

and friendly association with our people. But these are matters for your own free choice. Whatever that choice may be, we look forward with you to your ever-increasing prosperity among the greatest nations of the world and to a future even more glorious than your past.

[From C. H. Philips, ed., *The Evolution of India and Pakistan*,
1858 to 1947, 355–360.]

CONGRESS'S RESPONSE TO THE PLAN

The Congress Working Committee came to the following resolution on May 24, 1946.

In considering the Statement [of 16 May], the Working Committee have kept in view the picture of the future, in so far as this was available to them from the proposals made for the formation of a Provisional Government and the clarification given by members of the Delegation. This picture is still incomplete and vague. It is only on the basis of the full picture that they can judge and come to a decision as to how far this is in conformity with the objectives they aim at. These objectives are: independence for India, a strong, though limited, central authority, full autonomy for the provinces, the establishment of a democratic structure in the centre and in the units, the guarantee of the fundamental rights of each individual so that he may have full and equal opportunities of growth, and further that each community should have opportunity to live the life of its choice within the larger framework.

The Committee regret to find a divergence between these objectives and the various proposals that have been made on behalf of the British Government, and, in particular, there is no vital change envisaged during the interim period when the Provisional Government will function, in spite of the assurance given in paragraph 23 of the Statement. If the independence of India is aimed at, then the functioning of the Provisional Government must approximate closely in fact, even though not in law, to that independence and all obstructions and hindrances to it should be removed. The continued presence of a foreign army of occupation is a negation of independence.

The Statement . . . suggests a procedure for the building up of a Constituent Assembly, which is sovereign in so far as the framing of the constitution is concerned. The Committee do not agree with some of those recommendations. In their view it will be open to the Constituent Assembly itself at any stage to make changes and variations, with the proviso that in regard to certain major communal matters a majority decision of both the major communities will be necessary. . . .

The Statement of the Cabinet Delegation affirms the basic principle of provincial autonomy and residuary powers vesting in the Provinces. It is further said that Provinces should be free to form groups. Subsequently, however, it is recommended that provincial representatives will divide up into sections which

“shall proceed to settle the Provincial Constitutions for the Provinces in each section and shall also decide whether any Group Constitution shall be set up for those Provinces.” There is a marked discrepancy in these two separate provisions, and it would appear that a measure of compulsion is introduced which clearly infringes the basic principle of provincial autonomy. In order to retain the recommendatory character of the Statement, and in order to make the clauses consistent with each other, the Committee read paragraph 15 to mean that, in the first instance, the respective provinces will make their choice whether or not to belong to the section in which they are placed. Thus the Constituent Assembly must be considered as a sovereign body with final authority for the purpose of drawing up a constitution and giving effect to it. . . . The provisions in the Statement in regard to the Indian States are vague. . . . A Provisional National Government . . . must be a precursor of the full independence that will emerge from the Constituent Assembly. It must function in recognition of that fact, though changes in law need not be made at this stage. The Governor-General may continue as the head of that Government during the interim period, but the Government should function as a cabinet responsible to the Central Legislature. The status, powers and composition of the Provisional Government should be fully defined in order to enable the Committee to come to a decision. Major communal issues shall be decided in the manner referred to above in order to remove any possible fear or suspicion from the minds of a minority.

[*India, Statement by the Cabinet Mission*, Cmd. 6835 (1946),
reprinted from C. H. Philips, ed., *The Evolution of India
and Pakistan, 1858 to 1947*, 382–384.]

DR. B. R. AMBEDKAR CONSIDERS PARTITION

As noted in the introduction, Dr. Ambedkar presented forceful arguments against any attempt to make a logical case for Pakistan. He did this, inter alia, by comparing India to other nations around the world composed of multiple communities. He maintained that there were many more reasons for sustaining its unity than for dividing the political community. But, he said, emotions, not reason, must be the deciding factor. If the Muslims—meaning Jinnah and the Muslim League and their supporters—passionately wanted Pakistan, then it had to be accepted. He felt that a nation of several communities—for example, a free and united India—had to have citizens and an army completely committed to it. Anything less would mean disaster. If the Muslims could not make this wholehearted commitment, they should be granted Pakistan.

MUST THERE BE A PAKISTAN?

I. With all that has gone before, the sceptic, the nationalist, conservative and the old world Indian will not fail to ask “Must there be Pakistan!?” . . . The