

IV. INDIA

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So far as one can judge from newspaper comments, public addresses, the resolutions of Associations, and the gifts of Associations and individuals, as well as from private conversations, the Moslems of India are united as one man in their loyalty to the British Raj and their willingness to support Great Britain, to the point of utmost sacrifice, in this, her crucial hour. All unite in urging that the voice of complaint and controversy must be hushed in order that Great Britain, at the front, may not suffer the least embarrassment or anxiety by reason of any hint of internal disturbance in her Indian Empire. Looking within the circle of this universal loyalty, one finds two clearly marked and divergent lines of argument underlying it. In accordance with these divisions, we can distinguish two parties among Indian Moslems to-day.

(1) *The Patriotic pro-England Party.*

The adherents of this party are the followers of such outstanding and outspoken champions of Great Britain as the Agha Khan, who has offered not only his moral support and abundant financial aid but his person, as well, to the cause. These people, and the papers which represent their views, such as *The Hablul Matin* in Calcutta and *Paisa Akhbar* in Lahore are saying, in effect: "We must support Great Britain because she is fighting the battle of liberty and honour; as well as selfishly, because the world-wide predominance of Prussian mediaeval ideals of militarism would mean the ultimate end of Moslem solidarity and progress. We must play an enthusiastic, ungrudging part in this crisis as true Moslems." Furthermore, this party has asserted in no uncertain terms that should Turkey throw in her lot with Germany in this war, Moslems in India will not waver in their loyalty to Great Britain, as the Bengal Moslems made clear in their communication to the Turkish Government. The British Moslem Association,

speaking for the Moslems of India, declared in a public manifesto :—

“ Words cannot be found to express the anger we feel at Germany daring to proclaim that British Islamic subjects would prove false to their religion and be cowardly enough to attempt to take a mean and contemptible advantage of the country to whom they owe allegiance, and which has accorded them civil and religious liberty and protection. We desire to affirm the unflinching loyalty of British Mussalmans to His Imperial Majesty, King George V., and to assure him that all his subjects of Islamic faith are fully prepared and burning with a desire to shed their blood on behalf of England, side by side with the other sons of Islam, natives of Algeria, who are already fighting for France.”

Turkey is bidden to remain neutral and to direct her energies to internal reforms and to the regeneration of the Islamic world. According to a recent issue of *The Hablul Matin*, all that Germany's alleged friendship has done is to cause Turkey to lose her hold on Tripoli and Bosnia and Herzegovina. As for Russia, over against her ancient hostility to Turkey is set the fact of her present alliance with England, who can be counted on to strive to maintain the integrity of Turkey and Persia and whose influence over Russia is certain to be both powerful and beneficent, from the view-point of Turkey's highest interests.

(2) *The Opportunist, pro-Turkey Party.*

The number of Moslems belonging to this wing of Islam in India is not large, but their spirit is vigorous and aggressive. The leaders are Muhamed Ali, the brilliant editor of *The Comrade* and *The Hamdard* of Delhi, and Nawab Zafar Ali Khan, editor of the *Lahore Zemindar*, of dubious notoriety and turbulent history. These papers have become increasingly critical of British rule and rulers in India of late—the Viceroy and a few other individuals excepted. Their criticism has often seemed perversely unreasonable and unjust. At the outbreak of the war their editorials declared in favour of supporting Great Britain, but there was neither enthusiasm nor conviction in the tone. Without admitting the righteousness of the cause of the Allies, holders of public opinion have counselled true Moslems in India to pray and fight for and with Great Britain on grounds of naked expediency. India must have British

rule (with all its faults!) at the present time and for some time to come. Therefore, the defeat of Great Britain might spell calamity for the Indian Empire, which is as yet unable to stand alone. Therefore, a policy of "My country, right or wrong," is justified, not on grounds of blind devotion but of far-seeing opportunism. As the war has progressed, pro-German sympathies have become increasingly manifest. All that can be gleaned from the telegrams in favour of Germany and in support of the righteousness of her cause is given a prominent place. The worst that can be told of her "atrocities" is declared to be humane in comparison with Italy's brutality in the late war with Turkey. All utterances of the anti-war party in Great Britain, to the effect that the war is unnecessary and iniquitous, are culled from home papers and reprinted for the benefit of the Moslem public in India. There are sneers for Italy on the score of her broken plight with Germany and Austria upon the flimsiest pretext. With regard to Egypt, Great Britain is reminded of past promises of early evacuation, and is asked whether these promises are more than "scraps of paper" in the light of later history. Says a recent issue of *The Comrade* :—

"But the truest test of conscience and courage for England is not so much to declare war on Germany for a breach of Belgium's treaty rights as to evacuate Egypt of her own free will, even before a diplomatic demand is formulated by Turkey or Egypt. Nothing would shame Germany so well as this act of clear justice. The embarkation of the last English soldier from Alexandria will put the fear of God into the heart of the Kaiser more assuredly than the disembarkation of the last English soldier available in the Empire at Boulogne or Havre."

The enmity of both Russia and France toward Turkey is depicted in vivid colours. Indeed, the hostile attitude of all of the present Allies at the time of Turkey's war with Greece is called to mind, and the question is asked, "If Turkey chooses to strike Greece when her patron saint, Russia, cannot come to her rescue, who can blame her?" There is the utmost sympathy for Turkey in her present predicament, and the threatening attitude toward Turkey of such English papers as *The Times* is denounced as mischievous and hypocritical.

Nevertheless, Turkey has been adjuured by this party,

too, to remain neutral, if possible, in the interests of her own highest destiny. To quote *The Comrade* again :—

“ But admiration and sympathy are one thing ; making the cause of Germany our own is another. If any cause can be ours, it is the British, and if Germany counts on us she is grievously mistaken. It would be bad business for Turkey also to lavish on Germany the lives and energies and resources that she needs for her own quarrels, and that Germany never spared for her when she was beset by still greater perils. Germany has done nothing yet for the Turks to deserve the sacrifice of a single rupee, much less a street riot in a single town or village of India by the Moslem sympathisers of Turkey with a view to embarrass their own Government.”

The general hope that the war will be brief, and the coming peace, honourable and permanent, has not been more nobly expressed than by Nawab Nizam Jung, the notable Moslem poet of Hyderabad :—

“ A hundred toilsome years have rolled in vain
 Since one proud eagle drooped his shattered wings ;
 Another rises—and the welkin rings
 With the mad cry, “ For Glory ” once again !
 And legions rush through carnage to attain
 Some fancied good that blood-stained Conquest brings ;
 Is it the boast of Councils and of Kings,
 O God ! to triumph over millions’ pain ?
 Guardians of Good ! Ye nations of the West !
 ’Tis Mind, not Force, doth Nations’ worth attest.
 Force died with Rome—high Thought hath outlived Greece !
 Be thine, O England ! thine the nobler pride
 To win true Glory with the arts of Peace ! ”

Lahore, India.

HOWARD ARNOLD WALTER.

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IN A REAR-GUARD ACTION

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REARGUARD fighting had been going on for several days, of all forms of warfare the most trying to the nerve and spirit of an army. Mile after mile through the sultry weather the men had had to fall back, leaving dead and wounded behind them, yet keeping their battle line facing the foe, and their hearts in tune for victory. It was a rear-guard action, not a retreat.

At last a river delayed the backward march, and across one of its bridges two regiments retired, with the enemy close behind ; so close that by the time the last was over, machine guns were being planted on the shore they had left. That bridge must be blown up instantly.