

A HISTORY OF THE INDIAN NATIONALIST MOVEMENT

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A History of the Indian Nationalist Movement by Sir Verney Lovett

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PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION

THE second edition of this book contained a few corrections and explanations of minor importance. I added a brief clause to Appendix III.

As the book has reached a third edition, I have expanded it beyond its original scope by adding a chapter which reviews events from the end of April 1919 up to the close of the year 1920. I was not in India during any portion of this period, but have carefully ascertained all the facts narrated in the chapter, which is intended to make the present situation more easily comprehensible.

It will be noted that I have not dwelt on or discussed the conclusions of the Hunter Committee and the subsequent debates in Parliament. I have merely referred to them. They gave rise to bitter controversies which are fresh in the minds of all and cannot with profit be reopened now. I earnestly trust that as the foundations of the new constitution settle, the position will become more stable.

In my new chapter I have summarised the recommendations of the Joint Parliamentary Committee in the Government of India Bill; I have dwelt with some care on the progress of events in the Punjab during the latter months of the year 1920; I have traced the development of the non-co-operative agitation. It is directed by men who thoroughly understand how to play on the pathetic gullibility of the masses and the uncritical, easily aroused ardour of the youth of the educated classes. Indifferent seasons, economic depression, and other circumstances have favoured their efforts. They are determined to make the most of every opportunity. Their object is to subvert the

central and provincial British-cum-Indian Governments and Councils recently established by law.

The numerous Indian members of these bodies represent powerfully the thinking and responsible sections of their fellow-countrymen. They stand for the welfare and interests of all other sections. They know that, whatever may be the pretext, the issue which the Extremists have raised is crucial. Is there to be order or anarchy? That is the question. By the promptitude and vigour of their answer to it, the new semi-parliamentary Governments and Councils will be judged, not only in England, but throughout the civilised world.

To reformed India, for the sake of many happy memories of unreformed India, I wish the amplest measure of progress and prosperity.

H. V. L.

January 20th, 1921.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

I LEFT India in April, 1919, and in the following October completed thirty-five years of service passed in direct contact with Indians of all classes. I have enjoyed considerable facilities for observing from close quarters various phases of the Indian Nationalist movement.

In this book I have tried to trace its history and to summarise political conditions in India as they were when I left the country. My object has been to render some slight assistance toward a clear understanding of the difficult problems which India offers, and will continue to offer, to the British people.

Throughout I have felt the extreme difficulty of appraising and setting forth fairly the ideals and mental processes of men not of my own race. I have, therefore, aimed at explaining these, as far as possible, in the words of Indian Nationalists themselves. My book may be held to contain an excessive number of quota-

¹ See page 280.

tions; but the quantity of these is due to my anxiety to throw as accurate a light as possible on causes, motives, and events.

Another object has been present to my mind. British rule in India has been, and is constantly slandered and vilified in India, in England, and in other countries. I have taken care to show what has been said of its character and policy by prominent founders and leaders of Indian Nationalism.

My story is one of my own time, and ends with the day of my departure from India. My last chapter was written before publication of the amended Government of India Bill, which has since become law. I have endeavoured to write what I believe to be the truth in a fair and considerate spirit.

I wish to acknowledge my obligations to a large variety of authorities, to the published reports of the Indian National Congress, from 1885 to the present time, to the newspapers *India*, *The Times of India*, the *Pioneer*, the *Leader*, and other Indian journals, to the writings of the late Sir Alfred Lyall, to Mr. Vincent Smith's *Early History of India*, to the *Life of Saiyid Ahmad Khan, C.S.I.*, by Colonel Graham, to the *Speeches of Lord Curzon of Kedleston* edited by Sir Thomas Raleigh, to Lord Morley's *Recollections and Indian Speeches*, to the *Speeches of the late Mr. Gokhale*, to *Papers on Indian Social Reform*, edited by Mr. C. Y. Chintamani, to Mr. William Archer's *India and the Future*, to the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms Report, to various reports published by the Government of India, and to other sources of information too numerous to detail.

Lastly, I would express the hope that the importance and interest of the subject, especially at the present time, may lead my readers to forgive the shortcomings of the book; and I would express my gratitude to the people of the United Provinces, and to my brother officers of the Indian Civil Service, with whom I have passed many happy years.

H. V. L.

December 31st, 1919.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

"An accurate knowledge of the conditions of the past is necessary for a right understanding of the problems of the present."

SOME time ago, in the well-known book *J'accuse*, I read the following passage :

"National movements in fact cannot be suppressed. The practical politician must deal with them as facts ; and if he hopes to conduct them in the desired direction, he must endeavour, as far as possible, to satisfy their demands, which rest on community of race, of language, and often of religion—demands which are thus healthy and justifiable. Therein lies the skill of the English, and the true basis of their colonial greatness."

These words, written by a German, and inspired by observation of stirring incidents in the recent War, are a well-deserved tribute to the success of the colonial policy of Great Britain. Her Indian policy has been declared to be based on the same principles, but must be adapted to far more complex circumstances ; for in this great continent, or collection of countries, diverse in soil and physical characteristics, she has to deal with, not community, but numerous varieties of race, language, and religion. Yet she must recognise that

“ although Indians are broken up into diversities of race and language, they are, as a whole, not less distinctly marked off from the rest of Asia by certain material and moral characteristics than their country is by the mountains and the sea. The component parts of that great country hang together morally and politically. There is no more room for two irreconcilable systems of government than there is in Persia, China, or Asiatic Turkey.”¹

The British Government has decided to accede to the demand of Indian Nationalists that India shall tread the paths that lead to parliamentary government. This decision calls for, and will call for the solution of very difficult questions. We shall explore these to small purpose unless we make some study of the past, unless we observe the course of events which introduced democratic politics into the most rigidly conservative country in the world. The formal introduction took place thirty-four years ago; but the India of 1885 was, like the India of to-day, heir to a former time.

In view of perversions of Indian history which have lately become too common, it will be convenient to describe briefly the nature of the political inheritance to which Britain succeeded. The Moghal Empire, the product of a great Muhammadan invasion from Central Asia, had previously swept away all indigenous political institutions and shattered all semblance of Hindu nationality except in the States of Rajputana. When, after two centuries, that Empire itself fell gradually into decay, Sikhs, Jats, Afghans, Marathas disputed and fought over its territories. The Marathas were showing signs of consolidating their acquisitions when British intervention turned the scale; but history does not show that their Government represented any pan-

¹ Sir Alfred Lyall.