The decade preceding partition is of momentous importance in the history of freedom movement of the country. It witnessed a rapid development of events which, not only resulted in the withdrawal of the British from India, but also gave birth to Pakistan.

Though the partition idea was not a bolt from the blue as its smoulderings could be seen even towards the close of the last century, yet the present work is confined to the period 1937-47, mainly because, the Pakistan movement which was considered only as a chimera in the late thirties, became a hard reality in 1947.

The Congress leadership, in spite of their strong commitment to the idea of a united India, could not prevent partition of the country. Gandhi, who averred repeatedly that he would never agree to the vivisection of India, had to witness the tragic scene of partition smeared with bloodshed and unprecedented violence.

Was it the gradual development of events that made Gandhi's efforts go down the drain? What moves did he make to prevent partition? What difficulties did he face in keeping India united? What role was played by the Indian political parties and the British in the drama which ended in partition? The present work aims at probing these questions.
The work is based mainly on the primary source material, namely, All-India Congress Committee files, Private Papers, Oral History Transcripts, Speeches and Writings of Indian leaders, Intelligence Reports of Government of India, Confidential Papers, Home Political files of Government of India and Official Records of the British Government currently released by Her Majesty's Government.

For keeping a track on the day-to-day developments, the Indian Annual Register, journals and files of various newspapers such as Dawn, Times of India, Hindustan Times, The Tribune and a number of weeklies and fortnightlies have been scanned through. Besides, autobiographies, biographies, reminiscences and memoirs of Indian leaders and British statesmen have been quite helpful in the preparation of this volume.

The first two chapters deal with the causes of Hindu-Muslim tension, their growing differences and Gandhi's early efforts to find a solution of the communal problem. The next chapter traces the development of the idea of Pakistan and examines the various schemes of reorganisation of the country. Chapter IV studies the efforts made by the British to solve the Indian question through Cripps Offer and Gandhi's reaction to it. The impact of Quit India movement on political developments is discussed in chapter V. The next chapter is devoted to C. Rajagopalachari formula and Gandhi's dialogue with the League leader for arriving
at a settlement of the communal problem. The next three chapters evaluate the British efforts towards the settlement of the Indian tangle through Wavell Offer, Cabinet Mission Plan and Mountbatten Plan and Gandhi's reaction to these moves.

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