

# **INDIA IN TRANSITION**

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**INDIA IN TRANSITION**  
**A STUDY IN POLITICAL EVOLUTION**  
**BY HIS HIGHNESS THE AGA KHAN**



**BENNETT, COLEMAN AND CO., LTD.**  
**THE "TIMES OF INDIA" OFFICES**  
**BOMBAY AND CALCUTTA**

**TO**  
**MY MOTHER**

For, always roaming with a hungry heart,  
Much have I seen and known.

"ULYSSES," TENNYSON.

## FOREWORD

**M**R. MONTAGU'S historic announcement last August that he was to proceed to India to discuss the extent and form of the "substantial steps" to be taken in the direction of self-governing institutions, and to receive with Lord Chelmsford the suggestions of representative bodies and others, confirmed me in the intention I had formed on finding I was debarred on medical grounds from Army service in the Allied cause to return to India last winter. I cherished the hope that I might be of some small service to my country in helping to shape some of the representations which might be made, and in contributing to the success of so momentous a mission by a British statesman whose zeal and devotion in promoting the welfare of India had greatly impressed the Indian people during the time of his Under-Secretaryship at the India Office.

My plans and hopes were thwarted, however, by a painful and tedious malady requiring surgical treatment in Europe, and fully six months of rest and retirement in a prescribed climate. The eminent specialists consulted were peremptory in refusing my appeal to be permitted to carry out my plans. They were confident that within two or three weeks of my landing in Bombay I should be laid aside by severe illness, making it quite

impossible for me to render the public service I had in view. Their assurances that acceptance of their advice and the regimen prescribed would most probably restore me to vigorous health are being confirmed as time goes on.

The bitterness of my disappointment was considerably mitigated when, acting on the suggestion of valued friends, I obtained the assent of the specialists to my spending two or three hours daily during my enforced retirement and rest in consecutive literary work, for the purpose of presenting a detailed exposition of my views on Indian reconstruction. I had been approached frequently in the past dozen years or so by publishing houses with requests to write a book on current topics. Though the idea was not without attraction, I did not consider that the time was ripe to bring it to fruition; and I continued to limit my public utterances to speeches in India and in England, and to occasional review and newspaper articles. I now felt it a duty, as well as a privilege, to give a detailed exposition of my thoughts on India, and my hopes and aspirations for the future, as a contribution to the many-sided problem Mr. Montagu has been investigating.

The reader will pardon, I trust, these personal details since they are required for an understanding of the conditions in which my views have been formulated and presented. They may be pleaded in mitigation of shortcomings in execution, of which I am only too conscious. In my retirement the verification of references has not been easy, nor have I had the opportunities of consultation on questions of fact or policy which might otherwise have been available. The revision of proofs,

in the later stages, I have been compelled to leave to others, in order to obviate any greater delay than present difficulties of book production in England imposes.

My limitations, however, have not been without their compensations. Enforced exclusion from the arena of day by day discussion in India, however disappointing, may have contributed at least to the dispassionateness with which I have sought to temper the ardour of my Indian patriotism and my belief in the inherent possibilities of my countrymen under the more favourable political conditions I advocate. Though outside the current, I have been able to watch its course with the help of many kind correspondents and occasional visitors, and by careful study of the organs of opinion in India.

Moreover, writing and thinking almost within hearing of the thunder of battle in Europe, I have been in a better position to apply to the Indian problem the widened outlook derived from a close and frequent contact with political systems and affairs outside, as well as within, my own country. Further, thrown so fully on my own resources, I can at least claim that the work, whatever its demerits, is an original and strictly personal contribution to the Indian problem. Many of the opinions I express will not be new to leaders of political and social thought in many lands with whom for years past I have discussed the future of India. Such views can also be traced in my occasional writings, though they have undergone development in the last four fateful years. We none of us stand where we did before the events of July and August, 1914, brought us to the watershed of



contemporary history. The war has enormously changed the political and social outlook throughout the world in the direction of strengthening those forces of democracy and national self-determination, of liberty and progress, for which the Allies have made so many sacrifices.

One further word of explanation is desirable. I have studiously avoided any attempt to penetrate the plans which may have been formulated by the Secretary of State and the Viceroy as a result of their consultations, and which have still to be disclosed at the time I write. I make no claim to any inspiration in the guise of "intelligent anticipation." The proposals of His Majesty's Government are to be issued for public discussion, and will be embodied in a Bill to be submitted to Parliament in due course. I cherish the hope that this contribution to the subject may be of some service in helping to mould the moderate yet earnestly progressive ideas, both in Great Britain and India, on which, when all is said, the satisfactory and continuous solution of the complex Indian problem depends.

AGA KHAN.

18 May, 1918.

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