

‘The Great Divide’

K Z ISLAM

I have read with interest Yasmeen Murshed's column *Talking Books* (Daily Star, 23 February 2004) relating to H.V. Hodson's *The Great Divide*. I am sure she will find that *The Great Divide* was commissioned by Mountbatten like he motivated many other writers to write hagiography about him. All these books project him in a most favourable light. Mountbatten not only made history but also saw to it that it was recorded in his own way.

Is it not curious that *The Great Divide* does not contain a bibliography? Why should it? The book is based on *The Viceroy's Report* as Hodson acknowledges in the introduction 'it could never have been written without the unstinting help and confidence of the last Viceroy of India.' Hodson says, he had unlimited access to the Mountbatten papers and Mountbatten went through the final draft personally. Of course, the papers were made available. Only those that suited Mountbatten. I would go as far as to say that *The Great Divide* is merely a reproduction of *The Viceroy's Report* suitably garnished, embellished and protracted to give the readers impression of events as Mountbatten wanted them to be perceived. Anyone reading this book would get a totally distorted picture of events during the crucial partition period. The book is full of half-truths distortions and glaring omissions. There are too many gaps and it would

take probably another book to fully point them out. One has to read every page with caution. I propose to elaborate on some of the major lapses.

I would like to state that there is no one book that gives a comprehensive, objective, fair and complete picture of the story of partition. One has to read at least a dozen books to get a fair assessment of the partition proceedings.

It is to the eternal credit of Harold Wilson who as British Prime Minister decided in 1966 to reduce the close period for official records from 50 to 30 years and the decision a year later that the first material to be published under the new plan would be documents from the India Office Records relating to the transfer of power in India. The first volume in this project was published in 1970. The final four volumes (making a total of twelve), which contained documents pertaining to partition appeared between 1980 and 1983. Mountbatten was audacious enough to think that he could control the unfolding of events according to his plan, moreover, that he could see to its execution in association with a mixed band of co-conspirators without fear of ultimate disclosure.

Unfortunately, *The Great Divide* was published before the publication of the official *Transfer of Power (TOP)* documents and the glibble readers accepted it word for word.

Some of the major lapses and falsehoods in *The Great Divide*:-

Wavell: Hodson thoroughly derides Wavell finally commenting on p-184 'He lacked either the political

experience or the personal finesse to handle a situation, or series of situations, as delicate and complex as any in the politics of whatever nation.' The fact is with the publication of Wavell's *Journal* and the TOP just as Mountbatten's reputation has plummeted the esteem of Wavell has soared.

Who appointed Mountbatten? Sudhir Ghosh in his *Gandhis Emissary* (mostly *Gandhi's* original letters) writes (page 44) 'It was during this visit to London that Cripps brought together Mr. Nehru and Viscount Mountbatten, a relation of the Royal family who had a distinguished career as Supreme Commander of the Alliance Forces of the South East

does not permit me to elaborate on Who appointed Mountbatten but please read pages 467 to 470 of *The Cripps's Version* by Peter Clarke for documentary evidence about the veracity of Sudhir Ghosh's statement. Therefore, Hodson's statement is false.

Further evidence. Turn to page 220 of Volume-IX of *The Transfer of Power* documents: Note by I.D. Scott (Wavell's Deputy Private Secretary) dated 29 November 1946, 'I should like to suggest that it would be a good thing if Nehru and perhaps Tarlok Singh (probably meaning Baldev Singh) with him, could stay in a private home in London. At his hotel he will inevitably have crowds of Indian

whole things.', 'You must be crazy.', 'It's absolutely idiotic to refuse to say yes.', 'To think that I had to say yes for this clot . . .', 'I have never forgotten that moment waiting to see if that clot was going to nod or shake his head.', 'that dramatic moment when this great clot was about to throw everything.', 'I have no worry about Jinnah being shown up for the bastard he was. You know he really was.'

The above are some of the opinions of Mountbatten about Jinnah that is in print. What he must have said privately God alone knows.

Meeting with Krishna Menon prior to Mountbatten's departure from London to take up the Vice regal appointment: On page 223

quickly so that Pakistan loses the maximum. The quick transfer also led to the biggest uprooting of population in history and the loss of lives of nearly a million people predominantly Muslim (*Tuker While Memory Serves*).

The Simla House Party, 6-11 May 1947: Hodson gives his account of the events from pages 294 to 301. This account is totally mixed up and completely false. This was of course the Mountbatten's version. But an elaborate study of the goings on in Simla in that crucial get together was when the fate of the Indian sub-continent was decided as per the Congress plan. The transfer of power plan already approved by Indian leaders during

what a vital and dangerous trio they prove to be!' Hyderabad, state with a Muslim Ruler and Hindu population, Junagadh, Muslim Ruler Hindu population, Kashmir, Hindu Ruler with Muslim population. The redeeming feature of the book appears to be that if one reads between the lines it is crystal clear that Mountbatten used all his skills and powers to ensure the accession of the three states to India.

Hodson writes about Kashmir (pages 383-385) Mountbatten conveniently forgot to show Nehru's six and half page note which Nehru wrote to Mountbatten (17 June 1947) on the status of Kashmir prior to Mountbatten's visit to Kashmir, *Transfer of Power* documents page-442, Volume-XI which concluded 'If any attempt is made to push Kashmir into the Pakistan Constituent Assembly, there is likely to be much trouble because the National Conference is not in favour of it and the Maharaja's position would also become very difficult. The normal and obvious course appears to be for Kashmir to join the Constituent Assembly of India. This will satisfy both the popular demand and the Maharaja's wishes. It is absurd to think that Pakistan would create trouble if this happens.' Simply put Nehru and Mountbatten are the architects of the Kashmir problem which has created such a lot of bloodshed, strife and confrontation in the subcontinent.

Mountbatten had decided fairly early in his Viceroyalty about the accession of Kashmir to India. Otherwise why on earth did he send the cable on 29 April 1947 (TOP documents p-485, Vol-X) cancelling the Gilgit lease. The telegram ended 'I propose merely to inform Nehru personally of decision'. No mention of this in the *Great Divide*.

Radcliff's Award: All that can be said about the Radcliff's Award as Chairman of the Boundary Commission is that it was a most

unjust arbitrary and unfair award imaginable. The biggest sufferer is Bangladesh. According to the Indian Independence Act 1947 passed in July 1947 (p-233-249 TOP Vol-XII) by the British Parliament the districts of Murshidabad, Nadia, Malda and Rajshahi were allotted to East Bengal. As regards Sylhet, there was to be a referendum and if the voting was in favour of either East Bengal or Asam the entire district would become part of the majority province. In actual fact East Bengal lost Muslim majority areas Nadia, Malda, Murshidabad and half of Rajshahi in Bengal and the sub-division of Karimganj to give access to India to the state of Tripura which had already decided to join Pakistan. As a footnote one can only quote the confession of Christopher Beaumont (Radcliff's Secretary) reproduced in the *Daily Telegraph*, dated 24 February 1992, "How Mountbatten bent the rules and the Indian border".

The concluding paragraph: For Hodson's unctuousness and Mountbatten's self aggrandisement the concluding sentence (The Great Divide page 543) must take the first prize. 'A later historian will be able to judge them more fairly than we can judge them today. There were great men among them, and Lord Mountbatten was among the greatest'. I could not help bursting into fit of uncontrollable laughter after reading this.

There are too many gaps, falsehood and omissions in The Great Divide. It will take me at least one month to point them all out.

K Z Islam, a chartered accountant and eminent businessman, has extensively researched on Partition and his book will be published soon.

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Command; and Cripps told Nehru that if he felt that he and Mountbatten could work together then he would do his best to get Mountbatten appointed as Viceroy in Wavell's place.' Contradicting this statement Hodson writes (page 213) as a footnote 'A story in *Gandhi's Emissary* by Sudhir Ghosh, that in December 1946, Sir Stafford Cripps brought Mountbatten and Nehru together in London is without any foundation in fact.' Space

callers and journalists on his return each evening; and he will not so easily have an opportunity of meeting the kind of people with whom contact is very desirable. Lord Louis Mountbatten might be his host.'

Wavell had noted after the above report, 'I am afraid we can hardly ask Lord L. to put up N. and I doubt whether N. would accept...'

What on earth made I. D. Scott make the above suggestion to Wavell in an official note?

Nehru, however, stayed at the Dorchester Hotel where Edwina kept a permanent suite overlooking the Hyde Park. Jinnah was comfortably billeted in Claridge's with the rest of the delegation.

There are too many ancillary conclusive evidence that Mountbatten was appointed Viceroy at the behest of Congress. *The Cripps's Version* and *Gandhi's Emissary* quoted above are merely two of them.

Jinnah Mountbatten Relationship: Hodson elaborates on pages 215/216 and 224/225 about Jinnah Mountbatten encounters which reveals strained dialogues. Turn to *Mountbatten and the Partition of India* which is a transcript of a series of interviews Mountbatten gave to Collins and Lapierre for another hagiography known as *Freedom at Midnight*. Mountbatten's opinion of Jinnah: 'He was the evil genius in this

Hodson mentions casually about the two meetings of Krishna Menon with Mountbatten prior to his departure from London to take up his Viceroyalty. Hodson conveniently omits to mention (or Mountbatten suppresses) the eight-page memorandum which Krishna gave to Mountbatten. This memorandum is virtually the Congress mandate (TOP, p-946-951, Vol-IX). No meetings with League leaders took place.

The Governor conference held on 15-16 April 1947: Hodson quotes from the Viceroy's Personal Report No. 3, 17 April 1947 relating to the Governor's conference. Mountbatten conveniently omitted to mention in his report his statement to the conference recorded in the minutes (*Transfer of Power* documents, Volume-X, P-251). The statement is an outrageous one and is the blue print of the Congress which led to the disastrous consequences of the partition. His statement -

'His Excellency the Viceroy pointed out that a quick decision would also give Pakistan a greater chance to fail on its demerits. The great problem was to reveal the limits of Pakistan so that the Muslim League could revert to an unified India with honour. Their excellencies the Governors all agreed that the necessity for an early decision was paramount.'

One of the blue prints of the Congress was to transfer power

Understanding cholesterol

DR SADIA ISLAM

THESE'S so much information out there about cholesterol, but many people don't really understand what it is. All cholesterol isn't bad. In fact, it's produced naturally in your liver and it helps with important body functions. Why would you have high cholesterol? Family history; unhealthy diet; inactivity; being overweight?

Do any of your family members have high cholesterol or heart problems? Or, do you realise that your diet is high in fat and that you may be carrying extra weight? If so, it's time to talk to your doctor about your cholesterol.

What's cholesterol? Cholesterol is a fat-like material present in the blood and most tissues, especially nervous tissue. An elevated concentration of cholesterol in the blood (high cholesterol) is a serious risk factor for hypertension and heart disease. High-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol is often called the "good" cholesterol because it helps "cleanse" cholesterol from the blood vessels. In contrast, low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol is often referred to as the "bad" cholesterol. over time, it can accumulate in the blood vessels with other substances to form plaques. That can cause a blockage, resulting in heart attack or stroke.

What's good diet for high cholesterol? Diet alone can help reduce high cholesterol levels in the blood. But there is not a single diet plan that will work for every person. An appropriate diet should be developed by the patient and a registered dietitian based on medical history, previous dietary patterns, individual lifestyles, and personal preferences. In addition, patients will vary in their willingness and ability to adapt to dietary restrictions. Collaboration between dietitian and patient to evaluate all of these variables is essential. The most important factor to control is the saturated fat in the diet. Saturated fat comes primarily from food of animal origin such as meat or dairy products. Foods high in soluble fibres such as lentils, beans and oatmeal also assist in reduction of blood cholesterol. These foods should be consumed several times a week. Consuming soy based "vegetarian" type meals may also help to lower cholesterol. Keeping your diet high in fruits and vegetables is also important, not only for risk of heart disease but it lowers cancer risk as well. Some fruits like apples and oranges, and some dried beans may even help reduce blood cholesterol levels. Research is showing that one who eat 2 to 3 apples a day may have lower cholesterol. Studies show that the LDL (bad cholesterol) dropped while the HDL (good cholesterol) went up. Researchers believe that the pectin in the apples is one of main reasons why total cholesterol decreased. Much of the pectin the apple has is in the peel (skin). Pectin through research has been found to be effective in lowering serum cholesterol, triglycerides, and blood sugars. Apples are also a good source of thiamine (vitamin B1) needed to help brain function.

I have high cholesterol and need to be treated but I don't want to take drugs. Do I really need to? The reason for wishing to treat high lipid levels is that they are a risk factor for certain conditions, particularly cardiac disease. Within populations, there is an exponential relationship between serum cholesterol and the incidence of coronary heart disease. This depends on LDL cholesterol, which usually comprises some 70-80% of total cholesterol in men and a little less in women. The optimal serum cholesterol is 200mg/dL or less. A level of 250 is considered to indicate a moderate risk, and 270 a high risk. For serum HDL cholesterol, a lower limit of normality of 40mg/dL, and an ideal level above 60mg/dL is desirable. Cholesterol values must always be viewed in the context of the individuals' overall cardiovascular risk. This is because, although each risk factor for cardiac disease is important, the presence of more than one more than doubles the importance. Therefore, for example, if you just have high lipid levels on their own, there might be less of an indication to treat you than if you had high lipid levels and, say, high blood pressure too. Always remember that the reason for identifying risk factors is to reduce the risk that these factors suggest. However, one final point is that medication might not be indicated in the first instance and dietary and other means of control could well be tried first. By eating a healthy diet you help raise the "good" cholesterol levels and lower the "bad" cholesterol levels. Regular exercise is also necessary to reduce and/or maintain normal body weight, along with no smoking.

I have diabetes and high blood pressure and high cholesterol levels. What can I safely eat? You have three risk factors for cardiovascular disease (and the diabetes also can cause other complications). Each of these risk factors responds to diet. We will deal with each in turn.

Let us start with diabetes. The immediate question here is whether you are overweight or not. If you are, then successful management depends essentially on dietary treatment to reduce you weight. This is particularly important if you have type II diabetes. Meals should be slowly digested and absorbed. The need for regular feeding should be stressed in insulin dependent diabetics. Do not forget about the benefits of exercise.

High blood pressure can be controlled by weight reduction, alcohol restriction, avoiding extra salt to cooking. Potassium (in fruit and vegetables) is probably very important. There is some evidence too that certain fish oils lower blood pressure.

For high cholesterol reduce obesity. The main dietary effort should be to reduce dietary fat, especially saturated fat, which should be less than 10 per cent of the dietary intake. Saturated fat should be substituted with a mixture of refined carbohydrate and monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats such as sunflower, corn oil and fish oil. Fibre is particularly advisable. Some dietary fat is needed for good health. Choose low-fat milk products, lean meats, fish, poultry, beans, and peas to get essential nutrients without substantially increasing calorie and saturated fat intake. Eat less red meat, especially ground beef and fatty processed meat like sausages and hot dogs, and full-fat dairy products like whole milk, regular cheese, ice cream, and butter. And remember: egg yolks are the biggest source of dietary cholesterol.