On coming out of the jail, Gandhi discovered that the citadel of Hindu-Muslim unity that he had built two years earlier had crumbled like a house of cards. The intermittent eruption of communal riots at several places during his confinement and after compelled him to make fresh analysis of the communal situation in India with a view to finding a cure for communal malady.

On 29 May 1924, Gandhi listed in Young India the specific causes of the Hindu-Muslim problem in an article entitled Hindu-Muslim Tension—Its Causes and Cure. The causes as summarized by him on 5 June 1924, were as follows:

1. That the remote cause of the tension is the Moplah rebellion.
2. The attempt of Mr. Fazal-i-Husain in the Punjab to offer more employment opportunities to Mohammedans which alarmed the Hindus.
3. The Shuddhi and Sangthan Movements.
4. Lack of faith in non-violence in both Hindus and Muslims.
5. Indulgence in cow-slaughter by the Muslims and playing of music before mosques by the Hindus.
6. Hindu cowardice and the consequent Hindu distrust of Mussalmans.
7. Mussalman bullying.
8. Mussalman distrust of Hindu fairplay.¹

Let us examine these causes one by one.

The Moplah uprising took place in August 1921, when the Khilafat and the Non-co-operation movements were gaining momentum and popularity. It upset the Hindus throughout the country as a large number of them in this area suffered at the hands of the Muslim fanatics. Though conscious of the feelings of the Hindus at their outrage, Gandhi was reluctant to express any definite opinion about it as he was not in possession of all the facts. He, however, denied that Moplah rebellion was the result either of Non-co-operation or Khilafat movement. In January 1922, when the Non-co-operation movement was in full swing,

¹ C.W., Vol.XXIV, p.188.
he appealed to the Hindus that if they made a dispassionate analysis of Moplah uprising they would find "that they are not without blame. They have hitherto not cared for the Moplah. They have either treated him as a serf or dreaded him. They have not treated him as a friend and neighbour, to be reformed and respected. It is no use now becoming angry with the Moplahs or the Mussalmans in general."²

The Moplahs were a band of fanatic Muslims, poor and ignorant and were about a million in number. They had descended from the Arabs who had settled in Malabar Coast about 8th or 9th century, A.D. The number of the Hindus living in Malabar along with them was about two million. Moplahs had acquired notoriety for crimes perpetrated under the impulse of religious frenzy. They were responsible for no fewer than 35 outbreaks during the British rule. Gandhi rightly suggested that the problem there was not merely religious. The poor Moplahs had some deep-rooted hatred against the Hindus who were economically in a better position. This hatred, therefore, found expression through religious frenzy. The problem there was more the result of tension between the oppressor and the oppressed than between

² C.W., Vol., XXII, p.269.
the Hindus and the Muslims as was the case in
the Punjab and Bengal. So whenever the oppressed
found an opportunity they retaliated in their
worst form. As Gandhi explained "when blood boils,
prejudice reigns supreme; man, whether he labels
himself a Hindu, Mussalman, Christian or what not,
becomes a beast and acts as such." 3

But no such explanation could pacify the Hindus
at that time and the experience of the Moplah rebellion
continued dampening their spirits in all political
enterprises involving co-operation with the Muslims.
That way it was a remote cause of the subsequent
riots since it created in the Hindus a feeling of
distrust for all Muslims.

But the immediate cause, according to Gandhi,
was the policy of Fazal-i-Husain, Minister of Education
and Local Bodies in the Punjab who attempted to raise
the number of Mohammedans in the Government jobs in
proportion to their percentage population in the province
which upset the Hindus of the province who had an edge
over the Muslims in this sphere because of their economic
and educational superiority over the latter. This led
Gandhi to conclude that the underlying cause of the
trouble was "more than merely religious." 4 His investigation

4. Ibid., V
into the Kohat affairs subsequently corroborated this conclusion, for he came to know that the publication of the scurrilous poem by a Hindu against the Prophet of Islam was not the only cause of the riots in that town. This reveals his awareness of the fact that at the root of the problem was economic and political disequilibrium between the two communities and not merely religious differences.\textsuperscript{5} Undoubtedly, the Muslims, in the Punjab although in majority, did not have as much access to services or political institutions as their population warranted on account of their economic or educational backwardness as compared to that of the Hindus or the Sikhs.

But the most potent cause of communal tension in Gandhi's opinion was "tiredness of non-violence and the fear that the communities might, by a long course of training in non-violence, forget the law of retaliation and self-defence."\textsuperscript{6} He was aware that some Muslim friends openly decried the utility of non-violence in resolving human conflicts on the ground that "violence is the law of life."\textsuperscript{7} The Hindus, too, were not behind the Muslims in their denunciation of non-violence. They upheld the use of

\begin{itemize}
\item[5.] In 1931, he reiterated that the causes of the discord are economic and political (\textit{C.W.}, XLVI, p.303).
\item[6.] \textit{C.W.}, Vol.XXIV, p.188.
\item[7.] Ibid., p.139.
\end{itemize}
violence in certain situations on the ground that it was enjoined upon them as a duty by the Bhagvadgita. He denied that the Hindus suffered more during these riots simply because of the observance of non-violence, for most of them did not face the bullies, not because of their commitment to non-violence but out of sheer cowardice.

Further, as observed by Gandhi, the Shuddhi and Tabligh movements, that created competition between the Arya Samaj and Muslims proselytising agencies, added fuel to the fire of communal conflict. Shuddhi literally means purification but it took the form of conversion of non-Hindus to Hinduism. The Muslims apprehended it as a clever move of the Hindus to weaken the numerical strength of the former since Hinduism before had mostly abstained from seeking converts from other religions. Consequently, Muslims, too, pursued proselytisation more vigorously.

Moreover, this kind of competition gave rise to a tendency among the proselytisers in both the communities to revile the religion of their opponents. Thus both Hindu and Muslim religious bigots wrote objectionable pamphlets to bring to 'ridicule the founders of each other's religion'. Such tracts were responsible for serious communal riots.

The Intelligence Bureau of the United Provinces reported that communal friction started in this area in 1923 as a result of the reclamation of Malkana Rajputs to Hinduism by Shuddhi movement. Provoked by such activities of the Hindus, the Anjuman Islamia of Delhi took up the question of counter activity. Though the Shuddhi Sabha was started by Pandit Bhoj Dutt Sharma of Amritsar in the first decade of this century, the Anjuman Islamia did not view the activities of this Sabha in any way dangerous to it till 1923 when the attitude of the Turks towards the Khilafat left the Indian Mohammedans with no focus of interest and they were at a 'loose end' with no outstanding individual to direct their energies and attention to any objective. Shuddhi revival of 1923, removed this lacuna and, in the British Government's view, the Muslim community as a whole welcomed the chance of active opposition as a cohesive force to cement their scattered ranks. It was also noted that propaganda against each other's religion through pamphlets and articles was much in vogue during the years 1923 and 1924. Gandhi, therefore, was not unjustified in laying his finger on Shuddhi and Tabligh as one of the causes of communal tension.

Allied to this was the Sangh\athan movement among the Hindus that sharpened communal controversies. It aimed at strengthening the Hindus with a view to protecting them against the attacks of the Muslims. Logically, there was nothing wrong in this programme but Gandhi argued that any move to strengthen the Hindus physically through Akhadas or gymnasia would worsen the situation by proliferating suspicion between the two communities from which sprang their fear of each other.\textsuperscript{10} It is our common experience that any programme of preparing one community to fight another cannot establish peace between them. At best it can only lead to a state of armed peace which may be disturbed on a slight provocation. Even Lajpat Rai who at times was a great advocate of Hindu Sangh\athan admitted that such movements added to the existing estrangement between Hindus and Muslims.\textsuperscript{11} Another champion of the cause of the Hindus in the Punjab admitted that the Tanzim and the Sangh\athan movements simply acted and reacted on each other and failed to solve the communal problem.\textsuperscript{12}

Dispute over cow-slaughter and music before mosques was the immediate cause of several communal riots. The leaders of the two communities were so much

\textsuperscript{10} C.W., Vol.XXIV, pp.142-3.
\textsuperscript{11} Lajpat Rai, op.cit., p.209.
\textsuperscript{12} Gulshan Rai, Congress and Hindus, article in The Tribune, 4 March 1940.
exercised over these issues that it was reported that many hours were wasted at the Unity Conference of 1924 over the settlement of these questions.\textsuperscript{13} This was equally true to several subsequent conferences. Gandhi rightly observed that cow-slaughter was not the fundamental cause of tension. This was the symptom of the malady or the subsidiary cause of the tension, for though cow-worship was the central fact of Hinduism, cow-slaughter by Englishmen and Europeans practically went unnoticed by Hindus.\textsuperscript{14} The anger of the latter, observed Gandhi, "becomes red hot when a Mussalman slaughters cow."\textsuperscript{15} Consequently, there was nothing irrational if Gandhi felt that it was the distrust between the two communities that was the real cause of tension and not the cow-slaughter by Muslims. It must have been a rude reminder to the Hindus when Gandhi observed that they were equally responsible for the cow-slaughter as most of the cows slaughtered were sold by them to the butchers.\textsuperscript{16}

Similarly, he reminded the Hindus that they were unnecessarily blaming the Muslims for their sufferings during the communal riots, for the real cause of all this was their own cowardice as "where there are cowards, there will always be bullies."\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{14} C.W., Vol.XXIV, p.150.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., p.151.
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., p.142.
The activities of some organisations that were engaged in promoting exclusively the interests of the Hindus only did not escape his notice. He discovered that the performances, activities and outlook of the Arya Samaj were not conducive to generating trust between Hindus and Muslims. He was, therefore, unsparing in his criticism of the ideology and leadership of the Arya Samaj. Reflecting on the Satyarth Parkash, the Bible for the Arya Samaj, he commented that he had not read "a more disappointing book from a reformer so great," for Hinduism has been 'misinterpreted' in it and it preaches 'intolerance' towards other religions. He blamed the Arya Samajists for their narrow and pugnacious habit. "They either quarrel", he observed "with people of other denominations or failing that, with one another." 

Gandhi's analysis touched greater measure of reality when he examined the role of the elite in both the communities in fomenting communal trouble. Events after his release from Yeravada continuously reminded him that the communal problem was closely connected with the power struggle among the elite.

19. Ibid.
20. Ibid.
Wrangling for seats in the legislatures and local bodies, demand for weightage and preferential treatment in the services etc. had their roots in obtaining greater share of power that the British were ready to offer to obtain allies for perpetuating their hold over the Indian Empire. Such leaders "intoxicated with the exuberance of their own language' had not known "to put a curb upon their tongues or pens". 21 Reflecting on the causes of the assassination of Swami Shraddhanand in 1926 by a Muslim fanatic, he said, "Secret and insidious propaganda has done its dark and horrible work, unchecked and unabashed for the hot fever which possessed Abdul Rashid." 22

He was, therefore, confident that if the leaders in both the communities agreed that "mutual rows should be, as in all advanced countries, erased out of our public life as being barbarous and irreligious," 23 the masses would quickly follow them. After his unsuccessful attempt at mediation between Hindu and Muslim leaders of the Punjab in 1925, he told a correspondent that all the parties were preparing for a share of the power they believed

22. Ibid.
23. Ibid., p.152.
would result from 'our non-violent revolution'.

Similarly, in reply to a question at National Labour Club Reception at London on 12 October 1931, he stated that the argument of mutual fear advanced by some leaders of both the communities was really more or less manufactured and was not so much fear as the desire for the exercise of power. However, he admitted, "it is not a high ambition .... but no one is free from this ambition in the world — not even the Labour Party." 25

Any serious student of modern History can easily discover that the awareness of religious and cultural differences between the Hindus and the Muslims, about which so much had been said by scholars and politicians, existed mostly amongst the member of the upper classes of the two communities. A Hindu villager had hardly any idea about the empires of Mauryas or Guptas or the cultural achievements of the Hindus. Similarly, a Muslim labourer was equally ignorant of the political achievements of Muslim rulers. The masses among both the communities were immediately concerned with the economic problems which were common to them.


But this statement begs the question: why did Muslim and Hindu masses support the elite in their respective communities? Probably among Muslims the mass mobilisation was achieved by the political elite through the co-operation of the Ulemas who had acted as intermediaries between the masses and the political elite. The Ulemas issued 'Fatwas' which held sway over the ignorant masses. Its impact was further reinforced by such psychological devices as the visits of the Nawabs and well-placed educated leaders to the dwellings of workers and peasants and it was, hammered into their heads that though they were poor as Muslims they had been rulers of India before the advent of the British, and Hindus had been merely their subjects.

On the other hand the Hindu communal elite dinned into the ears of their co-religionists that the Muslims were clamouring for political power only to rule over the Hindus and to deprive them of their due place in their country.

Recent studies of Muslim separatism and Hindu communalism reveal that politics became a profession of some leaders who found it "a satisfactory way of improving their waning prestige and flagging finances." 26

Some of them had continually "to manufacture issues and to whip up agitations to keep their newspapers going, their organisations active and their coffers full."²⁷

Gandhi also blamed a section of the press for intensifying tension between the two communities. He looked upon it as a 'walking plague' which "spreads the contagion of lies and calumnies."²³

A "newspaper man of this type" observed Gandhi, "exhausts the foul vocabulary of his dialect, and injects his virus into the unsuspecting, and often receptive minds of his readers."²⁹ In a country where more than two-thirds of the people were illiterate and were hardly in a position to distinguish between a rumour and a fact, one can understand the damage that irresponsible press could do to the relations between the two communities. It was not an unnatural phenomenon in the history of Indian Press that some of the papers depended upon inflammatory situations or controversial issues of their papers. Any study of the history of communal riots in India will reveal that the immediate cause of several riots was the publication of a scurrilous tract against the prophet of a religious community. Kohat riots belonged to this category.

²⁹. Ibid.
Insistence on the system of communal or separate electorates by the majority of Muslim leaders and its opposition by the Hindus, was another bone of contention between the two communities. In the Punjab where the Muslims were in majority, they even insisted on the extension of this principle even to local bodies. Gandhi was confronted with this kind of demand of the Muslims when he visited Punjab in December 1924, and was called upon to settle the differences between the two communities. The claims of the Sikhs for weightage in representation in the Punjab added more complications to the communal trouble of which Gandhi was fully conscious.

An enquiry into the Kohat riots, the task which had been assigned by the Congress Working Committee to Gandhi and Shaukat Ali, gave the former another opportunity to delve deeper into the causes of the communal riots in a Muslim majority area. In pursuance of this mission, he sought the permission of the Government to visit Kohat after his recovery from the effects of his historic fast of 1924.\(^\text{30}\) But his request was turned down by the Viceroy on the ground that his proposed visit "can do no good and may do indefinite harm..."\(^\text{31}\) Similarly

\(^\text{30}\) Letter to Private Secretary to Viceroy dated 16 October 1924, C.W., Vol.XXV, p.238.
in reply to his telegram dated 9 February 1925, the Private Secretary to the Viceroy stated, "His Excellency would have been glad to be able to fall in with your wishes. But his attention has been called to the advice you have just given in Young India to the Kohat Hindus not to return to Kohat unless the Muslims make some honourable peace with them without Government intervention. The only construction His Excellency can put on this article is that if you went to Kohat your influence would be directed towards the breakdown of the recent settlement, the effecting of which was a matter of great concern to His Excellency and from which he hopes and believes an enduring reconciliation will spring. His Excellency is sure therefore that you yourself will appreciate how impossible it is for him to fall in with your wishes."32

Gandhi, on his part, believed that the settlement brought about by the Government was based on coercion, for it had been arrived at under threat of prosecutions on either side,33 while he was working for a settlement that pleases the parties.34 It appears that some Hindu leaders, too, were not in favour of Gandhi's advice to the Kohat Hindus to return only when the Muslim inhabitants of Kohat had extended the hand of good fellowship. It is reported that Bhai Permanand impressed on Gandhi to abandon this kind of

33. Ibid.,p.196.
34. Ibid., p.197.
plan and he even prevailed upon Lajpat Rai to go to Rawalpindi so that he could put a check on the so-called Mahatma's readiness to play into the hands of the Mohammedans.  

The enquiry had to be conducted at Rawalpindi on the basis of cross-examination of the witnesses that could come to Rawalpindi. The commission was, however, confronted with great difficulty since most of the important Muslim leaders of Kohat refused to come on the ground that reopening of the issue would damage the reconciliation already arrived at between Hindus and Muslims of Kohat, under the pressure of the Government. Further, Gandhi failed to carry Shaukat Ali with him in arriving at the joint conclusion regarding the causes and events of the riots.

According to Gandhi the riot was the result of many deep-rooted causes out of which he listed three major causes that had created tension between the two communities leading to the riot.

Firstly, resentment on both sides over conversion. Secondly, the desire of (Parachas) Mussalman traders of Kohat to oust the Hindu traders of Kohat. Thirdly, the immediate cause of the riot, according to Gandhi, was the abduction of a Mussalman married girl.
by the son of Sardar Makhan Singh and the publication of the pamphlet, containing an objectionable poem, by the Secretary, Sanatan Dharama Sabha, Rawalpindi imported by him into Kohat.

This enquiry makes one feel sceptical about the validity of the charge of the Hindus that Gandhi had lost his sense of objectivity and his deep devotion to truth on account of his predilections in favour of the Muslims. Had it been so, he would not have differed with his old colleague Shaukat Ali who was inclined to put greater blame on the Hindus for the outbreak of the riot. Gandhi did not refrain from censuring the Muslims for their aggressive role during this riot. If the cause of the riot, he argued, was Sardar Makhan Singh's son abducting a married Muslim girl, "his crime was no warrant for the fearful vengeance wreaked upon a whole community." Similarly while condemning the importation of the objectionable pamphlet by Jiwan Das, Secretary, Sanatan Dharama Sabha, Rawalpindi, containing some "highly offensive poem", he defended the Hindus on the ground that "the Sabha made enough reparation by its apology", and even agreed

to make further reparation, though unwillingly, "by burning the copies of the whole pamphlet including the portrait of Shri Krishna"42 in order to satisfy the Muslims. Consequently everything done thereafter was "far in excess of the requirements."43 Moreover, he argued, every action on the part of Hindus was taken in self-protection. But he expressed his disapproval of the conduct of Khilafat volunteers who not only neglected their duty to protect the Hindus but also "joined in the loot."44 He held the authorities equally responsible for the tragedy as they had betrayed callous indifference, incompetence and weakness in handling the situation. He considered it as criminal on the part of the authorities on the spot to have disregarded the warnings given by the Hindus on 6 September and repeated on the 9 September that their lives and properties were in danger.45 It was also criminal on their part not to have offered protection when the riots eventually broke out. The Government of India, in his view, had also shown dereliction of duty by not instituting an impartial commission to enquire into events and the conduct of the officials concerned.

43. Ibid., p.102.
45. Ibid., p.341.
Shaukat Ali's differences with Gandhi came to the surface when the Maulana tried to water down the responsibilities of the Muslims for the injuries inflicted on the Hindus. While Gandhi believed that the controversial pamphlet was not imported by Jiwan Dass "to irritate the Mussalmans". Shaukat Ali was not ready to absolve Jiwan Dass of the charge of having caused injury to the religious susceptibilities of the Mohammedans. For Gandhi, the pamphlet contained only one offensive poem that was calculated to wound Muslim sentiments. The rest of the pamphlet was confined to 'Bhajans' in praise of Sri Krishna and Hindu-Muslim unity. But Shaukat Ali held that its effect could not be minimised on Muslim population, leave aside the Muslim population of a place like Kohat. Commenting on Gandhi's inquiry, one of the leading English Dailies of the Punjab, wrote, "The impression which the review leaves on one's mind is that the Mahatma has gone into the whole matter not only in that spirit of justice and impartiality which one naturally expects from him in such cases but with that thoroughness which is one of the principal characters of his mind."

49. The Tribune, 29 March 1925.
The authorities traced the outbreak of the riots to the deep-rooted tension between the two communities, though the actual explosion, according to them, was the result of the publication of the controversial pamphlet, and the release of Jiwan Dass. However, the fury of the riots could have been reduced if not completely avoided, in case the local authorities had taken proper action at the right time. It was certainly not understandable to the people particularly to the nationalists that if the local authorities were aware that the publication of the derogatory poem by Jiwan Dass had paved the way for the trouble, his release on bail was sure to inflame the passions of the Muslims. In the opinion of Gandhi, it was right to arrest Mr. Jiwan Dass in the first instance, but it was an error of judgement to have released him before 11th and it was equally wrong to re-arrest him after release. Similarly it was not understandable to any impartial observer as to why the authorities failed to take adequate measures to protect the lives of the Hindus when it was known to them even a week earlier that there was a great tension between the two communities. The Government of India also later on

admitted that the incoming of the Mohammedans from the surrounding villages into the city of Kohat after making breaches in the mud wall surrounding the city was enough alarm for taking protective measures. But the local authorities failed to take note of them.

The Government of India had, therefore, to say that it would have been wiser if the authorities had taken into account the "possibility of a recrudescence of a serious rioting." It also admitted the involvement of some officials in the act of looting. Nevertheless, the Government did adopt some measures to restore peace after the occurrence of the riots. It is reported that as a result of the Government's efforts the following agreement was reached between the Muslims, the Sikhs and the Hindus:

(i) "Criminal cases connected with Kohat disturbance of September last to be dropped and no criminal case to be brought in guise of civil suit.

(ii) No obstacle to be put in any of reconstruction of places of worship.

(iii) Full assistance by each community to other in restoration of identified property.

(iv) No boycotting of each other by either party."

54. Ibid.
55. Home Pol., 31/1/1925.
In addition to it the Government gave general amnesty as it hoped that it would result in the early return of the Hindus of Kohat, for if the cases were taken into court even those who had returned would probably have to go again. 56

It cannot be denied that when the riots actually broke out, the authorities had to act in order to keep control over the situation, for prevalence of lawlessness could be interpreted as their incompetence. However, the wranglings between the communities were not unknown to the alien Government that always felt uncomfortable in the event of unity between them. They might not have taken sufficient precautions in advance to nip the evil in the bud. Consequently it was not unnatural for any nationalist leader including Gandhi to charge the local authorities with callous indifference and weakness.

Generally the Government denied such charges. It rather put blame on the policies and programmes of the Indian leaders for communal tension. It will be of interest to examine the causes listed by the authorities of the communal riots that had set Gandhi thinking. These were:

1. The Khilafat and Non-co-operation movements aroused so much disregard for law and order that it

would take years of firm government to dispel. Those who had aroused bitter feelings were quite unable to control the storms they had raised.

2. The Reforms as they were bound to do, created the belief that the old strong hand was going and the communities which failed to assert themselves would be left in the lurch. We could see this not only among the Hindus and the Mohammends but also among the Sikhs.

3. Conversion movements among the Hindus and the Muslims.

4. The educated Mohammends had become keenly alive to the fact that Indianization meant 'Hinduization'.

5. The repeal of the Press Act had led to inflammatory writings on both sides.

6. Reappearance of the real politics of India i.e. communal differences as a result of the failure of the common bond of enmity with Government through the collapse of Khilafat movement.  

The role played by proselytising drives and acrimonious and inflammatory literature in generating tension between the two communities was justly pointed out by Gandhi and some other nationalist leaders, too.

57. Home Pol., 140/1925.
These, as already pointed out, were only the immediate causes and not the fundamental ones.

It cannot be denied that the disappearance of the Khilafat issue removed an important link between the orthodox Muslim leadership and the Hindu leadership that had extended support to the Khilafat movement and consequently the former became less responsive to the appeals of the latter for any joint action to create conditions of peace between the two communities. Even Dr. Satyapal, a leader of the Punjab Congress, while narrating the difficulties of Congressmen in the Punjab in restoring peace between the two communities on the outbreak of Multan riots in September 1922, wrote to Gandhi, "The Congress had not much power left in it to persuade the Mohammedans to make a clean breast of all their offences and thus to soothe the feelings of the Hindus which were indeed brutally outraged. The Mohammedans of the Punjab at this time showed weakness of spirit which sounded the death-knell of Hindu-Muslim unity and which was a fatal blow to the prestige of the Congress...." Evidence is not lacking that at places the Congress and the Khilafat organisations worked against each other. But that only shows the limitations of the Indian leadership in preventing the outbreak of riots through mutual understanding.
and peaceful devices. But this is no justification for the Government for its inability to meet the riotous situation firmly. The Government report admitted that during the riots following the withdrawal of the Non-co-operation movement the firm hand of the Government was missing whatever might be the reasons. This strengthened the impression of the nationalists including Gandhi that the authorities betrayed callous indifferences, incompetence and weakness during the communal riots.

The Government report lays emphasis on the point that one of the major causes of riots was political as the Reforms raised the ambitions and fears of the elite in all the communities regarding their political future in the country. Gandhi and several other Indian leaders did lay their fingers on it. But the Government never made any efforts to restrain or remove such feeling. Rather it exploited them to prevent the Indian leadership from uniting against them. It was on this issue that there was a fundamental difference between Gandhi and the British Government and both had their own compulsions that led them to examine the phenomenon of communal riots from different angles.