat of future economic sanctions by the conferees if the Security Council did not act, the vagueness of the resolution proposing future consultation of the nations represented, and the absence of any reference in the resolutions to the desirability of ending Western aid to the Netherlands."

A correct appraisal of the conference was given by V.P. Nikhamin, a Soviet scholar, who said that the conference had contributed to some extent to the recognition of Indonesia's independence and that it had demonstrated the community of interests of the Asian countries fighting against colonialism. But, he pointed out, as the resolution did not denounce the policies pursued by the colonial powers or show the possibility for Asian countries to take independent action should UN decisions prove ineffectual, the Soviet Union and all progressive forces criticised the conference decisions.

Meanwhile, the numerous meetings in India protesting against aggression in Indonesia, Prime Minister Nehru's sharp denunciation of Holland's action which he described as naked and brazen aggression in a speech on January 3, 1949 the closing of all Indian sea and air ports to Dutch vessels and aircraft from January 1, 1949, and the organisation of an international conference on Indonesia which asked the Security Council to take measures to protect the Indonesian Republic- all this had a strong impact on the Indian people who were convinced that the Indian Government was pursuing a fully independent foreign policy. Even Karunakar Gupta, an Indian scholar, who was rather critical of the conference on Indonesia, wrote: "Whatever might have been the original plans of India in calling the Asian Conference in New Delhi, it had the effect of 'taking the wind out of Russian anti-imperialist sails, by giving leadership to Asian opinion on the subject' as the Economist suggested on 5 March, 1949, while achieving a compromise settlement which' satisfied the Big colonial powers as well as the moderate elements in control of national leader- ship in Indonesia".

A month and a half after the Indonesia Conference, during a debate on March 8, 1949, in the Constitutional Assembly on the general budget, Nehru had an opportunity to ascertain how the attitude of the Assembly to India's membership in the Commonwealth had changed. Nehru began his speech by saying that India must play an important role in Asia thanks to its geographical situation, history and for many other reasons and that India was the point where "East and West met".

"Look at the map", he went on. "If you have to consider any question affecting the Middle East, India comes into the picture inevitably; if you have to consider any question concerning South, East Asia, you cannot do so without India. So also about the Far East ... So, even if you think in terms of regional organisations in Asia, you may have to keep in touch with other regions. And whatever regions you may have in mind,

India cannot be ignored her important part in Asia".¹¹³ At the end of his speech. Nehru, after noting that one of the resolutions of the Conference on Indonesia called for a study of methods of close collaboration, promised that another conference would be held to look into the possible lines of collaboration.¹¹⁴ Somewhere in the middle of his speech Nehru referred briefly to India's membership in the Commonwealth. First, he recalled that he had had occasion to inform the Assembly of the Government's general approach to this problem and had gathered that the House agreed with that in spite of "possibly some individual Members not agreeing with".¹¹⁵ Then he said that at its Jaipur Session the Congress party had laid down in broad lines the policy on this question to be pursued by the Government.

This speech evoked immediate comments from many Assembly Members. H.V. Kamath, a Socialist, and Brajeshwar Prasad, a Congress party worker from Bihar, were the only ones who spoke against India's membership in the Commonwealth.

The question of India's membership in the Commonwealth was again raised in the Assembly three weeks later, on March 31, 1949, when the bill on additional allocations for the Ministry of External Affairs was discussed. This time, of all the Members who spoke on the question, only one, Sahu, opposed India's membership in the Commonwealth. He recalled that Indians were discriminated against not only in South Africa, but also in Australia, the United States and Canada, and read out a passage from Leo Tolstoy's Letter to a Hindoo which read "in India and in other countries the dominant class belongs to an entirely different nation from those oppressed.

"It appears especially strange of India, for here we have a people of 200 millions of individuals, highly endowed with spiritual and physical powers, in absolute Subjection to a small clique, composed of persons utterly alien in thought and aspiration and altogether inferior to those whom theyenslave'.¹¹⁶

The next speaker, Mahavir Tyagi, a prominent member of the Congress party, thought that India should be a member of the Commonwealth but insisted on a clearer definition of the Government's foreign policy. He said:" we are claiming every day that we are neither on this bloc nor on that-we are in the middle. Then again there is the talk of our cooperating with the British forces to fight together the Communist menace in the East and so many other things in the Press".¹¹⁷

The Assembly debates of March 8 and 31, 1949, showed that opposition (including that from Congress party members) to India's continued membership in the Commonwealth was not so pronounced as it had been a year before. As for the alignment of the internal political forces outside the Assembly, i.e., the "non-parliamentary opposition", the situation was as follows. The more determined opponents of India's membership in the Commonwealth the Indian Communists, were, because of mass repressive action taken against them in 1948-49, in a semi-illegal position and were unable to exert much influence on Indian public opinion. Early in March 1949 the National Executive of the Socialist Party adopted another resolution which criticised the possible decision that India should remain in the Commonwealth and paid still more attention than before to the proposal about creating a "third force": under the impact of the Conference on Indonesia the Socialists were highly optimistic about the possibility of forming an alliance of Asian countries. As regards other opposition parties, the Muslim League had failed after all to come back as an all-India party, while the Hindu Mahasabha not only had lost its onetime influence but, after resuming its political activities, was wary of attracting too much notice by opposition to the Government.

On April 10, 1949, the question of India's future relations with the Commonwealth was submitted to the Congress Working Committee for discussion. All Committee members were of the opinion that India must be a republic and her Constitution must make no mention of any link with the British Crown. After a five-hour debate, the Committee resolved to ask Nehru to work out, in consultation with the Congress leadership, a formula of India's membership in the Commonwealth.¹¹⁸

During April 21-27, 1949, the annual Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference convened in London. The main point of discussion was India's membership in the Commonwealth. There was much argument about how India's republican status on which Nehru firmly insisted could fit into the monarchic system of Britain, which headed the Commonwealth. The Australian proposal that the British king be designated "King of the Commonwealth" was opposed by India and Canada. The Indians objected also to the proposal to have the President of India formally appointed by the king. Mountbatten suggested the inclusion of the Crown in the Indian flag, but this, too, was rejected. Finally, it was decided that the king be regarded as "symbol of the free

association of members".¹¹⁹ This formula became the basis of a document known as the Declaration of London.

Michael Brecher wrote that "India's decision to remain in the Commonwealth occasioned much surprise both at home and abroad", In fact, it occasioned much more than surprise.

On May 16, 1949, the Declaration of London came up for discussion in the Constituent Assembly. Calling on the Assembly to ratify it Nehru tried to prove that India would gain by remaining in the Commonwealth. His main argument was: "If we are completely dissociated from the Commonwealth for the moment we are completely isolated. We cannot remain completely isolated, and so inevitably by stress of circumstances, we have to incline in some direction or other. But that inclination in some direction or other will necessarily be a give-and-take affair. It may be in the nature of alliances, you give something yourself and get something in return. In other words, it may involve commitments, for more than at present."¹²⁰

The next to speak was ShibbanlalSaksena a prominent Congress figure. He made the following points: (1) the terms of membership were derogatory to India's dignity and incompatible with her new status, (2) they limited her freedom of action in international affairs and tied her down to the "chariot wheel of Anglo-American power bloc", (3) India with a population of 350 million out of a total population of about 500 million of the whole of the Commonwealth could not accept the king of England as the Head of the Commonwealth, and (4) India could not become a member of the Commonwealth, many members of which still regarded Indians as an inferior race and enforced colour bar against them. Saksena said that the only recent problem of comparable importance to that under consideration had been that of India's partition, but that the decision on that question was made by the All- India Congress Council, not by the Constituent Assembly. "We know", Saksena continued, "the fruits of the decision that was taken on that occasion have not been very good. I was one of the most bitter opponents of the partition plan. Today also I have to voice my disagreement with my Leader on this London Declaration."

Later Saksena, speaking on a point of order, explained that his object was to see that the ratification should be deferred and "the country be caned upon to give its decision on this momentous issue".

Saksena's amendment was seconded by Congress members Damodar Swamp Seth and Professor K.T.Shah and by MaulanaHasratMohani, the poet.

On the other hand, 12 Assembly Members spoke in favour of Nehru's proposal to ratify the London Declaration. Towards the end of the day, on March 17, 1949, it was ratified.

Once the Assembly had ratified the Declaration, it was much easier to have it approved by the Congress party. But when the question was brought up before the Congress Working Committee, Nehru, according to A Short History of the Indian National Congress, became "the target of criticism, sometimes even violent, from members of the Working Committee for agreeing to line India with the Commonwealth'. A resolution approving of Nehru's actions at the London Conference was, nevertheless, passed. It was to be introduced at the AICC session by Constituent Assembly Chairman Rajendra Prasad and seconded by Pant, who had already helped to pass the re- solution on "free association" at the Jaipur meeting. The session of the AICC convened at Dehra Dun on May 21-22. 1949. The Indian press observed that even Prasad, who introduced the resolution, was 'not very eloquent in explaining the issue and pleaded expediency as the main justification of India's continued membership in the Commonwealth.

The resolution of the Congress Working Committee was seconded only by Pant, P. Tandon, Govind Das (who at the sitting of the Assembly three days before had supported Nehru, but with the explicit reservation that India must not be involved in war on the side of the Commonwealth), and by President of the Indian National Congress P. Sitaramayya, On the other hand, many at the session spoke against the agreement, criticised its various aspects and introduced amendments.¹²¹ Altogether 54 unofficial resolutions were submitted for the consideration of the AICC.

When all the resolutions had been submitted and B. Das had risen to introduce yet another, MohanlalGautam, a Committee member, asked with a note of sarcasm if the Government were prepared to send Nehru to London again to insist on the agreement being altered along the lines mapped out by the Congress party. This caused some embarrassment. The critics realised that an their amendments were just a waste of time. After that it was proposed that the amendments be withdrawn. Whereupon the

original resolution as drafted by the Working Committee was passed by an overwhelming majority" only five or six raising their hands against it".

On November 26, 1949, the Constituent Assembly adopted the Constitution of the Indian Republic which went into effect on January 26, 1950. It is highly significant that the formula of the British king being a symbol of the unity of the Commonwealth was absent from the text of the Constitution and generally it did not mention India's relation to the Commonwealth. However, the fact that India actually remained in the Commonwealth was later discussed in Parliament, in the National Congress and in the Indian press many times and on different occasions. Nehru had to defend to the end of his days the decision on India's continued membership in the Commonwealth. Speaking in Parliament on June 12, 1952, Nehru said: "Being in the Commonwealth means a meeting once or twice a year and occasional consultations and references.

Surely, that is not too great a price to pay for the advantages we get. If the Commonwealth had the right to interfere with any constituent country, then I should certainly cease to be in the Commonwealth.¹²²

Later Professor M.S. Rajan, an Indian scholar, defended the decision by trying to prove that continued membership in the Commonwealth was necessary to India in the economic and military respects, and did not in any way conflict with the policy of non-alignment, for "the Commonwealth is a bridge between the Western bloc and the Communist bloc"¹²³ Other Indian authors including Puran Batria¹²⁴ have also tried to show that being in the Commonwealth is to India's advantage. Dr.B.S.N.Murti, an Indian researcher, who dwells at greater length on the military aspects of the agreement on India's membership in the Commonwealth, writes: "; all the Commonwealth countries believe that collective security is like an insurance scheme to which all must contribute.... schemes for regional defence are required by all countries as a necessary part of the general international scheme of defence. The problem of the defence of the Commonwealth concerns the security of the communications which link its scattered parts together" Further on, Multi speaks of broad collaboration and consultation relating to military matters, coordination of strategy, standardisation of armaments and training of the armed forces, and so on.¹²⁵ From this it follows that from the military standpoint the British ruling circles were no less interested than the Indian Government was in having India in the Commonwealth.

Further on we shall see how the struggle waged by the Indian people for the consolidation of independence, the mounting antagonisms between the Indian bourgeoisie and the British monopolies and Nehru's foreign policy course prevented India from becoming a docile Commonwealth member subservient to Britain.

The Indian Union and the United States

In the early days of independence India badly needed financial and technical aid in order to build up her industry and agriculture. The Soviet Union and the United States were the only countries able to render her substantial economic aid. But, the Indian researcher Karunakaran wrote, "it was widely felt that the USSR would not help a non-Communist state. The Government and the industrialists of India realised that they had to turn inevitably to the United States. The spokesmen of the business community even maintained that the Government must formulate their foreign and domestic policies so as to create a favourable climate for the investment of American capital in the country".¹²⁶

Shortly after World War II the United States sought to penetrate into the Indian economy and gain a foothold in the Indian market. Whereas before the war Britain's share in Indian import and export trade was respectively five and three times that of the United States, after the war, in 1947-48, the shares of Britain and the United States in Indian foreign trade were almost equal.¹²⁷ The United States had taken this kind' of approach to India approximately until the summer of 1948 when it became clear that the American plans with respect to China had failed and the US State Department began feverishly to look for a new base from which to implement its imperialist plans in the East. Along with its economic penetration into India, the United States began to explore the possibilities of using India as a springboard for suppression of the national liberation movement in Asia. In connection with India's request for American loans a special mission sent by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) arrived in Delhi on January 2, 1949, to look into the economic situation in India and assess her paying ability. For six weeks the mission carried out a detailed study of India's economic position. The Indian press reported that the IBRD mission had made the elimination of the "communist danger" in the country a condition of the loan. After the IBRD mission, India was visited by a mission of the International Monetary Fund which also made a study of the Indian economy.

But the United States did not confine itself to examining the economic position of India. In May 1948 President Harry Truman invited Prime Minister Nehru to visit the United States. As was reported in the Indian press, Nehru intended to go to the United States in January 1949, after the Presidential election there was over. But circumstances prevented him from going to the United States in January, and it was only in May 1949 that he told the press that he had accepted President Truman's invitation. What made Nehru first postpone his visit to the United States and then avoid announcing his acceptance of the US President's invitation May 1949.

The real reason, it seems, was not the Presidential election in the United States but the tense struggle that was going on in India at that time over the question of the future status of India. The bulk of the Indian people wanted India to leave the British Commonwealth. The radical press and diverse public organisations again and again pointed out the enormous" harm which India's membership in the Commonwealth had done to the country. For example, the Hindi newspaper Netaji, published by the Forward Bloc party, said on September 21, 1949, that the Government had decided to devalue the rupee following the devaluation of the pound sterling only because India was a member of the Commonwealth.

In the ruling Congress party, as shown earlier, a struggle was going on between those who wanted India to leave the British Commonwealth, and those who maintained that the current international situation did not allow India to take such a step since separation from Britain would lead to India's isolation and might involve India in other commitments of a more onerous kind.

The struggle for India between the American and the British imperialists resulted in yet another approach whose exponents business circles in Bombay and, to some extent, in Calcutta- claimed that it would be better for India to leave the British Commonwealth and conclude a military-political alliance with the' United States. Such views were expressed, for example, by Professor K.J. Bhattacharyya in an article headlined, "Alliance with US Better than with Britain; Nothing to Gain from Commonwealth", which appeared in the newspaper Bharat Jyoti.¹²⁸

Closer relations with the United States were advocated by V. Patel and his supporters in the Government and in the Congress party, as well as by some Socialist Party leaders, AshokaMehta in the first place.

Thus, the struggle over the question of India's future status went on within the Indian National Congress and in the Government, and not only among different political parties and other social groups. This is evident also from the cautious description of the situation by K.P. Karunakaran, who wrote: "Even within the Congress Party, which was the predominant element in the Central Government, there was no unanimous agreement on social political and economic programmes. The position was still more confusing in the Central Cabinet, where non-Congress Ministers held important portfolios. In regard to India's faith in the United Nations and her association with the Commonwealth, the Deputy Prime Minister's speeches did not show the same degree of vigorous enthusiasm as those of the Prime Minister".¹²⁹

In our view, Nehru, who insisted on India maintaining her ties with Britain, postponed his visit to the United States because he considered that India's position in the Commonwealth should be clearly defined first. That question was to be discussed at the Congress Session at Jaipur, scheduled for December 1948, and thus Nehru's visit was initially postponed to January 1949. But the Jaipur Session had failed to resolve the issue, and Nehru again postponed his visit to the United States, announcing it in May 1949, after the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference, held in April 1949 in London, had arrived at an acceptable formula for India's continued link with Britain.

In June 1949, an unofficial Indian delegation consisting of Ghanshyamdas Birla, an Indian monopolist and a personal friend of V. Patel, Professor N.G. Ranga, a member of the Congress Working Committee and Constituent Assembly Member, and S.K. Patil, Mayor of Bombay and a prominent Congress figure, set out for the United States. The delegation held talks with President Truman, Secretary of Defence Louis Johnson, Secretary of Commerce Charles Sawyer, and other high-ranking American officials. The talks concerned such questions as Indian foreign policy and American aid to Asian countries.

Nehru went on a visit to the United States in early October 1949. He made the trip not merely because others wanted him to, but also because he himself wished to ascertain personally what chance India had of obtaining economic aid from the United States. He, evidently, did not expect to get American aid on the basis of inter-governmental agreements and tried, when in the United States, to get US business circles interested in investing capital in India. This was how the Indian press interpreted

the Prime Minister's interview given to the American newspaper Alliance on August 21, 1949.

On his way to the United States Nehru stopped for two days in London where he had talks with Attlee, He arrived in the United States on October 11, 1949.

What, exactly, was Nehru's object in visiting the United States? Evidently not wishing to reveal the purpose of his visit, Nehru said at the National Press Club soon after his arrival that he had no business object in mind whatsoever, but that he had wanted to visit the United States for 35 years and had been unable to do so owing to pressure of work. Nehru concluded his speech by saying: "During the tour, I shall go from place to place and form innumerable pictures in my mind ..."¹³⁰

Frank Moraes, author of a biography of Nehru, interpreted the purpose of the visit as follows: "Nehru's idea in going to the United States was threefold-to demonstrate India's friend- ship for America as well as her gratitude for America's sympathy in India's struggle for -independence; to learn more about America; and to make Americans more conscious of India as a factor in world affairs". These words refer to the means by which the purpose of the visit was to be achieved without, however, disclosing what the purpose was Nehru did it himself, in part and somewhat later, when he interrupted his sojourn in the United States for a brief visit to Canada. Speaking at a press conference in Ottawa, the Canadian capital, Nehru said with regard to his visit to the United States and Canada: "First, we would like one million tons of wheat to hold as a reserve to enable us to control the wheat crisis in India. Second, we want technical assistance. Third, we want financial terms for our purchases in dollar countries, and we, want to encourage private capital to be invested in India".¹³¹ Yet another purpose of Nehru's visit, which, though secondary, was nevertheless important, was to secure US support on the Kashmir question. According to the Indian News Chronicle, Bajpai, the Secretary-General of the Indian Ministry of External Affairs, who accompanied Nehru on his tour, conducted long talks on the Kashmir question in the US State Department on October 12-13, 1949.

In the course of his talks in the United States Nehru had quite a number of obstacles to surmount. Chester Bowles, the US Ambassador to India, wrote that Nehru was, "particularly irritated by the insistent assumption of many Americans, both in and

out of public life, that if he was unwilling to accept completely the American analysis of the world situation, he must be pro-communist¹³² Since Nehru came to the United States to get economic aid, he had to overcome his irritation and do his best not to return to India empty handed. Thus Nehru tried first of all to convince the US ruling circles that India was beginning to play an important part in world politics. He observed in one of his speeches during the tour that "India's pivotal position between Western Asia, South-East' Asia and the Far East made it the crossroads of that part of the world ... India's role of leadership may not be so welcome to others although it may satisfy our vanity. But it is something which we cannot escape. We cannot escape the various responsibilities that arise out of our geography and history".¹³³

Having described in this way India's important role in Asia, Prime Minister Nehru delivered his famous speech at a joint meeting of both chambers of the US Congress. In this speech which is mentioned by nearly all writers on Indian foreign policy who interprets it in different ways, Nehru said: "Where freedom is menaced or justice threatened or where aggression takes place, we cannot be and shall not be neutral. What we plead for and endeavour to practise in our own imperfect way is a binding faith in peace and an unfailing endeavour of thought and action to ensure it. Friendship and cooperation between our two countries are, therefore, natural. I stand here to offer both in the pursuit of justice, liberty and peace".

In the United States, where at that time all politicians in their public speeches and all the mass media tried to frighten the American people with talk about "Soviet aggression;', Nehru's speech was interpreted as a promise that India would not be neutral should there be war between the United States and the Soviet Union.¹³⁴ In India, however, the speech was given a different interpretation. The Indian press noted that "what Pandit Nehru meant by the threats to justice and freedom were the threats of imperial domination and discrimination".

As for the attitude of the US ruling circles to the visit of the Indian Prime Minister, the best comment on it came from the American monopolists' magazine Business Week, which stated on October 22, 1949: "Prime Minister Nehru of India reached Washington last week just as the Chinese Communists prepared to take over Canton. It was not mere coincidence. It was the inevitability of a complete Nationalist rout in China-and the consequent need to strengthen US ties with India that led the State Department to arrange for Nehru's American visit some time back".

Nehru and those who accompanied him on his trip held talks with President Truman, State Secretary Acheson and others for four days, but no results were achieved. This was due to a lack of confidence on the part of the American ruling circles in the stability of the internal situation in India, and still more to the fact that Nehru did not want to make "any concrete political or military commitments to the United States. Nehru failed to get the US understand India's position in the Kashmir issue. Moreover, as the Indian newspaper NetaJi observed on October 15, 1949, one of the most essential conditions of American investment in the Indian economy and American aid to the Indian Government was the demand that Kashmir should be handed over to the United States to be turned into a military base spearheaded against the Soviet Union.

Speaking at Columbia University in the presence of Dwight D. Eisenhower, who was then its president, Nehru, annoyed by the failure of the talks, said: "The very process of marshalling's the world into two hostile camps precipitates the conflict which it is sought to avoid". Further he said: "If all the world takes sides and talks of war, war becomes almost certain then. I do believe, in accordance with my master's teaching, that there is' another way to meet this situation and solve the problem that faces US".¹³⁵

On November 7, 1949, Nehru left for home. Appraising India-US relations in the subsequent period, Brecher observed that they "cooled after Nehru's unsuccessful bid for large-scale American aid without strings in the autumn of 1949"¹³⁶ An entirely different view of India's relation with the United States was expressed by Chester Bowles, who wrote: "Beginning with his trip to the United States in 1949 and continuing through the many fruitful months Nehru and I worked together, I believe he grew to have a far more sympathetic feeling for America's complicated problems and responsibilities."¹³⁷ One hardly needs to prove that this judgement is incorrect. Bowles, in fact, contradicts himself. At the beginning of his book he writes that to many Americans Nehru was a troubling enigma. Mr. Truman told me how puzzled he had been by the Indian Prime Minister during his trip to America. Some officials in' Washington actually wondered whether he was a Communist sympathiser. Nehru said that we had no understanding of the 'mind and heart of Asia'."

A month after Nehru's return from America, from December 12 to 22, 1949, an Indo-American conference was held in Delhi. It was organised by the Indian Council of World Affairs and the American Institute of Pacific Relations. The conference was

intended to be a continuation of the talks between India and the United States begun by Nehru. Just before the conference, the influential Hindustan Times said, referring at the start to Nehru's trip to the United States: "it was neither possible nor desirable to enter into detailed discussion of the ties, political, economic and cultural, binding the two countries. That task has been taken up by the present conference where distinguished educationists from the United States and Indian publicists of standing will be jointly studying and reporting on the lines of development. It is perhaps as an indication of the high importance of economic relation between the two nations that the conference is to be inaugurated by the Industry and Supply Minister, S.P. Mookerjee".¹³⁸

What did the conference achieve? Evidently it could not alter the results of Nehru's negotiations in the United States. It had been planned and preparations for it started even before Nehru's visit. Had his talks been successful, there would have been an occasion for elaborating on and developing the agreement reached. But after Nehru's unsuccessful trip, the only possible explanation of the conference was that it was convened by inertia. It is, however, of some interest to us as owing to its semi-official character, both sides made fairly; candid statements on policy (mostly that pursued by the other side).

In opening the conference, Kunzru, the head of the Indian delegation and President of the Indian Council of World Affairs, said: "In the sphere of foreign policy, India's position was clear. She pursued an independent policy, but she was bound with ties of sympathy with those nations who believed in the democratic way of life". But in the conclusion of his speech Kunzru, confessing "his inability" to understand fully American foreign policy, said that developments in the Far East showed the "great danger in dividing the world into the two camps". In his speech at the conference the leader of the Hindu religious-communal reactionaries, S.P. Mookerjee said: "The USA won her independence after a revolution against a Power which also ruled over India for more than a century and a half...The American people, however, never allowed their country to be partitioned". This is the most interesting part of Mookerjee's speech .. By this Mookerjee showed that he was interested most of all in American aid in establishing "Akhand Hindustan". When the newspaper National Herald which was close to Nehru, said after the first day of the conference that it had "come close on the heels of Pandit Nehru's visit to the United States",¹⁴⁰ it sounded like an admission of its

utter futility.

On the sixth day of the conference the American Orientalist Lawrence Rosinger introduced a draft report summing up the results of the discussion on the principal problems. The part which is of the most interest to us is, naturally, the summary of the foreign policy discussion which said: "Most of the Indian speakers defended 'the middle course' policy. Many declared however, that it did not mean neutrality but Independence, or suggested that in the event of a world war India would canvass the situation and adopt a positive policy".¹⁴¹ We also find in the summary that an Indian delegate (unfortunately the records of the conference do not mention the names of the speakers) declared and his statement sounded like a protest that "in economic matters the United States had used the United Nations as an instrument of its own policy or, where it was unable to do so, had created its own agency". To this "some American delegates" haughtily replied that "countries making the largest contributions to international organisations naturally want their money to be used for purposes with which they sympathise".

By and large, the 1949 India-America, conference had no impact on the state of relations between India and the United States.

How did India's internal political forces regard India's relations with the United States? Before answering this question I should like to quote K.P.Karunakaran, who says that in India, "as in most other countries, public opinion followed rather than led the Government in the formulation of its foreign policy".¹⁴² This may be true in the case of isolated foreign policy moves, but not in the case of long-term problems such as the Kashmir question, membership in the Commonwealth and so on.

The Indian public, Karunakaran observes, could be expected to pay much attention to India's relations with the United States after Nehru's visit to that country. That, however, did not happen. Before Nehru's visit the question of India's relations with the United States had been a subject of tense, if rather covert, struggle within the Indian Government, but after his return no great interest in India's relations with the United States was observable. When Nehru reported to the Congress Working Committee about his trip to the United States (at a sitting held on November 16-17, 1942), there were no questions or discussions.¹⁴³

This loss of interest in the question of India's relations with the United States was, in our view, due to the following factors. First, Nehru made his trip after the question of India's continued membership in the British Commonwealth had been settled; this means that maintaining relations with the United States no longer presented an alternative to maintaining the old link with Britain. Secondly, the majority of the Indian bourgeoisie wanted to have American aid without making commitments that might jeopardise India's independence. Thirdly, as no agreement had been reached with the United States, those of the Indian upper bourgeoisie who would cooperate with monopolies even at the price of altering Indian foreign policy could do nothing except resign themselves to the situation, for some time at least.

Because of Nehru's failure to obtain American aid without military or political strings and because of the general foreign policy line of the United States which was directed at that time at suppressing the national liberation movement in Asia and preparing for another world war, by 1950 relations between India and the United States had deteriorated.

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