NOT OFTEN in history has a people taken two great steps in political development at the same time, yet the past year in India has seen both the drive for independence and the demand for a separate Pakistan become accomplished facts. The necessity for loosening the ties which held India to the British Empire is now generally granted; less clear is the need for and the consequences of division into the two new dominions of India and Pakistan. Whether the settlement will provide the political security which both so greatly need is still a question of the greatest importance.

David G. Mandelbaum, Associate Professor of Anthropology at the University of California, conducted field research among the villagers and tribesmen of South India in 1937-38, under the auspices of the National Research Council and Yale University. During World War II he served as an intelligence officer in India and Burma.
To appraise the potentialities of recent events in India, it is necessary above all else to have some understanding of the complex factors which led to the realization of Pakistan. The victory of the Moslem League may be regarded as the outstanding political phenomenon of the past year. Yet it is obvious that the seeds of the League's victory lie deep in India's history and social structure. Religious beliefs and practices, cultural traditions, language, economic inequalities, the accidents and designs of British administration, emerging nationalisms, personalities — each of these has helped to round out the picture in its own fashion.

The differences between Moslems and Hindus, whether considered within a particular village or throughout the land, are not of the character or magnitude that they sometimes are made out to be. They are not differences of race, of biological, physical type. Most Indian Moslems are descendants of Hindus who became converts to Islam; the number of those who can justly claim unmixed ancestry from the comparatively few Islamic invaders is so tiny as to be negligible. Nor are the differences markedly those of language. In every region, both Moslems and Hindus speak the same local dialect. The most widely used, Hindustani, was originally the speech of the area about Delhi, and became disseminated because Delhi was for some five centuries the center of Moslem rule. As Professor W. Norman Brown has recently pointed out, many Persian and Arabic words were introduced into this language; it came to be written by Moslems in the Arabic script and to be called "Urdu." 1 The same dialect is written by Hindus in the native Indian Devanagari script, and, for literary uses, with many borrowed Sanskrit terms; in this form the language is called "Hindi." But despite the variance in the form of script and in the turn of elegant literary phrases, both Urdu and Hindi are essentially the same language. However, the mere fact that Moslems used one script and Hindus another has meant that each rarely reads the other's books and scriptures.

In the realm of scripture, in the formal ideologies of the respective religions, there is indeed the greatest difference between Islam and Hinduism. Hinduism is concerned mainly with the salvation of the individual soul: each individual worships alone for the sake of his own eternal balance sheet which attaches to him through his successive rebirths. Until recently it was so non-proselytizing that when the pundits of Benares were asked, about a century ago, whether large groups of Kashmiri Moslems who wanted to return to Hinduism could do so, they refused to allow such reconversions. Hinduism is little concerned with the political governance of men, nor does it have any great tradition that all Hindus should be under a single rule.

To such precepts the doctrines of Islam could hardly stand in greater contrast. Islam is a unitary dogma, whose followers worship in congregations, and which encourages the propagation of the true religion among all mankind. It rejects the orthodox Hindu notions of caste, and historically has been much concerned with states and governments. Those who have ranged themselves under the banner of Pakistan have done so as adherents of Islam. But while religion is the hallmark of this political allegiance, no one claims that religion is the prime cause for the political dichotomy. M. A. H. Ispahani, a prominent Moslem League spokesman, in writing of the differences that divide Hindus from Moslems in India, notes that "It is not a question of polytheism, pantheism, or monotheism, nor is it a question of theocratic administration." 2

Mr. Ispahani's opinion that religious dogma, as such, has little to do with the conflict can be borne out by examples from many phases of Indian life. The veneration and preservation of the cow is among the most sacred tenets of Hindu dogma. Yet in many parts of South India, where Moslems are a small minority and where Hinduism is the most orthodox, Moslems have been slaughtering cattle for food for centuries without interdiction from Hindu secular or religious authorities. The leaders of the Moslem League, although they attempt to fulfill the amenities befitting a Moslem in public position, make no claims to be particularly devout or fundamentalist practitioners of Islam.

The purely religious differences that exist are between Hindu-

ism and Islam, not between Hindu and Moslem. In the ordinary
round of present-day life in India, ideal and theoretical tenets
do not create any vast chasm in culture between the two groups.
Whatever details of diet, dress, and custom distinguish a Moslem
from a Hindu peasant of the Bengal countryside are small when
contrasted with the variance in way of life as between the
Bengali villager, whether Hindu or Moslem, and the Punjab
villager of either community. Even these regional differences, to
the ethnologist's eye, appear only as variations upon the basic
theme of Indian life.

Yet it is the reality of this basic theme that the Moslem
separatist leaders are prepared to question: to them the outward
manifestations are but the symptoms of a far deeper division.
Mohammed Ali Jinnah, head of the Moslem League and new
Governor-General of Pakistan, has maintained in innumerable
speeches and statements that Hinduism and Islam in India
"are not religions in the strict sense of the word, but are, in
fact, different and distinct social orders." Jinnah's familiar
argument goes on to postulate certain basic ethnic
differences between the groups, differences which the impartial observer
viewing the matter from the scientific rather than the partisan
perspective, finds hard to confirm. But Mr. Jinnah is eminently
right in seeking the basis of the conflict in the social order of
India. It is indeed true that the root causes of the political
sundering of the land are to be found in the patterns of Indian
social organization, although in themselves they need not have
led to the kind of division that became necessary when they
were brought into unhappy conjunction with political and eco-
nomic factors which sharpened amiable communal distinctions
into bitter rivalries for power.

II

The root of communal conflict in India is to be found, there-
fore, not in the differences between the Hindu and Moslem
deologies themselves, but in the manner in which India's social
structure has affected Moslem as well as Hindu groups, so that
one has come to be pitted against the other. The people of India
have long been divided into social compartments. A man is
born into one of these groups, and this community delimits his
social world. Within it he marries; by its traditions he frequently
makes his living; his kin and his friends and his primary loyalties
all cluster within the group. Historically, the caste system has
certainly had a certain flexibility: both individuals and groups could and
did change their status in the caste hierarchy. But the basic
principle of the social organization of India remained that of
mutually exclusive groupings, the members of which were
usually judged by the rest of society as part of their respective
groups far more than as individuals.

The ideology of Islam repudiates such social barriers, at least
within the fold of the faithful, and Moslems are, theoretically at
least, opposed to such social compartments among men. But
only a part of the people of India became converts to Islam, and
often the conversions were made in large blocs; a whole commu-
nity embraced the new religion, whether by conviction or
armed persuasion. In assuming the new faith, such communities
did not divest themselves of their traditional patterns of social
interaction. In effect, Moslems became yet another community or
 caste within the land, and in time the divisions within the
Moslem population, whether sectarian as between Sunni and
Shiite, or occupational as between peasant and artisan, came to
function in much the same way as the caste distinctions among
Hindus. Even among the tribal peoples of the far northwest of
India, where there has been least impact of Hindu culture upon
the Islamic folk, the caste idea and practice is not entirely
lacking. Thus the nomadic Brahui have a class of lowly families
who perform as minstrels and midwives as well as general
menials, functions which are the lot of low castes throughout
India.

The communal principle of social organization is not unique
to India. All peoples tend to group themselves into small, rela-
tively compact communities. In most tribal and folk societies,
considerations of kinship, of joint family and of clan, are very

* See J. H. Hutton, Castle in India (Cambridge, 1946), pp. 105-106.
Riots are an old story in India and are not infrequently drawn on social rather than religious lines. Some of the worst rioting in the record of Indian history has occurred in South India between two factions of the lower castes among Hindus, known as the Right-Hand and the Left-Hand castes. Prominent as protagonists of the respective factions have been the low castes of Mala and Madiga. Professor J. H. Hutton relates that “the Chindu dance performed by Madigas with bells on their legs, at marriages and festivals generally, has had to be prohibited in several districts on account of its infuriating effect on the Malas and of the resulting riots.” Similarly, there have been bitter and bloody riots between Moslem and Moslem. Outbreaks between Sunni and Shiite went on for many years, with an intensity which rivaled factional strife between any other two groups.

In recent decades there has frequently been added to the existing social distance between Moslem and Hindu the further barrier of economic class disparity, heightening the latent communal discord. Thus the outbreak of 1907 in Mymensingh was a rising of Moslem peasants against Hindu landlords and creditors; the Bombay riots of 1929 were primarily between striking Hindu mill-workers and deliberately chosen Moslem (Pathan) strike-breakers. In this instance, the antagonism was increased because some of the Pathans were also money-lenders.7

Especially in the villages of the northwest, where Hindus are often the money-lenders and Moslems the peasants, and of the northeast, where the Moslems are frequently tenants of Hindu landlords, there has been this combining of communal and economic motivation for friction between Hindu and Moslem. When there is economic reason for antagonism, the emotional pull of religion rallies and intensifies the forces of violence. In smashing the shop of the Hindu money-lender, the aroused mob does not hesitate to go on to destroy the Hindu peasant’s cattle and crop.

But in spite of the increasing crystallization of the lines of physical strife as between Hindu and Moslem, such outbreaks

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1 J. H. Hutton, op. cit., pp. 9-10.
were, until the last few years, limited in area, in scope, and in
duration. They flared for several hours or days within a re-
stricted locality; on the next day the shutters of the Hindu shops
were opened, business soon went on as usual, and the Hindu
farmer sought out his family’s Moslem weaver to get a par-
ticularly fine piece of cloth for his son’s wedding.

In most of village India, even in the sections where violence
was most frequent, the outbreaks were sporadic instances in
scattered places. And in these very places of riot, the respective
communities soon returned to the pattern of their previous
relations, of amiable aloofness from each other in most social
interaction, of traditional co-operation in the exchange of goods
and services, and in the operation of local governmental affairs.
Hindu and Moslem villagers occasionally engaged in skirmishes,
and each skirmish added to the general legacy of communal ill
will, but there was no constant warfare, and little continuous
rivalry.

There was, indeed, a certain constant rivalry between Moslem
and Hindu, but it went on among the upper and middle classes,
not at the level of the peasant. This rivalry originated in the past
century. When the British began to establish themselves in the
country, they did so from the south, east, and west, in regions
that were predominantly Hindu. By the time the Moslem centers
of population were brought under British influence, there was
already in existence a class of Hindus who were educated in the
ways of the English and adapted to the economic role which the
Indian middle class could play. In addition to the disadvantage
of a late start, the growth of a Moslem middle class was ham-
pered by a fundamentalist reaction against Western influence,
and even more by the aftereffects of the Indian Mutiny of
1857–58. British policy held the Moslems responsible for the
rebellion, and for a decade afterwards deliberately discriminated
against them in governmental and private employment and in
educational opportunities.  

The British Government reversed this policy in the 1870’s.
Opportunities for education and for professional employment
were opened to Moslems, and under the leadership of the states-
man Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan (1817–1898) a Moslem bourgeois
began to develop. But it has never attained the proportional
strength and influence of the middle classes among Hindus, and
it has been ever conscious, in communal terms, of its relative
weakness.

Under the imperial regime, there has always been a good deal
of middle-class unemployment. Opportunities for educated
Indians in industry and the professions were limited; the com-
petition for the most glittering careers in government service
was fierce and virulent. Only a few of the competitors could be
successful, and those few lived with the uneasy feeling that they
could still be outdone in the struggle for advancement by others
who had better connections or a better start. Given the communal
outlook so deep-rooted in India, many a middle-class Moslem
could hardly help but feel that his would have been the better
post, his the richer profit, if only Moslems had a more equal
footing with Hindus.

The emergent middle class among the Hindus was developing
at this time a strong nationalist sentiment, and its leaders tried
to deny and do away with the old communal psychology which
they knew was inherently antipathetic to a vigorous nationalist
movement. There were Moslems, especially in the generation
which was the first to take on Western education and ideas, who
joined the nationalist forces and became prominent in the
general fight for independence. Not all did so, however. Jawa-
harlal Nehru aptly summarizes their dilemma: “Indian na-
tionalism was dominated by Hindus and had a hinduized look.
So a conflict arose in the Moslem mind; many accepted that
nationalism, trying to influence it in the direction of their choice;
many sympathized with it and yet remained aloof, uncertain;
and yet many others began to drift in a separatist direction for
which Iqbal’s poetic and philosophic approach had prepared
them.”

The poet Mohammed Iqbal (1873–1938) expounded, in vig-
orous and beautiful language, a message which educated Moslems
wanted to hear. It was a cry of hope and a vision of future

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8 For a more extensive analysis of this process see Smith, op. cit., pp. 189-205; and Brown, op.
cit., pp. 171-76.

1 Jawaharlal Nehru, The Discovery of India (New York, 1946), p. 353.
greatness; it was a call to action and a denunciation of injustice. Iqbal’s life and writings were full of inconsistencies: he praised and later damned Mussolini; in one polemic he eulogized Lenin and later wrote of him in terms of glowing praise; he advocated Hindu-Moslem unity and was one of the earliest to propose a separate Moslem state. But he had no need to be consistent. The invigorating tenor of his talk exhilarated his Moslem compatriots, and the part of his message that took hold had to do with the past triumphs of Islam and its future glories. His contagious ardor helped buoy the emotions of those Moslems who were feeling the drag of colonialism. Hindi nationalists in the same despondency took heart in looking back to the great cultural and political achievements of ancient India. The prevailing communal pattern of thought blocked Moslems from sharing in a common vision of the past. The ancients of India were of another community; Moslems gained inspiration from contemplating the greatness of Islam, and that largely in countries beyond India. There have been notable exceptions to K. M. Panikkar’s observation that “every Mohammedan, even if his family embraced Islam during the last generation, feels that he is the inheritor of the culture of the Saracens and of the Spanish Moors, and is an alien to the inheritance of India.” 11 But it was frequently true.

This psychological alienation was reinforced by the opposition between the two communities in politics. The Moslem middle class, late in getting started, lagged behind the political development of the Hindu bourgeoisie. Hence at any particular point of time, most politically conscious Moslems were at the stage that Hindus of the same class had reached some twenty years before, had abandoned, and now opposed. Just after the Mutiny, the remaining Moslem landlords were repelled by the westernization of the new professional class, which was largely Hindu. When a Moslem professional class did come into being, it feared to endanger its new status and proclaimed its loyalty to the British. This at a time when the more advanced professional group, again predominantly Hindu, was becoming strongly nationalist and anti-British. Again, in recent years, the Moslem professional and landed classes have had different interests from those of the influential industrialists who were mainly non-Moslem.

An example of this lag is contained in the resolutions of the first sessions of the Moslem League in 1906, which were “an almost word-for-word repetition, along communal lines, of those of the early Congress twenty years before.” 12 The resolutions averred loyalty to the Empire, asked for more jobs for Moslems in government service, and greater representation in the new councils.

III

By the early years of the twentieth century, Moslem communal consciousness, rooted in India’s social structure, nurtured upon a sense of inferiority in the constantly tightening struggle for economic well-being, and fostered by the growing awareness of a national Islamic heritage, was well on its way toward formal political expression. The Moslem League was founded during the nationalist upsurge which followed the partition of Bengal in 1905. The partition seemed to the advantage of the middle-class Moslems since it separated the predominantly Moslem eastern Bengal from the rest of the province, and so provided an enclave of posts in a provincial service which would be comparatively free from competition with Hindus. The rising Hindu middle classes viewed the partition as an infamous British cabal to vivisect the most progressive province of the land. They fought the issue aggressively, exuberantly, and, as they thought, on a nationalist plane. But to the yet loyal Moslems, it appeared as a communal fight, fought and finally won by the Hindus when the partition was later rescinded.

The codification of communal rivalry into the formal political procedure of the country came with the Minto-Morley reforms of 1909, which brought into being an electorate and gave it a limited representation in the government. But the electorate was split by communities, so that Moslems voted for Moslem candidates, Sikhs for Sikh candidates, and so on through several smaller communities, with the “general constituency” being largely

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13 Smith, op. cit., p. 201.
equivalent to the Hindu community. The minorities were given somewhat more representation than their strictly numerical proportions warranted.

This seemed to the British to be a fair sort of arrangement. It was what Moslems and other minorities wanted and the kind of system Indians understood. Indeed, it is advantageous in an oligarchy to have each segment of the body politic organized to present its case for adjudication by the oligarchic power. Neither Lord Minto nor Lord Morley envisaged the abdication of British rule.

It was a truly drastic step away from the path toward a federal democracy. Thenceforth, elected representatives of minorities naturally tended to hold that their primary loyalty was to the community which they represented, rather than to the country in which they lived. It encouraged the very aspect of Indian society which was inimical to the growth of a unified nation. This was fully realized by the authors of the next series of political reforms for India. In their report of 1918, Lord Chelmsford and Mr. Montagu wrote that the communal division in government meant 'the creation of political camps organized against each other, and taught men to think as partisans and not as citizens.' But by then it was not possible to eliminate the communal scheme of representation.

Nor were most British officials particularly anxious to see a communal rapprochement. Penderel Moon, who was himself a member of the Indian Civil Service, portrays the prevailing official attitude in his penetrating little book, Strangers in India. One of Moon's characters, the official he calls Lightfoot, remarks that under British rule both parties have been allowed to clamor and found that clamoring paid. The divisions could not just be quietly forgotten. "That we should have made use of these divisions for our own purposes was so natural and so inevitable that I see no need to be apologetic about it; and to deny it is absurd. In the early days of our rule we made no bones about it. 'Divide et impera' was freely acknowledged as a proper principle for our Government of India. . . . I well remember during the 1919 disturbances the surprise and alarm caused by the unprecedented fraternization of Hindus and Muslims. It seemed to us a most disturbing symptom . . ." 14

The record, indeed, is not one of unrelieved political opposition between the communities. There were pacts between the Moslem League and the Indian National Congress and there were some notable occasions on which the two worked together. But the eras of good feeling were brief. The disruptive forces — social, economic, and political — soon negated efforts toward amalgamation.

During the nineteen twenties and early thirties the center of the political stage in India was occupied by the All-India Congress. Under Gandhi's leadership, it made great strides and built a political machine which reached down into the villages. The Moslem League remained a comparatively small organization which was mainly supported by landed proprietors and professional men. From 1924 on, its leading spirit has been Mohammed Ali Jinnah.

Jinnah's talents and personality have molded the Moslem League. Not long ago he described himself as a "very cold-blooded logician." His years of steadfast and successful tactical maneuvering, of cool administrative manipulation, bear that out. His control over policies and appointments in the Moslem League has been absolute. But to his followers he is much more than a consummate politician, he is qaid-i-'azam, the Great Leader. They speak of him in almost religious terms, as both inspiration and final authority.

The number of these followers grew rather slowly for a time. It was not until 1936 that Jinnah launched the League on a campaign to widen the base of its membership. It was done to win votes for the 1937 elections, which marked a greater extension of self-government to Indians than they had ever had before. But the grant of political power and responsibility came in the usual communal wrappings, and led to more communal bitterness in the struggle to share in that power.

The Moslem League had not attained the full tide of its popularity in 1937. Less than a fourth of the Moslems elected to office in the provincial elections, 110 out of 482, were Moslem

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*Penderel Moon, Strangers in India (New York, 1945), pp. 81-82.
League candidates. Congress candidates were highly successful and Congress ministries were established in seven of the eleven provinces. It was during the years 1937–39, when these ministries held office, that the Congress policy intensified Moslem communal solidarity, rather than mitigating it as nationalists desired. Acting as a successful political party would in the West, the central Congress leadership parcelled out the plums of office to faithful party cohorts, some of whom, indeed, were Moslems. But the Moslem League was ignored. Psychologically prepared to feel themselves discriminated against as a community, many Moslems took this as proof that a complete Congress victory would lead to a completely Hindu Raj and to the total subordination of their community. This was felt keenly in the Moslem-minority provinces, especially in the United Provinces where the Moslem middle class was wealthiest and most advanced. From these provinces came the strongest support for the Moslem League.

In the Moslem-majority provinces, as the Punjab, there was also increasing Moslem disquiet. It was not lessened by the activities of the Hindu communalist organization, the Mahasabha. The Mahasabha was eventually proved to have only a minuscule following — in the 1945–46 elections it won only 3 of 1,585 contests in the provincial elections — but by then Moslems were all too ready to believe that the strident, bellicose propaganda of the Mahasabha was the voice of all Hindudom. As W. C. Smith has noted, communalism is a vicious spiral. The more one group is communal and separatist, the more the other group from which it is separate becomes self-conscious. To the degree that Hindu communalism did exist, it exasperated and seemed to justify Moslem communalism. The argument of non-communalism, that all groups within India should be treated equally, seemed hypocritical to the Moslem mind, believing, as it did, that the Hindu middle class possessed so many advantages over the Moslem middle class that to treat both equally would be to favor the stronger.

The Moslem League grew mightily in strength during World War II. The stand for a separate Moslem state was not adopted until the Lahore convention of 1940, and even then one competent

American observer who was at the meetings and heard the backstage conversations thought that the resolution for Pakistan was intended more as a bargaining lever than as an unalterable statement of purpose. Other American and European correspondents shared the same opinion. But the Pakistan slogan gripped the imagination and the allegiance of the great majority of middle-class Moslems. The Pakistan issue swept the League to an overwhelming victory among the Moslem electorate in the elections of 1945–46. By the end of the war, non-communalism had ceased to be an alternative possible of consideration.

The Moslem League victory went deeper than the restricted scope of upper-class Moslems who could and did vote. It captured the Moslem villager. The war years had brought uncertainty and uneasiness throughout the land. Inflation and food shortages had heightened anxiety everywhere. In the villages it was realized that the British Raj was nearly over, and the general insecurity of the Moslem peasant was enhanced by fears concerning the future government. These fears were fueled by communalist newspapers, whose invective percolated through the villages. Communalism is a great unifier of anxieties and fears, a ready channel for the consequent impulses of aggression.

The aggression burst out first and fiercest in the cities. There has long been a floating population of men and boys, known as goondas, in the large cities, who live on the lowest level of subsistence, who are frequently homeless, who jump into the slightest fray with the prospect of getting a bit of loot. Under the prevailing tension of the past years, quarrels quickly drew mobs, and the mobs quickly turned any quarrel into an excuse for goondas to pillage and riot. All disturbances became communal disturbances, and the riots spread to the countryside. This rioting was shocking in its intensity and devastation. Those who had been moderates now chose sides. The opportunity for even a communal compromise was past, and it is to Lord Mountbatten’s credit that he realized the terrible temper of the times and worked rapidly to bring about the only solution that is acceptable to both sides, a partition of India.14

14 Since communal division has been so much a factor in recent developments, it is frequently forgotten that among the quarter of India’s population living in the native states, communal
The two new dominions will have to solve a series of communal problems. There are sizable minorities in each — of Hindus and Sikhs in Pakistan, of Moslems in the Indian Union — and the minorities will not readily give up attempts toward special representation and privilege. The difficult task of working out a satisfactory relationship with the princes will be complicated by the presence of such Moslem-ruled states as Hyderabad within the borders of the Indian Union, and of Hindu-ruled Kashmir partly enclosed by Pakistan. The boundaries between the countries are necessarily arbitrary in many places, not following natural geographic features or demographic frontiers. On either side of these difficult boundaries will be army patrols that might become trigger-happy if people of the border regions continue to be tense and embittered.

Economists forecast continued food shortages, especially in the eastern part of Pakistan and the adjoining parts of the Indian Union. During the last two years, comprehensive administrative measures have been needed to avert disastrous famines. Considerable administrative efficiency will be necessary to forestall widespread hunger; the disorientation of administrative procedures following partition will not increase that efficiency. It is not to be expected that the part of the press that has been venomously partisan will mellow overnight, and it will be all too easy to blame the other country for the plight of one’s own land. The vicious cycle of communalism may be set in motion again, but now on an international plane.

Fortunately there are forces which will work to avert this cycle. Each country will have a stronger central government than would have been possible under any feasible federation, and each can set up the central machinery necessary to deal with its own peculiar problems. The former leaders of the Congress and of the Moslem League who will operate this machinery of government may be expected to act somewhat more temperately as responsible heads of government than they did as directors of opposition parties.

In many fields the heads of the new governments will find themselves in agreement. This has already been demonstrated by the quick reaction of both the Indian Union and Pakistan in sympathy for the Indonesians when the Dutch began military operations in the summer of 1947. There has been similar unanimity of attitude concerning other matters before the United Nations.

In the economic sphere, both governments will be anxious to raise the very low standard of living in their countries. Yet it is obvious that the economies of the two are so closely and intricably intertwined that one can flourish only if it is supported and supplemented by a healthy economy in the other. Continued communal dissension can lead only to continued poverty. As this comes to be increasingly realized in each country, it may be hoped that the forces which generate communal friction will be tolerated no longer. But not until a fundamental change takes place in the basic communal character of India’s social structure, will the bitterness between Hindu and Moslem which has been breeding over the years be struck at the root. Foresighted social and political measures can hasten such change, which economic developments have already set in motion.

distinctions have never been allowed to become political issues. It was not to the interest of the princes to have one group of their subjects at political odds with another, and they have discouraged village factionalism and middle-class rivalry from becoming political separatism.