HALDANE AT 125

J. B. S. Haldane and Journal of Genetics

VEENA RAO*

Centre for Human Genetics, Electronics City (Phase I), Bengaluru 560 100, India
*E-mail: aneev52@yahoo.co.uk.

Published online 24 November 2017

Abstract. This is a brief sketch of the history of Journal of Genetics from its beginning in 1909 to the taking over of its publication by the Indian Academy of Sciences in 1985. The account is centred on J. B. S. Haldane’s involvement with it over many years, especially as Editor, initially in the UK and later in India.

Keywords. Punnett; Bateson; genetics journals; Haldane; Helen Spurway; Mahalanobis.

The beginning

A letter of January 14, 1933 from R. C. Punnett to J. B. S. Haldane (figure 1) initiated Haldane’s lifelong involvement with Journal of Genetics.1 Punnett had founded the journal with William Bateson and, after Bateson’s death in 1926, run it single-handedly. He now wrote to Haldane. The letter began ‘Now that you have definitely cast in your lot with genetics (and I am very glad that you have so decided) I want to ask you whether you would care to help me with the Journal of Genetics on the following terms’. The terms were that Haldane would be Editor on an equal basis with Punnett, who would retain financial control. Haldane was offered a remuneration that would amount to about £90 per year, ‘not a lucrative proposition’ because ‘journals of this nature are not gold mines’. He stressed that he was not making the request ‘because the thing is getting beyond me’. Rather, ‘I want to feel that there is someone in charge in the event of prolonged absence on my part, whether through illness or absence abroad. And lastly I have my eye on the time when I retire (not so very far away) and have to come to a decision as to the way in which the journal is to be carried on’ (Punnett 1933, full text reproduced as appendix). The allusion to Haldane’s casting in his lot appears to refer to his having taken up the Chair of Genetics at University College London. Haldane was happy to accept the offer and edited the journal jointly with Punnett until 1946 (figure 2). His relationship with the journal endured until his death in 1964. Curiously, the title pages of some issues of 1936, 1944 and 1946 carry only Punnett’s name as editor. A possible explanation is that 1936 was a tumultuous year for Haldane (Wilmot 2017); in 1944 he was involved in war work demanding high secrecy; and in 1946 he was away in the USA and had become involved in political disputes including those related to Lysenko (deJong-Lambert 2017). From 1946 onwards, while Punnett was still alive but had retired, Haldane remained the sole editor of the journal until he died. From the time he joined, Haldane’s influence on the quality of the journal was visible; for one thing the spectrum of subjects covered was wider than before.2

Older genetics journals

Journal of Genetics had come into being close to the beginning of the field itself,3 and it is of interest to look at some of its predecessors. The very first published journal devoted to the study of genetics appears to have been in German, the Zeitschrift für Induktive Abstammungs- und Vererbungslehre (Journal of Inductive Research in Evolution and Heredity).4 It was started in 1908 by the botanist and discoverer of plastid inheritance Erwin Baur (1875–1933) (figure 3a). The name was changed to Zeitschrift für Vererbungslehre (Journal of Heredity), and then to its present name, Molecular and General Genetics.5 Contrary to the belief that is sometimes expressed (e.g. https://link.springer.com/journal/12041), Journal of Genetics was not
the first English language journal in genetics. That credit goes to *Mendel Journal*, published by the Mendel Society, which was formed in 1907 by Rose Haig Thomas with the help of G. P. Mudge and a group of like-minded scientists. The Society met at her home, at least in the initial period. Besides being a biologist herself, Rose Haig Thomas was a wealthy woman. She assisted Mudge in his Mendelian research work by rearing the necessary animals and helped to fund research projects. By 1908 the members of the Mendel Society were confident enough to think of publishing a journal that carried their contributions, with Mudge as its editor. The first issue of *Mendel Journal* appeared in early 1909 (figure 3b).

C. C. Hurst was a member of the Mendel Society and a good friend of William Bateson, the first director of the John Innes Horticultural Institution (founded in 1910; Wilmot 2017). Hurst, who had contributed to the Mendel Journal, informed Bateson about it and requested him to come on board to help and guide the editorial team. But the response was cool if not negative. The reason was that Bateson himself was planning to launch a journal. He succeeded in doing so jointly with R. C. Punnett in November 1910; it was *Journal of Genetics* (Cock and Forsdyke 2008, pp. 336–337; figure 4).

From the word ‘Genetics’ to *Journal of Genetics*

As we have seen, William Bateson and R. C. Punnett were the founding fathers of *Journal of Genetics* (figure 5). It is of interest to see where the name came from. The word ‘Genetics’ was already in use as an adjective (Bateson 2017). In a letter to Adam Sedgwick dated 18 April 1905, William Bateson appears to have first proposed that it be used as a noun to stand for the area of study dealing with heredity and variation. Bateson begins by raising the question of a suitable title for ‘the foundation of a Professorship relating to Heredity and Variation’ to be funded by the Quick Foundation and suggests that ‘the best title would be the Quick Professorship of Heredity’. But then he goes on ‘No simple word in common use quite gives the meaning. Such a word is badly wanted, and if it were desirable to coin one, “Genetics” might do. Either expression clearly includes variation and the cognate phenomena’.

*Journal of Genetics* was planned as a quarterly periodical. A review of the first issue that appeared in *The New Phytologist* states that its aim was ‘publication of records of original research in Heredity, Variation and allied subjects’ (Gregory 1911). The first issue, dated 10 November 1910, consisted of 72 pages and carried five articles. Initially Bateson used the journal to promote his views on inheritance, which meant following the workings of the principles of heredity enunciated by Mendel. One implication was that articles dealing with work on ‘Mendelian Inheritance’ got top priority, whereas the publication of research dealing with a possible chromosomal basis of
heredity was discouraged. According to F. A. E. Crew, ‘As editor of the Journal of Genetics, Bateson was in a position actively to discourage those actively engaged in genetical research from following the lead given by these younger men’ (Crew 1969; ‘younger men’ refers to T. H. Morgan and his group at Columbia University).

Bateson was trained as an embryologist, which gave him a broad understanding of heredity. Also, he believed that genetics was the study of the ‘physiology of descent’; so, for instance, the journal welcomed papers on the physiology of sex determination. According to the John Innes archives, in a way that was supposed to be a statement on behalf of all those who had been thwarted by stalwarts like E. W. MacBride (Professor of Zoology at Imperial College London and a member of the governing council of the John Innes Horticultural Institution) and Karl Pearson (Professor of Applied Mathematics and Mechanics at University College London), both determined anti-Mendelians.

Still, in the early years the journal was somewhat conservative in its policy and the contents gave the impression of leaning towards plants as systems for the study of genetics. Bateson’s attitude had scientists at the Institute of Animal Genetics in Edinburgh feeling sidelined. It induced Julian Huxley, Lancelot Hogben and F. A. E. Crew to get together and, under the aegis of a newly founded Society for Experimental Biology, start Journal for Experimental Biology in 1923 as an alternative to Journal of Genetics. The new journal welcomed a broader range of articles than Journal of Genetics. For a while the development gave rise to doubts about the future of Journal of Genetics, doubts that Bateson himself may have shared, at least temporarily. But the sense of uncertainty did not last long. Once Haldane came on board as co-editor and later, sole editor, the contents of the journal became more varied and interesting, and the Edinburgh group of scientists no longer felt neglected.

Haldane and Journal of Genetics

In a sense, Haldane’s association with Journal of Genetics long predated his joining Punnett as co-editor. At the age of 8 he had listened to a lecture by A. D. Darbishire on the rediscovery of Mendel’s laws. The memory of the lecture subsequently stimulated him to verify the laws for himself by experimenting at home with guinea pigs. Later, while reading the latest paper by Darbishire in Biometrika, he made an important observation that the author had missed.

That observation amounted to the independent discovery of genetic linkage. Haldane shared his conclusion with Punnett, and was advised to conduct his own experiments to confirm it. He did so, working this time with mice, and...
made the landmark discovery of linkage (or ‘reduplication’) in a vertebrate (Clark 1984, p. 15). Haldane held Bateson in high regard and even as a student, used to seek his advice and discuss problems with him (Wilmot 2017). Well aware of the significance of what he had found, he wrote to Bateson in March 1915, before going off to fight in World War I, and requested him to help his sister Naomi publish the paper in case he did not survive the war. Eventually the finding appeared in print as Haldane’s first paper in Journal of Genetics (Haldane et al. 1915). Delays in publishing and the outbreak of World War I led to its missing out being the first report of its kind as well. His sister and his friend A. D. Sprunt were coauthors; and indeed one of them, Sprunt, was killed in the war (Clark 1984, p. 21). Some years later Haldane published another important paper in the Journal of Genetics. It was the first exposition of ‘Haldane’s Rule’ and has continued to attract attention ever since (Haldane 1922; Charlesworth 2017). Haldane spoke about it prior to publication in a talk given to the fourth meeting of the Genetical Society. Subsequently, after spending time under F. Gowland Hopkins in Cambridge (1923–1932) and as a part-time researcher at the John Innes Horticultural Institution (1927–1937), Haldane’s achievements made him one of the founders of biochemical genetics. It was also an extremely productive period for him. But the uncertainty of a permanent position at the John Innes loomed large in the early 1930s (Clark 1984, pp. 62–66). His situation improved soon, however, with election to the fellowship of the Royal Society in 1932, the offer of a chair in genetics at University College London in 1933, the offer from Punnett to co-edit the Journal of Genetics, also in 1933, and appointment in 1937 as the first Weldon Professor of Biometry in University College London (Clark 1984, pp. 54–57, 66). Haldane married for the second time in 1945. Helen Spurway, his wife, was also his doctoral student. He purchased the copyright of Journal of Genetics for her in 1946, saying that he had done so in order to ensure her future financial security (Clark 1984, p. 108). Henceforth he was to edit the journal alone (figure 6).

**Haldane as editor and the move to India**

As coeditor and later, sole editor of Journal of Genetics, Haldane managed to keep the biologists at the Institute of Animal Genetics satisfied—with the prominent exception of C. H. Waddington, Director of the Institute and Haldane’s one-time collaborator (Samal and Martin 2017). Waddington complained that Haldane was a fussy editor and unresponsive to authors’ letters and queries. In the late 1950s Haldane and Spurway announced their decision to migrate to India. Besides taking many of their colleagues by surprise, the news made headlines (Clark 1984; Rao 2015). Haldane and Spurway announced their decision to migrate to India. Besides taking many of their colleagues by surprise, the news made headlines (Clark 1984; Rao 2015). Haldane and Spurway announced their decision to migrate to India. Besides taking many of their colleagues by surprise, the news made headlines (Clark 1984; Rao 2015). Haldane and Spurway announced their decision to migrate to India. Besides taking many of their colleagues by surprise, the news made headlines (Clark 1984; Rao 2015). Haldane and Spurway announced their decision to migrate to India. Besides taking many of their colleagues by surprise, the news made headlines (Clark 1984; Rao 2015). Haldane and Spurway announced their decision to migrate to India. Besides taking many of their colleagues by surprise, the news made headlines (Clark 1984; Rao 2015). Haldane and Spurway announced their decision to migrate to India. Besides taking many of their colleagues by surprise, the news made headlines (Clark 1984; Rao 2015). Haldane and Spurway announced their decision to migrate to India. Besides taking many of their colleagues by surprise, the news made headlines (Clark 1984; Rao 2015). Haldane and Spurway announced their decision to migrate to India. Besides taking many of their colleagues by surprise, the news made headlines (Clark 1984; Rao 2015).
decided. He wrote to Waddington in November 1956: 20 ‘I have at present no intention of relinquishing the J. O. G. On the contrary, I am hoping to reduce its price by getting it printed in India.’ He followed that up with a typically Haldanian elaboration in January 1957: 21

You can of course reply that I am an old man and may soon die or lose such intellectual powers as I still possess. I may. But my systolic pressure is 120–130 mm Hg. And I have not lost a day’s university teaching through illness since 1930. And meanwhile a thermonuclear bomb or a major economic crisis may affect British publication. When I die or become too senile to edit, there need be no more difficulty in transferring the Journal back to Britain than in transferring it to India.

He informed P. C. Mahalanobis, Director of the Indian Statistical Institute (ISI), Calcutta (where he was going to work), in a letter dated 1 November 1956, that if he could get the journal printed in Baranagar, he would have an adequate income and India would have a new export. But if it turned out that the journal could not be published from India, it would free his time for work; but then he would need monetary support from ISI (Clark 1984, p. 131). The Haldanes were planning to make ISI their new home. Around the same time as his exchanges with Waddington and shortly before his emigration from Britain, Haldane was writing to P. C. Mahalanobis, about financial arrangements for living in India. Considerations regarding the journal played a major role:

...with regard to appointments, I know very little about salary scales in India. My present salary is about 2,300 pounds and Helen’s is 800 pounds... A Reader in London gets about 1,500 pounds... Over half our joint income is taken up by income tax. I know that the scale is at present much less steeply graded in India, and living is cheaper. Unfortunately I do not yet know just what my pension will amount to. I wrote to the college accountant a month ago, but have had no reply yet. ...A great deal will depend on the Journal of Genetics. As the enclosed letter shows, there is strong opposition to its being transferred to India, and I have an offer of 2000–3000 pounds for it. But I want to try the experiment. The Eka press is certainly excellent for text, tables and graphs, though its proof reading is often imperfect (inevitably so in a foreign language). Sankhya generally arrives here rather crushed, as do American journals. A journal of the format of the Journal of Genetics could be packed in cardboard containers, and I propose to use them, even if it
adds to mailing costs…If the Journal of Genetics were bringing in say 1000=00 pounds a year (and it sometimes brought in 800 pounds here) I should ask, either for a nominal salary, or for none at all, if the I. S. I. were prepared to pay the cost of our travel to conferences. …If I have to abandon the Journal of Genetics I should ask for an appreciable salary. In this case I should have more time available for the Institute, and should hope to publish two or three papers a year in Sankhya which would otherwise go to the Journal of Genetics. … I am sorry to be so vague about salaries, but, as I repeat much depends on the Journal of Genetics, and the amount of my pension.22

Haldane wanted to build a house in India with an office for Journal of Genetics. But this depended on publishing the journal from India in the first place. Feeling that the process needed to be speeded up, he tried to persuade Mahalanobis that the issue was urgent:

The question of the Journal of Genetics is getting rather urgent. It is, somewhat of a gamble to take it to India… The Eka press is excellent on type setting and I can manage the proof reading… If I cannot take the Journal of Genetics, I shall have to ask for a salary. But if I can, I think it quite possible that other European and American journals may be transferred to India at a later date.23

Mahalanobis understood only too well that the publication of the journal from India was a matter of pride and a show of capabilities to the rest of the world. His response to Haldane was:

I am eager to arrange the publication of the Journal of Genetics from Calcutta. The Eka press has given me a first estimate inclusive of paper, plates, (black and colour) and printing of fourteen hundred pounds per 1000 copies of a volume of 600 pages of the same size of type and matter…We should be glad to give the highest priority to your journal to ensure rapid publication. I fully appreciate the need and importance of efficient performance in the first year in India.24

Haldane and Journal of Genetics in India

Soon the journal found a second home in India. Work on publishing from Calcutta began in earnest. According to Asit K. Bhattacharyya, who was Haldane’s secretary and later publisher of Journal of Genetics, there was no editorial board (Bhattacharyya 1992). For someone of Haldane’s erudition, it was not a difficult task to manage all editorial functions himself. The state of affairs may have been unusual, but then Haldane was an unusual person. Bhattacharyya had detailed discussions with Mahalanobis regarding aspects of publishing in the manner desired by Haldane. Financial issues continued to loom large. A letter from Bhattacharyya to Mahalanobis dated 1 April 1958 discusses foreign and Indian subscriptions, the quality of postal packets and fixing the price per copy of the journal, adding ‘I would also like you to expedite matters concerning the agreement between you as publishers and Mrs. Helen Haldane as proprietor of the J. Genet.’. The letter’s tone hints that relations between Haldane and Mahalanobis were starting to get difficult fairly soon after the move to ISI.25

Haldane’s encyclopaedic knowledge—in more than one field—was put to the service of contributors. He would point out something important that had been missed by the authors themselves, who were sometimes unaware of the value of their paper until Haldane pointed it out (as had happened in the case of Darbishire’s paper long ago). On occasion he would help young authors to contact scientists in other parts of the world who were engaged on similar work, which must have been a boon to the authors (Bhattacharyya 1992; Meera Khan 1992). In many cases, the journal would contain not only a paper but also an extra note by Haldane summarizing the article and projecting it as far more interesting than what the author had believed it to be (Clark 1984, p. 148). Regular book reviews became a feature of the journal. Haldane may have used them as a means of attracting readers. The many reviews he wrote were embellished with sarcastic humour and were keenly awaited and enjoyed, except, one presumes, by the unfortunate targets. The title of one review, ‘A parade of ignorance’, offers an illustrative example (Haldane 1962). According to H. Sharat Chandra (personal communication), people were intrigued by the provocative titles.

Haldane took pride in bringing out Journal of Genetics and publication proceeded smoothly. Haldane and Spurway contributed much of their major work to the journal. It did remarkably well financially, bringing in about sixty thousand rupees in foreign exchange annually (Clark 1984, p. 144).26 Haldane, a master in conveying ideas in understandable language, guided his junior colleagues in the art of editing articles; the hands-on training must have benefited them when it came to writing their own. Eventually he fell out with Mahalanobis and in July 1962 left Calcutta for Bhubaneswar, where he founded a new institution whose name, ‘Genetics and Biometry Laboratory,’ testified to his continuing interest in biometry (Rao 2015). The frequent letters to his colleagues in Bhubaneswar, even from his hospital bed in London (he ran the journal for a while from there), testify to the depth of his involvement with Journal of Genetics. They were full of instructions and were meant especially for Suresh Jayakar, his student and collaborator, whom he thought of as his successor (Clark 1984, pp. 164, 165).
Journal of Genetics after Haldane

The Genetics and Biometry Laboratory in Bhubaneswar did not survive much longer after Haldane’s death in 1964. It was dismantled on account of many reasons including a change in the political environment. Then, after a couple of years, Helen Spurway moved to Hyderabad. In spite of having moved to Pavia, Italy, Jayakar functioned as sole editor. He knew the work of Sharat Chandra and advised Spurway to invite him to join the editorial board of the journal. According to Sharat Chandra, it was a hard task to manage the journal, because there was no administrative staff for supporting publication-related work. The process was further complicated by the fact that the printing press was still in Calcutta, Spurway in Hyderabad and the editors spread around (Madhav Gadgil of the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, had been persuaded to join as an editor). But the desire to keep it going was strong. At one stage the Bangalore Press was given the task of publishing the journal, but without success. The upshot was that the journal began to appear irregularly. Volume 58 in 1962–1963 was followed by 59 in 1965–1966, 60 in 1968 and so on, until volume 63 came out in 1977. 28 Staunch loyalists kept up their flow of contributions nevertheless. There was always the apprehension that the journal could be bought up by a publishing house in the West, something which would have been against Haldane’s wishes. That made everyone who was involved, Spurway herself included, work hard to keep it afloat. But her death in February 1978 meant that publication stalled.

Naomi Mitchison, Haldane’s sister and heir to the Haldane estate, now the legal owner of the journal, came to India to sort out issues related to the inheritance. She too was convinced that the journal should remain in India. After much discussion it was decided that the Indian Academy of Sciences, which had an established reputation as a publisher of academic journals, would henceforth take on the responsibility of bringing it out. S. Ramase- shan, then President of the Academy and an admirer of Haldane, played a leading role in these events. 29 Soon an editorial team was assembled with H. Sharat Chandra as Editor. The first issue of Journal of Genetics published by the Indian Academy of Sciences was vol. 64, no. 1 in 1985. While the rebirth of the journal was under consideration, there were uncertain voices. A well-known geneticist was doubtful that the journal would be able to stand up to competition with other reputed science journals; he felt it might be better to give it a decent burial rather than risk certain failure (Sharat Chandra, personal communication). The enthusiasm of those involved prevailed over the doubts and scepticism. The outcome of the efforts made by them and their successors, of which this issue is an example, remains as a worthy tribute to the memory of Haldane and to the vision he had for Journal of Genetics.

Acknowledgements

Many people helped, advised and guided me in my effort to put together this record, and my heartfelt thanks to all of them. First and foremost, Sarah Wilmot, of the John Innes Institute, whose unstinting assistance has enriched the content of this paper. The John Innes Library and Archives was of immense help. Donald Forsdyke encouraged and guided me; Vasulu procured archival material from ISI, Kolkata; Katrina, Dean, Curator, of Cambridge University Archives readily granted permission for reproducing material, as did the LuEsther T. Mertz Library, New York Botanical Garden; Fia Wolters helped find old JoG copies; the Director, ISI Kolkata, permitted access to the archival collection of the P. C. Mahalanobis Memorial Museum and Archives. Partha Majumder guided me as always, Vidyanand Nanjundiah goaded me to do better and Laasya Samhita obtained copies of original records. H. Sharat Chandra spoke with me at length to give a first-person account of the travails that Journal of Genetics went through after the death of Haldane. I thank the legal heirs of the Haldane estate, in particular N. A. Mitchison, for permission to use archival material. My work on Haldane’s Indian period was funded by a grant from the Indian National Science Academy, New Delhi and an INSA-Royal Society of London Exchange Fellowship.

Notes on sources

1 MS 20534, folio 23–25, National Library of Scotland, Edin- burgh.
3 Mendel’s publication of 1866, and the three publications of 1900 that reported the ‘rediscovery’ of his laws, appeared in the transactions of learned societies or in botanical journals.
4 See www.Biodiversitylibrary.org/item/92853#page/7/mode/1up and www.biodiversitylibrary.org/bibliography/14291/#/ summary.
6 Reproduced with the kind permission of the library, John Innes Centre, UK. Another scientific society grew along with Journal of Genetics. In 1919, 12 years after the founding of the Mendel Society, William Bateson and Edith Saunders found the Genetical Society; besides Bateson and Saunders, Rose Haig Thomas and G. P. Mudge were among the earliest members. They, as well as J. B. S. Haldane, were among the 34 who attended its first meeting (https://www.jic.ac.uk/centenary/timeline/info/members-geneticalsociety.htm; https://www.jic.ac.uk/centenary/timeline/Timeline%20Complete.pdf).
7 Adam Sedgwick (1854–1913), Professor of Zoology and Comparative Anatomy, Imperial College, London, was the name sake of his uncle Adam Sedgwick (1785–1873), the famous geologist who initially guided Darwin and later turned against the theory of natural selection. Bateson’s letter to Sedgwick was made available to me thanks to the Syndics of Cambridge University Library (Ref. MS Add. 8634: B 42 G § p. 19). I am grateful to Sarah Wilmot for drawing my attention to its significance.
8 The reviewer, identified only as R. P. G., was probably the botanist and geneticist R. P. Gregory, who later became Bateson’s colleague.
9 An example is a short paper by Doncaster and Marshall in the very first issue. It reported on a test of the hypothesis that the two ovaries of the female rat are specialised for producing...
‘male eggs’ and ‘female eggs’ respectively; the hypothesis was disproven by performing unilateral ovariectomy.


12 A. D. Darbishire (1879–1915) was ‘appointed to the Lecture-ship in Genetics at the University of Edinburgh (the first of its kind in Britain).’ He seems to have concluded for himself that the difference between the Mendelian and biometric approaches to heredity was ‘was due more to differences of opinion rather than inherent theoretical incompatibilities’ (from http://libraryblogs.is.ed.ac.uk/towardsdolly/2013/11/11/remembering-arthur-dukinfield-darbishire-1879-1916/).

13 Biometrika was started by Francis Galton, Karl Pearson, and Raphael Weldon in 1901. It was meant as a vehicle for propagating the study of biometrics; as the editors said, ‘for collecting or publishing…biological data of a kind not systematically collected or published elsewhere in any other periodical…[and] spreading a knowledge of such statistical theory as may be requisite for their scientific treatment’. Galton himself stated the aim more directly as ‘the discovery of incipient changes in evolution which are too small to be otherwise apparent’; thus its philosophy was rather different from that of the later Journal of Genetics. Pearson and Weldon soon formed the heart of a ‘Darwinian’ camp that took a radically different view of the evolutionary process from Bateson and the ‘Mendelians’, who emphasised major variations. In a Centenary Lecture on Pearson that he gave soon after moving to India, Haldane offered the following assessment: ‘Whatever the fate of Pearsonian biometry in Britain, I believe that it will live and flower in India.’ Six years on, he was to name the last institution in which he worked the ‘Genetics and Biometry Laboratory’. See Note 14 and Haldane (1957).

14 It is interesting to note that already from a young age Haldane had been in touch with both the founders of Journal of Genetics.

15 Haldane was among the very first members of the Genetical Society and became its president in 1932. At a symposium held to mark fifty years of the society, F. A. E. Crew remembered the event thus: ‘The fourth meeting of the genetical society in 1920, was made memorable by J. B. S. Haldane, who enthralled the members with an account of his observations on the sex ratio and unisexual sterility in hybrids—Haldane’s Law. To witness a first class mind in action is always an exciting experience and this was the first time I had heard Haldane display his astonishing ability to take the results of the skill and enterprise of others and out of them distil a principle.’ See Crew (1969).

16 Of this he was to say in 1957, ‘I should not have accepted the Weldon Chair had I not been promised accommodation for Biometrical work. Owing to the war, and for other reasons, this promise was not kept. I have been unable to carry out the duties of this chair adequately.’ See Haldane (1957).

17 Helen Spurway went on to make fundamental contributions to the fields of developmental genetics and behaviour.

18 Part of GB237 Coll-41/5/2/9, cited in http://libraryblogs.is.ed.ac.uk/towardsdolly/2014/03/10/a-passage-to-india-j-b-s.haldane-and-the-journal-of-genetics/.

19 The decision to leave Britain has been interpreted as a protest against the invasion of Egypt following the nationalization of the Suez Canal. But Haldane had entered into discussions regarding the move to India with P. C. Mahalanobis, Director of the Indian Statistical Institute (ISI), which was located in Baranagar, Calcutta, before the invasion took place.


21 Part of GB237 coll-41/5/2/9, cited in http://libraryblogs.is.ed.ac.uk/towardsdolly/files/2014/03/Haldane-to-Wadd-coll.41.5.2.9.jpg.

22 Haldane to Mahalanobis dated 16 January 1957, Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis Memorial Museum and Archives, ISI, Kolkata, no. 543.F.322.

23 Haldane to Mahalanobis dated 4 March 1957, Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis Memorial Museum and Archives, ISI, Calcutta, no. 543.F.315. This indicates that J. Genet. was making good money at the time: an income of £100 in 1957 would be the equivalent of £5360–6810, meaning 4.5 lakh rupees or more, in 2016 (based on https://www.measuringworth.com/ukcompare/relativevalue.php). The conversions are only indicative; for reasons see https://www.measuringworth.com/ukcompare/relativevalue.php?use%5B%5D=CPI&use%5B%5D=NOMINAL&year_early=1960&pound71=3000&shilling71=6810&amount=3000&year_source=1960&year_result=2017 and http://www.historicalstatistics.org/Currencyconverter.html.

24 Mahalanobis to Haldane, No. 543.F.318, Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis Memorial Museum and Archives, ISI, Kolkata.

25 A further indication is that the error in Mahalanobis’s initials (typed ‘A.’ instead of ‘P. C.’) remains uncorrected. A. K. Bhat-tacharyya to Mahalanobis, MS 20536, Folio 31–53, National Archives, ISI, Baranagar, Calcutta, before the invasion took place. Part of GB 237 Coll-41/5/2/9).


27 A geneticist who had returned to Bangalore after spending time in the University of California, Berkeley.

28 See http://www-old.ias.ac.in/~c_archive/jgenet/volindex.html.

29 See Foreword by S. Ramaseshan (Journal of Genetics, vol. 64, No. 1; http://www-old.ias.ac.in/jarch/jgenet/64/1.pdf).
Appendix

R. C. Punnett’s letter inviting J. B. S. Haldane to join him in editing *Journal of Genetics*. (Haldane Papers, MS 20534, folio 23–25, National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh).
References


Samal A. and Martin O. 2017 Haldane, Waddington and recombinant inbred lines: extension of their work to any number of genes. J. Genet. 96, (https://doi.org/10.1007/s12041-017-0837-0).