CHAPTER FIVE

DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO SOLVE THE LEAGUE-CONGRESS CONFLICT BETWEEN 1943-45

The Congress and the League both were instruments in the hands of their communal leaders, who were not visible in the political hue and cry but were playing a very effective role in the background, in view of the fact that neither all the non-Muslim communities in India took part in the Quit India Movement nor all the Muslims of the sub-continent supported the Lahore Resolution which purported the very objective of the creation of Pakistan. Hence, there were a few in both the communities who were leading the sheep. They organised mass movement to engage the people in politics to strengthen the flame of nationalism, patriotism and fight against colonialism. However all the people were not able to foresee the consequences of the Lahore Resolution and the Quit India Movement. A survey of the educational institutions of that period reveals that no more than 5 per cent people were educated and those educated were mostly officials. In the mind of common men the doubt crept that Jinnah's demand for Pakistan in the Eastern and Western parts of India was alone to fight with their destiny. Likewise, average educated Hindu thought that the Quit India
Movement was a course of creating open gulf between the Hindus and the Muslims; giving unremedial wound to the Motherland.

In the above background, one would realise that the future panorama of Indian political scene could be no other than antagonistic, uncompromising and conflicting between the Congress, which claimed to be representative of all the communities, including Muslims, and demanding independence for a United India. The Muslim League, on the other hand, which claimed to represent all the Muslims in India and demanded a separate Muslim homeland including Bengal, Assam, Punjab, Baluchistan, Sind, NWFP and Kashmir. The Congress did not agree to leave any corner of India for the creation of Pakistan. Cripps proposals envisaged the right of any province to secede from the Union and that the British Government would agree to accept their new constitution. Jinnah expressed doubt to Cripps that no more than 25 per cent votes would be cast in favour of Muslims on the principle of proportional representation and they would not be able to join the Union. Cripps assured that "if less than 60 per cent of the provincial legislature voted in favour of accession, the minority would have the right to call
for a plebiscite of the adult male population of the province, the verdict of which would be implemented by the British Government. Jinnah was rather surprised and satisfied with Cripps assurance and did not raise any objection to it. However, since Jinnah was convinced that the Whitehall was creating a political climate for consultation and transfer of power he avoided any settlement with the Congress. Truly, the 1935 Act became null and void and the British Government was engaged in search of an agreeable plan for transfer of power to India and the principle was oriented partly in the Cripps proposals, partly in the Congress demand for a United India and partly in the League's demand for Pakistan.

However after the failure and departure of the Cripps Mission on April 12, 1942, the situation in India had become very tense. Gandhiji's Quit India Movement


2. Ibid., pp. 480-81.

was labelled with the charges of "ugly situation", "violent activities" and "lawlessness", while Jinnah invented the slogan of "Divide and Quit." Since Jinnah organised the League and its membership rose in Central Provinces to 33,541 (1943), in Bengal 5,50,000 (1944) and in Sind 3,30,000 (1944) with its divisions, sub-divisions, city branches and wards, it became a "revolutionary" and "mass movement." The Muslim National Guards infused a new spirit in the Muslims. Jinnah's second Five Year Plan, started after 1941, mainly concerned with the educational, social and economic uplift of the Muslims in the proposed area of Pakistan. He also desired to turn the agricultural environment into that of an industrial and commercial complex with the help of Muslim businessmen. These developments were being made in Punjab. At the same time the Sikhs were planning to establish their own state. Cripps assured the Sikhs that, in case of partition of Punjab, he would setup a semi-autonomous district for them on the Soviet model. Since Cripps had assured partition of Punjab, the failure of Cripps Mission greatly relieved the


Sikhs, but the Muslims and Sikhs became increasingly suspicious of one another. A reign of terror prevailed. The Akalis, the League, Hindu Mahasabha, Rashtriya Sewak Sangh and Khaksars raised their voice against each other. The Sikhs armed the Sikhs on the semi-military basis. The U.P. League Defence Committee was for the defence of Muslims against the attacks of Hindus. In Bihar, the League organised the Muslim protection scheme against the Hindu aggression. However, the Congress opposed the formation of communal volunteer corps and called for unity amongst the Indian to fight against the British imperialism. The Congress invited the League to participate in a Non-Party Defence Committee, but the League Defence Committee did not attend the meeting. The reason may be that there were already the Hindu military organisations like RSS and Hindu Mahasabha working behind the curtain in the interest of the Hindus, while there was no such organisations except the League Defence 

Committee to safeguard the Muslims in India. The British assessed the political deadlock and were in the process of imposing some formula for agreement between the Muslim League and the Congress, while the Hindu and the Sikh army officers had planned for the establishment of Hindu Raj in India. Sensing this danger, the Muslim League had made their interests identical to that of the British.

In the Congress circle there was a section led by Shri Rajgopalachari who was willing to look into the demand of Pakistan. Rajagopalachari met Gandhiji and the Viceroy and discussed with them the political situation. The advocacy of such a leading Congressman for Partition of India strengthened the demand of Muslim League for Pakistan. Further it was received with a shock by the non-Muslim communities, especially the Sikhs, who lost their confidence in Congress, and demanded demarcation of the boundaries of the Punjab between Delhi and Lahore, for a state of Khalistan. To enforce their stand, they on the one hand rapproached the British Government for their favour of a separate autonomous Sikh State, and on the other, improved their relations with the Unionist Party.

which then dominated the Punjab ministry. Since the Sikhs were against the creation of Pakistan and Unionists also did not like Partition some Muslim unionists thought to strengthen their party with the Akali support. In June 1942, Sikandar-Baldev Pact was signed, which among other things, provided "maintenance of Sikh representation in the provincial services at 20 per cent. It was also agreed upon that the Sikh claim for representation in the Executive Council would be supported by the Unionists. Tara Singh challenged the demand for Pakistan and threatened that it would amount to "Civil War." However the demand of Pakistan loomed over the head of Punjab and the Sikhs.

Sir Sikandar Hayat was the leader of the Unionist party in Punjab and he opposed the partition of Punjab. He was a dominant force successful in keeping Punjab ministry stable. He wanted a peaceful settlement of the partition and proposed a scheme as follows.

"In the absence of 75 per cent majority of members of the Punjab Legislative Assembly in favour of either

10. Fortnightly Report for Punjab for first half of June 1942, Home Department, Political, File No.18/6/42.

accession or non-accession to the Indian Federation, the Muslim community should be given an opportunity of deciding on non-accession by means of referendum if they so decided, the non-Muslim portions of the Punjab should, by a similar referendum, be accorded the right to cut themselves adrift from the provinces. If it actually came to the point where non-Muslims decided to break adrift, it would mean (assuming the unit concerned to be a district) that the Ambala division and a large part of the Jallunder division, and also the Amritsar district, would cease to belong to the Punjab."

The Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow, discussed with Sir Sikandar Hayat the scheme and intended to publish it.

Sir Sikandar Hayat had resigned from the Muslim League soon after the League conference held on May 29, 1942, and in spite of persuasion and request made by Choudhry Khaliquzzaman, on behalf of Jinnah, he did not withdraw it as the League was not agreeable to change its stand.

12. V.P. Menon, op. cit., p. 144.
13. Ibid.
By the beginning of 1943, the Quit India Movement was completely suppressed by the Government while Gandhiji was still in jail. However, after the Quit India Movement the British had decided to leave India at the earliest. The Indian officials were looking forward, without antagonising any party - Congress or League, to go on to the winning side after Independence had been granted. The Hindu officials had the Congress sympathies, while the Muslim officials had planned to reap a good harvest in the Pakistan area. In this political environment, the Muslim League planned to capture ministries in Assam, Sind, NWFP and Bengal.

When the Congress leaders were in jail in 1943, the Viceroy asked the Governors to form non-Congress ministries in the provinces.

In Assam the Congress ministry was in power since 1937. After the arrest of Congress MLAS, the ministry fell and Mohammad Saadullah formed a coalition ministry.


15. Conran Sminth, Ibid.
with the representation of other parties.

In Sind, Allah Bakhsh renounced his titles, which gave an opportunity to Linlithgow to dispose of and make the way open for G.H. Hidayatullah to form a ministry. The Provincial League joined the ministry of Hidayatullah in spite of Jinnah's instructions not to enter the government in which they did not have a dominant position. Surprisingly, Hidayatullah joined the Muslim League. The League membership grew to 30,000.

In NWFP, detention of eight, of the twenty-one Congress legislators, had brought the Congress to the verge of defeat by the Muslim Leaguers. Firoz Khan Noon, a member of the Viceroy's Council, suggested the Governor Sir George Cunningham, to allow the League to form the ministry as it had the support of the non-Congress members, but the Governor rejected his suggestion. However, in

16. Fortnightly Report for Assam for the first half of September 1942, Home Department, Political, File No. 18/9/42.

17. Viceroy to Governor of Sind Telegram, September 26, 1942, Linlithgow correspondence, Vol. 98.

April 1943 Aurangzeb Khan formed the League ministry in co-operation with the Akalis. Ajit Singh accepted the portfolio in Aurangzeb ministry on the condition that Pakistan issue would not be raised in the Assembly. The Mahasabha withdraw from the coalition ministry and Mehr Chand Khanna was not appointed speaker. However the League-Akali ministry could not have the support of more than 19 out of 43 members in the Assembly.

In Bengal, the Governor Sir Herbert J. Maynard asked Fazlul Haq to resign and proclaimed the application of section 93 in spite of his majority and established Nizamuddin's ministry, supported by 25 Europeans, who had also supported the Haq ministry. All the Muslims in the ministry were members of the League. Bose group and Mahasabha stood aloof.

In the Punjab, after the sad demise of Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan in December 1942, Jinnah selected Khizr Hayat Khan Tiwana, as the new leader of the Unionist party. The motion of confidence was seconded by Nawab Shah Nawaz Khan

20. Ibid., p. 135.
Mamdot, President of the Punjab Muslim League. Linlithgow doubted Khizr's ability, but he hoped that the Punjab Governor, Sir Bertrand James Glancy would give him a great deal of assistance, in the interest of war efforts. For this purpose, he was committed to prevent the fall of the Unionist ministry.

In the remaining provinces—Madras, Bombay, C.P., U.P., Bihar and Orissa the administration was under the Governors since the resignation of Congress ministries in 1939. Jinnah, thus, after making the League's position very strong and establishing League's ministry in the five important provinces, celebrated its victory on April 24, 1943, in Delhi, in a procession of elephants, camels and horses, thousands of cyclists and tens of thousands on foot. Jinnah in his speech said:

"I say to the Hindus, and the Britishers know it better than anybody else, that the quickest way for the freedom of the peoples, both Hindus and Muslims is Pakistan. It may come in my life time or not, you will remem-

ber these words of mine. I say this with no ill-will or offence. Some nations have killed millions of each other. That is not permanent. An enemy of today is a friend of tommorrow. That is life, that is history, so I say this, with a clear conscience. My profound regret is that it is the Congress and its Hindu leadership that are holding up the achievement of freedom of both the Hindus and Musalmans. Our conscience is clear. I appeal to the Hindu public and Hindu leaders. Revise your policy."

Jinnah claimed that all the Muslim majority provinces (Assam, Sind, Bengal, NWFP and the Punjab) were under the control/the League ministries and presented a demand for Pakistan in a very forceful manner. He reiterating the Congress stand for establishing Hindu Raj, which the League would never accept, Jinnah, recalled the duty of the Congress to find a truce and said: "Nobody would welcome it more than my self." He inviting Gandhiji for direct negotiations said:

"If Mr. Gandhi is even now really willing to come to a settlement with the Muslim League on the basis of

Pakistan, let me tell you that it will be the greatest day both for the Hindus and Muslims. If he has made up his mind, what is there to prevent Mr. Gandhi from writing direct to me?"

Explaining his viewpoint Jinnah continued: "Mr. Gandhi gets all the information, all the newspapers and knows and understands what is going on. If there is any change of heart on his part he is only to drop me a few lines, when I assure you, the Muslim League will not fail, whatever may have been our controversies in the past." The Subject Committee of the Muslim League decided to oppose any move of the Government to impose the all India Federation. He exhorted the Muslims to sacrifice everything to reach their cherished goal of Pakistan.

The most tragic incident of 1943, is that Gandhiji wrote a letter from prison to Jinnah expressing a desire to meet him and without referring anything to the League's

25. Ibid., p. 105.
demand. The Government held up this letter and sent an abstract of it. The press seriously commented that he was afraid of the Government and would retrace his steps.

The other tragedy was the imposition of restriction on Allama Inayatullah Khan Mashriqi to go out of Madras. Therefore, the Allama met Rajaji and other pro-Congress leaders and issued instructions to his followers to influence Jinnah to meet Gandhiji. A fanatic Khaksar from the Punjab went to see Jinnah at his residence and in his frenzy attacked him with a knife. However, he was overpowered and Jinnah was saved.

In spite of the Government's pro-League politics, Jinnah could not escape accusations due to rapidly deteriorating economic condition of the people. Firstly, since the Congress leaders were in jail and Jinnah was propagating against the Congress, he was fighting in the air and thus the League was losing its impact on the masses. Secondly, the Congress adopted progressive measures and the Muslims began to come into the Congress fold. Thirdly, there was unemployment and shortage of food and

27. See for details Jinnah Faces on Assassin, (Bombay, 1943).
famine in Bengal, Assam, Mysore, Coorg, Travancore due to supply to the warring Allies. Fourthly, cyclone and floods destroyed stocks on a very large scale which resulted in famines in Bengal in 1943-44. The people blamed the League ministries and held it responsible for these calamities. Indian soldiers in Bengal and Assam wanted immediate assistance for the people of Chittagong and felt that "the Sarkar had already failed in duty." Likewise, the families of the solidiers of East Bengal were "already apprehensive of the effects of food shortages upon their families." The industrial, economic, social hygienic and political problems had worried the people.

As a result of all these the League ministry fell in Bengal in spite of Governor's support.

The political deadlock continued and Rajaji also continued to propagate the realisation of the partition


29. Ibid.

of India to settle the Congress-League differences for the sake of Indian independence which was considered by B. Shiva Rao worthy of consideration. At the AICC Bombay session on August 8, 1943, the League policy was discussed and Azad, Nehru and Abdul Latif did not approve of any scheme of Partition. However the AICC made the following concessions to Muslim League that:

(a) for the interim period if the British agree to the formation of a real National Government Mr. Jinnah would be asked to form a Government, and

(b) in regard to the permanent constitution, the Congress would prepare to accept the largest measure of autonomy being conceded to the federating units and residuary powers vested in them. If however, a territorial unit would not agree with the basic structure of the new constitution, and desired secession the federation would not resort to coercion.

The above proposal did not satisfy the League. It gave an impression to the Indians that settlement between the Congress and the League was impossible.

32. Ibid.
Meanwhile a new development had taken place, Sir Archbold Wavell, the Field Marshal of India, was appointed the Governor-General of India. Churchill was the Prime Minister and Amery was the Secretary of State for India. Amery declared in the House of Commons that his appointment, did not imply any change in the settled policy to which His Majesty's Government were pledged with regard to the development of Indian self-government." Wavell took charge of the Viceroyalty from Linlithgow on October 20, 1943. Earlier, Wavell was the Commander-in-Chief of India and had taken a prominent part in the negotiations between different parties and the Government during the Cripps Mission in India. Wavell was cautious that the Indians would demand and press for independence of India after the war which had dragged India into a severe state of misery. Wavell's speeches gave an encouraging inspiration to the Indians that the British Government was keenly interested in breaking the constitutional deadlock and in arranging the Transfer of Power but the precarious situation in India made him to review the whole affairs in view of Amery's direction.

Wavell knew the attitude of the British Prime Minister Mr. Churchill and was convinced that under such a man so hostile to Indian problem, it was difficult for him to take any initiative for a new line. Amery was a loyal conservative and desired that India should remain united and be an equal partner in the British Commonwealth. Wavell had decided to turn the Executive Council of the Viceroy into that of a Cabinet with power to the Viceroy for either rejecting or agreeing to the decisions. He hoped that the political parties would co-operate in finding a suitable constitution. But his Assistant Secretary, Joseph Patric, was apprehensive of Jinnah's opposition. However Wavell liked that India should have the status of Dominion in the international society of communities. Further, the Secretary of State for war, Sir James Grigg, opposing the recommendations of the India committee, asserted that "a settlement in India is impossible as long as Gandhi is a live."

On October 28, Amery, in a speech in the House of Commons, pointed out that the Congress had "embarked upon

34. A.C. Guha, op.cit., p. 685.
35. Ibid., p. 689.
36. Ibid., p. 690.
a policy of irresponsible sabotage of the war effort" and, hence, no negotiations could be undertaken with the Congress. He warned Wavell that he should not "go beyond the Cripps proposals during the war." Therefore, Wavell felt himself quite unable to rectify the "mistake" and "blunders" committed in the past and only declared that Cripps offer still remained open for negotiation. But it could satisfy neither the Congress nor the League and the deadlock continued.

Four groups were politicising the freedom movement. By the end of December 1943, Wavell was anticipating that the Indian leaders would demand for independence soon after the War and it would be difficult to deny or delay the transfer of power. Congress was almost inactive because Gandhiji was in jail and he wanted to talk with Jinnah to find any solution. He knew that the League leaders had realised that they had committed a mistake in rejecting the Cripps proposals, but was astonished that Jinnah continued to reject it. He anticipated that Jinnah might reconsider the Congress August 1943 offer.

Contrarily, Jinnah established 'Action Committee' and

38. D.C.Gupta, op.cit., p.239.
39. Its member were Nawab Mohamed Ismail Khan, Sir
Parliamentary Board, at the All-India Muslim League
Karachi Session held on December 24-26, 1943, in order
to supervise the working of the League in the State Assemblies and "to organise the Muslims all over India to resist the imposition of a unitary constitution and to prepare for the coming struggle for the achievement of Pakistan." In the absence of Congress leaders, the Hindu Mahasabha had emerged as an effective organisation and in a meeting in Amritsar it demanded "the preservation of the integrity of India, the introduction of Federation with a strong centre, and the refusal to any province, community, or section of the right to secede." It raised a new slogan asking the Government, for Divide and Quit", as a counterblast to "Quit India."

(Continued from the previous page)


40. Khaliquzzaman had opposed the formation of a "Supervision Committee" but on the advice of Jinnah, the Committee of Action and Parliamentary Board were established. See Choudhary Khaliquzzaman, op.cit., p. 311.


42. Ibid.

43. A.C. Guha, op.cit., p. 697.
On February 13, 1944, Wavell delivered his first speech in the joint session of the central legislature and emphasized on "United country enjoying complete and unqualified self government as a willing partner of the British Commonwealth" and laid the responsibility of delaying the transfer of power mainly on the shoulders of the Congress and the League which failed to accede to a common proposal. Jinnah criticising the use of the word 'united country' said that the Viceroy was "fishing in Congress waters," and the Congress and Liberals accused the Viceroy for his refusal to release the Congress leaders. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru regretted that co-operation of the political parties to form a national government was not forthcoming. Dissatisfied with the Viceroy's policy, the Congress and the League joined in the Central Legislative Assembly, and defeated a number of Government decisions. In particular, they threw out the Finance Bill. However, Liberals efforts failed to break the impasse between the two communities and Wavell refused the formation of provincial Executive Councils with hostile legis-

44. V.P. Menon, op.cit., p. 154.
45. Ibid.
46. Ibid.
47. Ibid.
latures. While, these negotiations were going on the Congress was demanding the release of Gandhiji. Since GandhiJi got malaria, he was released on May 6, 1944, on 48 medical grounds. The Congress leaders were apprehensive of some accusations for their launching the Quit India Movement which caused national destructions and riots. To minimise the impact of its consequences they began to call the movement as Civil Disobedience Movement. However, after Gandhiji's release, the Movement came to an end.

On July 27, 1944, Gandhi wrote to Wavell that he was prepared to advise the Congress Working Committee for giving its cooperation in the war efforts "if a declaration of immediate Indian independence is made and a national government, responsible to the Central Assembly be formed subject to the proviso that during the war, the military cooperation should continue as at present, but without involving any financial burden on India." Wavell observed that this was the same offer as was made by Azad to Cripps in April 1942. The Viceroy made it clear that

freedom was made conditional upon the framing of a constitution agreed to by the main elements of India's national life, in order to "safeguard the interests of the racial and religious minorities and of the Depressed classes and their treaty obligations to the Indian States." The Viceroy laid down the following measures for the transfer of power to the Indian hands. "For such a transitional government to succeed, there must, before it is formed, be agreement in principle between Hindus and Muslims and all important elements as to the method by which the new constitution should be formed."

The Viceroy also said that the minority's problem were not imaginary. They were real and could only be solved by "mutual compromise and tolerance."

Wavell's proposal disappointed Gandhiji, who characterised the Viceroy to be a "conjurer" and suggested

52. Ibid.
53. Ibid.
54. Ibid., p. 880.
that the Congress needed enough strength to wrest with the British by "purely moral means." Wavell did not care for such remark. His only worry was that in case of elimination of Gandhiji the Hindu Mahasabha would replace Congress and adopt an even more hostile attitude towards Muslims.

On the other hand, Jinnah was convinced that Pakistan would soon be a reality. Helplessly, Gandhiji turned towards Jinnah for a face to face talk, for a communal settlement, while the Viceroy awaited the outcome of their meetings.

Rajaji believed that independence could be achieved only through Congress-League unity and peace could be maintained in future. For achievement of this objective, he wrote several times to the Viceroy, Linlithgow seeking permission to meet Gandhi, "but was not allowed."

However, according to other verdicts, Rajaji discussed the set of proposals with Gandhiji in March 1943.

55. A.C. Guha, op.cit., p. 700.
56. Ibid., p. 701.
57. Mohamed Raza Khan, op.cit., pp. 110-111.
and even before in jail in February, and Gandhi had given his approval of the same. Rajaji felt that the Viceroy had a strong anti-Gandhi bias and was using the League as a counterpoise to the Congress. Therefore, he wanted a settlement between the Congress and the League as soon as possible. With this view, Rajaji wrote a letter to Jinnah on April 8, 1944, enclosing a draft of the formula on behalf of Gahdhiji.

The formula embodied the following six points, to which Jinnah was requested to agree:

1. Subject to the terms set out below as regards the Constitution for free India, the Muslim League would endorse the Indian demand for independence and would co-operate with the Congress in the formation of a provisional interim Government for the transitional period.

2. After the termination of war a commission would be appointed for demarcating contiguous districts in the North-West and East of India wherein


59. Bombay Chronicle, October 31, 1942, Home Department Home Role File No. 3/21/42 containing clipping of the papers National Archive of India.
the Muslim population was in an absolute majority. In the areas thus demarcated a plebiscite of all the inhabitants, held on the basis of adult Franchise or other practicable franchise, shall ultimately decide the issue of separation from Hindustan. If the majority decided in favour of forming a sovereign state separate from Hindustan, such decision would be given effect to without prejudice to the right of districts on the border to join either state.

(3) It would be open to all parties to advocate their points of view before the plebiscite is held.

(4) In the event of separation, mutual agreements shall be entered into in respect of Defence, Commerce and Communications and for other essential purposes.

(5) Any transfer of population would only be on an absolutely voluntary basis.

(6) These terms would be binding only in case of transfer by Britain of full power and responsibility to the Government of India."

60. Gandhi-Jinnah talks, The Hindustan Times, (New Delhi), 1944, p.36, See also Mohamed Raza Khan, op.cit., pp. 110-111.
On June 30, 1944, Rajaji sent a telegram to Jinnah asking for his consent otherwise he would publish his rejection of the proposal. Jinnah, on July 2, replied that he could neither accept nor reject it and he would place the formula before the Working Committee of the Muslim League if it was sent to him directly by Gandhiji himself.

According to Jinnah, the proposal had many drawbacks. On July 29, 1944, Jinnah discussed the proposal clause by clause. In clause 1, these words: "The Muslim League endorses the Indian demand for independence" implied that the Muslim League was against independence and thus, it was the cause of insinuation to the Muslim League. In clause 2, Jinnah raised the question as to who would appoint the commission, what would be its terms and conditions, personnels, and power. Jinnah opposed the words, "contiguous districts", while the Lahore Resolution embodies "geographical contiguous units", where Muslims were in majority. In clause 3, Jinnah meant plebiscite to be held according to "geographical contiguous units." In clause 4, Jinnah questioned as to who would safeguard the defence, commerce and communication in case of separation,

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61. *The Dawn* (New Delhi), July 31, 1944.
as there was no indication of the form, character and personnel of the provisional government. In clause 5, Jinnah had no objection to transfer of population absolutely on voluntary basis. In clause 6, Jinnah commented that all steps for partition would remain on paper pending transfer of power to the Congress by the British Government. Therefore, Jinnah rejected Rajaji's formula saying: "it offered a shadow and a husk, a maimed, mutilated and moth-eaten Pakistan that torpedoed the Muslim League Resolution of 1940."

The release of correspondence between Rajaji and Jinnah caused a great sensation and strong reaction in the circles of Hindu Mahasabha, Sikhs and the Lebirals, including V.S. Srinivasa Sastri, but they could not affect any change on Jinnah's mind as he did not recognise Rajaji capable of carrying out these negotiations. He said that neither Gandhi nor Rajaji were authorised by the Congress

63. The Dawn (New Delhi) July 31, 1944.
to do so. Therefore Jinnah interpreted them "as pure and simple dictation without a sincere desire to negotiation." In fact, League's position in Bengal and Punjab was deteriorating due to internal differences with Fazlul Haq and Khizr Hayat Khan and in case of referendum, League could have lost the ground.

Jamil-ud-Din Ahmad, a Muslim Leaguer, opined that the motive of the formula was to put Jinnah and the Mussalmans of India in the wrong and bypass the League's demand for Pakistan. Different opinions were expressed by the Press. The Dawn observed that like the Cripps proposals, the formula also did not accept the principle of self-determination demanded by the Muslim League. Cripps "proposed a plebiscite province to province" and the formula suggested "plebiscite district by district." The paper characterised the formula "Booby trap". The Spectator commented that Jinnah did not find it attractive as the whole formula "rests on the air as it talks of independence during war which will not be granted by the British." The Tribune wrote that Jinnah had been treading

65. The Dawn (New Delhi), July 31, 1944.
66. Ibid., July 13, 1944.
67. Ibid., July 12, 30, 1944.
68. The Spectator (London), July 13, 1944.
the path leading "not to the heaven of peace and pros-
perity but to the jungles of civil strife and rancour."
Moonje, Jayakar and Arundala opposed the formula as it
envisaged division of the country. A number of politi-
cians said that the formula was "fraught with dire conse-
quences for the future and will imperil the very independ-
ence of the country....." The Sikh leader, Master Tara
Singh, opposed it as it had to put 17 districts in Pakis-
tan and 12 districts in Hindustan. Lord Wavell opined
that the formula was a try out and Gandhi's aim was to
"assess the strength of the Hindu feelings against
Pakistan." Amery rightly observed: (1) it was condi-
tional to transfer of power; (2) it was partial because
it did not include the whole of Punjab, Bengal and Assam,
and (3) it meant humiliation of Jinnah and his removal
from all-India Politics. However, though the formula was
a shrewdest stroke of policy, it became the basis for
Gandhi-Jinnah talks.

69. The Tribune, (Lahore), July 12, 1944.
70. Virendra, Pakistan : A Myth of Reality, (Lahore, 1946),
    pp. 109-10.
71. The Tribune, (Lahore), August 21, 1944.
72. Nicholes Mansergh, Constitutional Relation between
    Britain and India : The Transfer of Power, Vol.II,
73. Ibid., p. 1101.
Gandhi considered the demand for Pakistan a mere slogan of Jinnah, but the word 'two-nation' propounded by Jinnah created an ideological differences, which stood in the way of talks between them. The Congress wanted transfer of power according to Rajaji's scheme, while the League wanted it under the aegis of the British so that the Muslims may not be left on the mercy of Hindus. Gandhiji wrote to Jinnah on July 17, 1944, wishing to discuss the question of the partition of India. The All-India Muslim League Working Committee met in Lahore and fully authorized Jinnah to negotiate with Gandhi.

Gandhi-Jinnah talks continued almost daily from September 7 to 27, 1944. On the one hand, Jinnah was alone carrying on the talks, without assistance of Liaquat Ali Khan, the Muslim League General Secretary, while on the other side, Gandhiji was assisted by Rajaji and a few others. There were daily exchange of letters reducing the discussion in writing. They held 14 sittings and discussed also Rajaji's formula. On September 10, Jinnah questioned the representative character of Gandhi to continue the talks. Jinnah remarked: "I thought you had

74. See for details V.P. Menon, op.cit., p. 163.

75. The matter of discussion was brought in writing for clarification and record. see Latif Ahmad Sherwani, Pakistan Resolution to Pakistan, 1940-1947, (Delhi, 1985), p. 83.
come here as a Hindu, as a representative of the Hindu Congress." Gandhiji said; "No I have come here as an individual." Gandhiji assured that he would be able to get his agreement with him, if any, ratified by the AICC.

On September 27, the talks broke down as there was a world of differences between their viewpoints.

On September 11, Gandhiji laid down the following conditions before Jinnah:

1. The immediate grant of independence to India as one single unit;

2. The immediate formation of a provisional interim government responsible to the existing central assembly or a newly elected one (naturally with a 75 per cent Hindu Majority).

3. The provisional government to frame the constitution of India or to set up an authority to frame the constitution after withdrawal of British power;

4. This government to draft the treaty and agreements as regards administration of matters of common concern such as foreign affairs, defence, communications, customs,

76. Mohamed Raza Khan, op.cit., p. 113.
commerce and the like which would be matters for efficient and satisfactory administration under a central authority.

(5) The provisional government to setup a commission to demarcate contiguous districts having an absolute Muslim majority. After all these conditions had been complied with, the demarcated areas would be permitted to decide through a plebiscite of all their inhabitants whether they wished to form a separate state. But in any case all matters of vital importance were to be administered by a central authority with a Hindu majority."

Gandhiji called this scheme a partition between two brothers, but Jinnah refused to accept it as it indicated an overwhelmingly Hindu federal authority and demanded a sovereign Pakistan.

On September 24, Gandhiji put forward another proposal to Jinnah but Jinnah rejected that also as these were fundamentally against the Lahore Resolution of 1940. Jinnah insisted for acceptance by the Congress the following terms:


(1) The Muslims should be recognised as a nation with an inherent right of self determination.

(2) Pakistan should comprise six provinces, that is, Sind, Baluchistan, the NWFP, the Punjab, Bengal and Assam, subject only to minor territorial adjustments;

(3) Important matters like Foreign Affairs, Defence, Internal Communications, Customs and Commerce should not be delegated to the Central Government.

However, no settlement between Gandhi and Jinnah could take place. According to Pyarelal: "They met, they shook hands, they embraced each other. There seemed to be a genuine human touch in their first meeting. Jinnah came out into his porch to receive the Mahatama and to escort him back at the time of leaving and even posed with him to be photographed. Observers fancied they noticed in Jinnah's parting warm handshake a mere historic gesture."

On July 27, 1944, Gandhi declared that the talks had failed.

But by these talks, Gandhi had recognised the Muslim Leadership of Jinnah, who found a virtual equality with

79. Ibid., pp. 550-551.
Gandhi. Maulana Azad stated that these talks were a great political blunder of Gandhi. The Hindu Mahasabha criticised the talks as it gave importance to Jinnah. The Sikhs considered Gandhi's offer a sword hanging over their heads. Amrita Bazar Patrika criticised the increasing demand. The Bombay Chronicle highlighted the uncooperative attitude of Jinnah. The Tribune held Gandhi and Jinnah both responsible for the failure of the talks. In the League circle, Liaquat Ali Khan characterised Gandhi's offer as "a fraud calculated to thwart and frustrate the Muslim demand of Pakistan." However, Jinnah's rejection of Gandhi's offer of 'plebiscite' caused the deprivation of Muslim majority areas (11 districts in Punjab and 12 districts in Bengal including Amritsar and Calcutta) to Pakistan. However, the Unionists, the Sikhs and Mahasabha were pleased on the breakdown of the talks, while the Provincial Leaguers were happy that Gandhi conceded to the principles of Pakistan.

83. The Tribune, (Lahore), October 2, 1944.
85. The Dawn, (Delhi), October 31, 1944.
87. Fortnightly Report for Punjab for first half of October, 1944, Home Department, Political, F.No. 18/10/44.
The Viceroy, however, pressurised the Congress and the League to settle their differences so as to establish a Central Government. Further, Gandhi also realised that independence was impossible without an agreement between the Congress and the League. Meanwhile, reports came that Liaquat Ali Khan was desirous to come to an agreement.

Gandhi advised Sapru and Shulabhai J. Desai to meet Liaquat. Desai and Liaquat drew the following private and confidential proposals (known as Desai-Liaquat Pact) for settlement between the Congress and the League:

"The Congress and the League agree that they will join in forming an Interim Government in the Centre. The composition of such Government will be on the following lines:

(a) Equal number of persons nominated by the Congress and the League in the Central Executive. Persons nominated need not be members of the Central Legislature.

(b) Representatives of minorities (in particular Scheduled Castes and the Sikhs);

(c) The Commander-in-Chief."

The draft further explains:

"The Government will be formed and function within the framework of the existing Government of India Act.

89. Syed Mahmud to Desai, November 18, 1944, Syed Mahmud Collection.
It is, however, understood that, if the Cabinet cannot
get a particular measure passed by the Legislative Assembly
they will not enforce the same by resort to any of the
reserve powers of the Governor-General or the Viceroy.
This will make them sufficiently independent of the
Governor-General. It is agreed between the Congress and
the League that if such Interim Government is formed,
their first step would be to release the Working Commi-
ttee members of the Congress.

"The steps by which efforts would be made to
achieve this end are at present indicated to take the
following courses:

"On the basis of understanding, some way should be
found to get the Governor-General to make a proposal or
a suggestion that he desires an interim government to be
formed in the Centre on the agreement between the Congress
and the League and when the Governor-General invites
Mr. Jinnah and Mr. Desai either jointly or separately,
the above proposals would be made, desiring that they are
prepared to join in forming the Government.

"The next step would be to get the withdrawal of
section 93 in the provinces and to form as soon as possible
Provincial Governments, on the lines of a coalition."

90. Indian Annual Register, Vol. II, July-December, 1945,
Desai had drawn the proposals with the approval of Gandhi and latter had corrected somewhere in the papers of the former, and Gandhi had asked Desai to go ahead. On the other hand, Liaquat after remaining quiet for a considerable time replied that whatever he told was his personal opinion and Jinnah, on January 20, 1945, disclaimed any knowledge of the pact. In fact, the Congress was trying to form an interim Government and to get the transfer of power, so that the demand for Pakistan may be dead.

While the League was foreseeing in the near future a quick turn in Indian politics due to the ending of the war in near future in the West which would fetch for them Pakistan.

At last Liaquat declared that it was a "cock and bull story" and it was never concluded. In consequences the Congress repudiated the pact and Desai, like Rajaji, made his exit from the Congress.

91. Ibid.


93. C.H. Philips and M.D. Warnwright, op.cit., p. 570. Wavell's impression was that Jinnah was "Playing his usual slippery game in fact." See Wavell Journal entry for February 26, 1945, p. 114.