

Letters to the people of  
India on Responsible  
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OF INDIA  
ON  
RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT

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By Lionel Curtis.

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## Preface.

As the Joint Address from Europeans and Indians to the Viceroy and Secretary of State has been coupled with my name in the Indian Press, I must briefly explain my connection therewith. Having made some studies of Indian Government more especially relating to the United Provinces, I submitted them for criticism to a number of Indians and Europeans for the purpose of verifying my facts and conclusions. Some of my friends who had read these studies, and were anxious that members of both races should agree in advising the Secretary of State, invited my assistance. I outlined a scheme, which I afterwards reduced to writing, but advised them to restrict their agreement to a few principles which seemed fundamental. They accepted this advice; but as it was desirable to promote discussion, the memorandum was published as well as the twelve points to which the signatories subscribed. It was made clear that the agreement related only to the twelve points and that the signatories remained free to differ on all the suggestions contained in the report by which it is prefaced. In the final draft of the twelve articles of agreement my advice was not taken on various points, though none the less I should have signed them as they stand, had I been qualified to do so by residence in India.

For the memorandum by which they are prefaced I accept the sole responsibility. For the sake of brevity it was condensed from materials accumulated in the course of a year's study of the subject, and a

number of points raised in the discussions which took place, and in the documents submitted to the signatories, were omitted.

After its publication I was asked by some of the signatories, who rightly wished to promote reasoned discussion, to develop these points in a series of letters to the Press. Five such letters were published, and I must here acknowledge the kindness of Editors who printed them. It was not fair however to make such inordinate demands on their space as the subject required; and for studious readers the matter demanded presentment in more consecutive form. I therefore undertook to bring together what I had to say, including some matter already printed, in the form of a book. The work has had to be done at very short notice. The proofs have been read in haste, and those of the last few chapters I am not able to read at all. I must therefore ask my readers to excuse the blemishes which I expect to find when I see the book in published form. If these are not serious it will be due to the exceptional skill and care shewn by the printers in the hurried and difficult conditions under which their work has been done.

In order that the book may be published at the lowest possible price, some of the signatories have underwritten the cost. In the most unlikely event of any profit being realized, the amount will be paid over to war funds. I must none the less be held solely responsible for any opinions expressed in this book. The signatories are committed to nothing beyond the twelve articles they signed, and the *principle of specific devolution* upon which they are based. The virtue of that principle is its elasticity and the variety of ways

in which it can be applied to all the varying conditions of India. As an illustration of this I append to the volume a suggestive scheme worked out by my friend Mr. Provash Chunder Mitter, which contains a wealth of information to which I cannot pretend.

The Congress-League Scheme and the Joint Address are also appended. The latter is printed from the types of the published edition, for greater facility of reference. Those to whom these documents are not already familiar should study them before attempting to read this book.

In conclusion, I must acknowledge the kindness of my friends Mr. Pugh, Mr. Arden Wood, and Mr. Harvey, in undertaking to pass this book through the press in my absence.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "L. Curtis".

*December 17th, 1917.*

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