This thesis is being re-submitted in view of the suggestions made by one of the examiners. Accordingly, some pages have been added in the third Chapter (see pp. 138-141 and 161-165) to show the work of the Ministers in Bombay, Madras, and Central Provinces Legislative Councils.* A separate Chapter has been added (see pp. 459-470) to show the relations of the Liberals with other parties and interactions between them. These new additions are mainly based on the private papers of V.S. Srinivasa Sastri and P.S. Sivaswami Aiyar, preserved in the National Archives of India, New Delhi, and Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi. Papers of Motilal Nehru, Jawaharlal Nehru and Phoroz Sethna (all preserved in the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi) have been found to contain much useful information. Muhammad Ali Papers and Ansari Papers - to be found in microfilm in the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi - have been used. Papers of Mahatma Gandhi, preserved in the Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, New Delhi, have also been consulted.

* Though not Liberal by label, the work of the Ministers in these Provinces was liberal in nature. The Madras Council was composed on the basis of caste or community and the Ministers were chosen from the Justice Party, which was the organisation of the Non-Brahmins in Madras.
This is a study on the activity of the Indian Liberal Party since its inception in the year 1918. Two other major works which have preceded on the subject are Dr. B.D. Shukla's 'A History of the Indian Liberal Party', (Allahabad, 1960) and Dr. R.T. Smith's 'The Liberals in the Indian Nationalist Movement 1919-47: Their Role as Intermediaries', an unpublished doctoral dissertation, (Berkley, California, 1954). The former work may be treated rather as a general history on the period than any special study on the Liberals (and, therefore, it may be dismissed without much importance). In the latter work emphasis has been laid mainly upon the role of the Liberals as mediators. It has been the author's attempt to show from the very outset that at a time when the Gandhian Non-cooperation had captured the field, the only role forced upon those who differed from him in political views and tactics was that of mediators between two extremes in Indian politics - the Congress and the Government, both inside and outside the Legislature. They could no longer assume the leadership of the nationalist movement.

The present work concentrates on the years between 1919 and 1937 and attempts to show that, besides acting as mediators in Indian politics, on occasions they have also played an important part not only in different Central and Provincial Legislatures in securing the passage of some important legislation but also taken a leading part in the difficult process
of constitution-making which led to the passing of the Government of India Act of 1935.

An introductory chapter describes their creed and relates the whole story which led to their secession from the Congress and organisation into a separate political party in the Indian political life in 1918. It has been shown that Liberal secession in the year 1918 was the result of combination of two factors - the uncongenial atmosphere in which they gradually began to find themselves in the parent organisation and also the visit of Montagu, the Secretary of State for India, which proved in the end to be decisive.

The first chapter describes their activity during the two years which preceded the inauguration of the Reforms Act of 1919. Their activity during this time was chiefly devoted towards giving evidence before the Joint Select Committee in London and securing as many improvements as they could over the Bill. The measure of their success in persuading the Home Government to make changes in the Bill has been discussed. In the year 1920 the Non-cooperation movement was launched. The Liberal attitude towards it has been described in detail. Though the Liberals did not support the movement, they did not fail to measure the responsibility of the Government for the origin and popularity of the same.

As the Congress boycotted the Legislature, the field was left to the Liberals alone and the second chapter discusses in detail the activity of the Liberals in the Central Legislature during 1921-23. Montagu had been a decisive influence not
only behind the formation of the party but also during its later career and under his influence the Liberals sailed smoothly for some time. But the relationship between the Government and the Liberals was subsequently strained and by the year 1923 it reached a breaking point. It has been shown how the abrupt end of Montagu's career as the Secretary of State for India early in 1922 worked as a factor behind this.

The Liberals found a partial field of responsible activity in the Provincial Legislatures and the third chapter deals with the activity of the Liberals in the Provincial Legislatures (where they were capable of forming a Ministry). So far as the Bengal Legislative Council was concerned the discussion so long had mainly centred round the introduction of communal principle in the Calcutta Municipal Act for which Surendranath Banerjea, a lifelong champion of joint electorate, came in for a good deal of criticism. The general tendency has been to underrate the difficulties which stood in his ways and ignore the other beneficial aspects of the Bill and the steps taken to liberalise and broaden the constitution of the Calcutta Corporation. But an analysis of the circumstances has been made in such a way as to show how the cross currents of communal politics ran very strong in the Council and in the end proved almost insurmountable and left him with no other alternative than to introduce communal electorate in the Calcutta Municipal Bill for a temporary period. The Calcutta Municipal Bill was, no doubt, the most important legislative measure of Surendranath Banerjea's Ministerial career. But
attention has also been drawn for the first time to his other achievements as the Minister of Local Self-Government Department - his attempts to pass a Bengal Municipal Act in rural areas and to liberalise and democratise the administration there. The history of the struggle between the Calcutta University and the Government of Bengal, though constituting a major and significant chapter in the evolution of the University, has practically been left untouched in the two preceding works by Dr. Shukla and Dr. Smith. The Calcutta University episode, during the regime of P.C. Mitter as first Education Minister of Bengal, has also been traced with due importance which the subject deserves. The activities of the Liberal Ministers in the United Provinces, Bombay and Central Provinces have been shown. The work of Madras Ministers have also been discussed in detail. A detailed analysis has been made of the interplay of various factors which made the work of the Ministers less striking and less spectacular. Dr. Shukla's work has made no reference to this side of the problem. Dr. Smith makes only a passing reference to the financial stringency of the time, but has not dealt in detail with the extent or the manner in which all these factors operated as a handicap to the works of the Ministers in the different Provincial Legislatures during 1921-23.

As the Swarajists began to dominate the Legislatures from 1924 onwards the Liberal activity during the next few years were chiefly outside it. Here the chief contribution of the Liberals has been towards ameliorating the conditions of Indians overseas. This aspect of the Liberal activity has generally been tended to
be obscured. Neither Dr. Shukla nor Dr. Smith have touched on the matter. And this aspect has been described in its entirety in the fifth chapter.

The next chapter discusses how the Liberals were driven to wilderness by the announcement of the Simon Commission and ultimately reemerged in Indian politics as intermediaries in the year 1929. The efforts made by the Liberals to secure Congress participation in the ensuing session of the Round Table Conference have been discussed in detail. In assessing the reason for the failure of negotiation with the Congress leaders during 1929-30 the general tendency has been to apportion the blame on the Congress side and the responsibility of the other side has often been overlooked. But an analysis of the circumstances have been made in such a way as to show that the Government also cannot wholly be devoid of its responsibility for the failure of the efforts of the Liberals during 1929-30.

The seventh and eighth chapters tell the story of the Round Table Conferences and the efforts made by the Liberals during all these years at constitution making. The Government of India Act of 1935 which emerged ultimately out of their labours and turmoils of these years have been much criticised. Here also a detailed analysis has been made of the interplay of various factors which have severely circumscribed the efforts of the Liberals at every step.

The relation of the Liberals with other parties and interactions between them forms the subject matter of the newly added ninth chapter.

The concluding chapter makes a survey of the Liberal activity during the whole period under discussion which shows that though the Liberals tried to remain honest to their
principles and do their best for the country, they themselves were not very happy about their achievements. The Liberals, indeed, were the poor victims of the circumstances over which they had very little control.

Appendices have been added to show the comparative statements of the composition of the different Provincial Legislative Councils and the Legislative Assembly and Council of State under the elections held during the period from 1920-1934. Two other appendices show the peculiar financial difficulties of Bengal during 1919-21 and the distribution of seats under the Communal Award in 1932.

In the preparation of this thesis an extensive use has been made of the unpublished sources in the National Archives of India, New Delhi, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi and the State Archives, Government of West Bengal. I am grateful to the authorities concerned of all these institutions. I also take this opportunity to offer my thanks to the Librarian, India Office Library, London for sending me the microfilmed copy of Lord Templewood collection. I am also very grateful to the Librarian and the staff of the National Library, Calcutta for their co-operation and help. I am especially indebted to Prof. S. Gopal for his biography of Jawaharlal, the first volume of which has just been out and of which use has been made.

My heaviest debt of gratitude is to Professor Amal Tripathi, Head of the Department of History, University of Calcutta, who amidst his numerous preoccupations, found time to guide me in my research and helped me to bring the work to its completion. The study would have been impossible without his guidance.