PART THREE

WINSTON CHURCHILL'S WAR-TIME COALITION GOVERNMENT
AND THE PROBLEM OF INDIAN INDEPENDENCE
MAY 1940 TO JULY 1945
The period from 1940-45 was important from many points of view. During the period, the Indian question attracted the attention of the world, though for different reasons. The British Government, though headed by Winston Churchill*, whose earlier views on India have been cited above, made some effort to resolve the Indian deadlock. The British people were not told fully the changing and complicated nature of the contemporary political scene in India, except through the Governor-General, who sent them his own biased version of the situation. At home, Indian nationalists took the drastic step of calling upon the British to 'Quit India'. The period covered a very critical stage of the World War which had its repercussions on Indo-British relations.

During the war period covered in this part, there was a Coalition Government and it would be difficult, and may well remain so, even with access to Cabinet records, to disentangle Conservative attitudes from Coalition policies. But the Prime Minister, who held a dominant position during the war period, and the Secretary of State for India, were Conservatives. In addition to that, the Governor-General was a Conservative during the crucial period upto 1943 and hence it can safely be inferred that, by and large, the Conservatives were responsible for the making of the Coalition Government's India policy.

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*Winston Churchill headed the war-time Coalition Government from 10 May 1940 to 23 May 1945. Then from 23 May, to 26 July 1945, he was the head of a purely Conservative Caretaker Government.