One wonders, why M. A. Jinnah, while prepared to fight to the finish against the Congress and the Hindus, was anxious to avoid a clash with the British. It was exactly there that the weakness of the League position lay. The Muslim League had undoubtedly gained strength during the last seven years (1937-1944), but the foundations of that strength were most shallow. It was propped up on one side by job-hunting reactionaries and was being buttressed, on the other, by a self-seeking government. With the change in the political situation – international as well as Indian – with the Axis Powers being repulsed and the Congress repressed, Government support began to be withdrawn. Instead of behaving in a dignified manner Jinnah clung to petty crumbs of office in the various so-called Muslim provinces. He, unlike the Congress, was too much under the glamour of the very limited power which provincial ministries had placed in his hands to throw it away, and retire into wilderness. The latest to join his team of ministries was Aurangzeb Khan in NWFP in May 1943.

Everywhere the League ministries were shaky, born out of sheer accidental circumstances and depended on the support of the British government. In not a single Muslim province was the Muslim League in a majority. But Jinnah soon found that, the British government was chary of giving him even that chance of lording over limited power.

His efforts to lighten the League control over the Unionist ministry in Punjab not only aroused a united opposition from the various elements in the province – Hindus, rural and urban, Sikhs, pro-League and anti-League, throwing them all together - but also involved him in a direct clash with the British government. The Governor stood firmly behind Malik Khizr Hayat Khan. Jinnah’s failure in Punjab was a pointer of the direction in which the wind was blowing.

1 He was the son of Sikandar Hayat Khan, the late premier of Punjab.
JINNAH–GANDHI TALKS

Opposition to the League leadership was expressed simultaneously by various elements in the UP and in certain other places also. Many people thought that the League was quickly disintegrating. The resignation of stalwarts like Mohammed Ismail Khan and Choudhary Khaliquzzaman, members of the Central Executive, were significant. The younger element was getting restive at the futility of the League policy. It was at such a time that Gandhi asked Jinnah, and the latter agreed, to have a heart to heart discussion of the communal problems in the country in general and the Lahore Resolution in particular.

The Talks were held in September 1944 at the Quaid-i-Azam’s Mount Pleasant Bungalow, Malabar Hills, Bombay. The date of interview was originally fixed on 19 August but the actual talks began on 9 September. They met with a view to convince each other, and be convinced. Gandhi suggested humorously that they should be closed together till they arrived at a settlement. Talks continued for more than three weeks. The entire problem was brought under the hammer.

There were sharp differences regarding the federal system of the Lahore Resolution. While Jinnah dextrously advocated it, Gandhi mercilessly opposed it. But Gandhi acknowledged the soundness of the Lahore Resolution and the League and was willing to concede what he called the substance of the League demand. “The Lahore resolution”, Gandhi said, “is quite sound – where there is an obvious Muslim majority they should be allowed to constitute a separate state by themselves…” Gandhi contented that the right had been conceded both in the Rajaji Formula and in his own formula. But it could be done only “with due regard to the interest of the whole of India. Gandhi had accepted the principle of Pakistan for which only time and procedure of carrying out the scheme was to be negotiated, for that Gandhi could go only upto a point, not beyond it. He said “The right is conceded without the slightest reservation, but if it means utterly independent

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2 Gandhi was released much earlier due to his health problem. After release, he initiated a number of political moves such as fresh attempt for an understanding with the Muslim League and to open fresh negotiations with the Government (A.K. Azad, India Wins Freedom, Orient Longman, Madras, 1988, p.96.)

3 Jinnah–Gandhi Talks, Text of Correspondence and other Relevant Documents etc., Central office, All India Muslim League, Delhi, November, 1944, p.f.

sovereignty so that there is nothing in common between the two, I hold it to be an impossible proposition..."6

Gandhi’s offer could be summed up as:

1) India was not to be regarded a two or more nations but as one family consisting of many members. Of the family, the Muslims living in North Western zone, i.e. Sind, Baluchistan, the North West Frontier and that part of Punjab where they were in absolute majority over all other elements and in parts of Bengal and Assam, where they were in absolute majority, desired to live in separation from the rest of India.

2) If the majority vote was in favour of separation, they were to be allowed to form a separate state as soon as possible after India was free from foreign domination.

3) There was also to be a treaty of separation which was to provide for efficient and satisfactory administration of foreign affairs, defence, communication, customs, commerce and the like, which were to continue to be matters of common interest between the contracting parties.

4) The treaty was to contain terms for safeguarding the right of minorities in the two states.

5) Immediately on the acceptance of the arrangement by the Congress and the League, the two were to decide upon a common course of action - for the attainment of the independence of India. The League, however, was free to remain out of any direct action to which the Congress resorted and in which the League was not willing to participate.7

The negotiations unfortunately ended in a breakdown, but Gandhi’s offer still stood. On September 28, a press correspondent asked him whether the offer had been withdrawn. Gandhi replied that “it had not been made in any bargaining spirit”8 and, therefore there was no question of its being withdrawn. He reiterated his belief that he considered it a “just and proper solution” of the problem. The main cause for the breakdown of the talks

5 The Dawn, 31 July 1944.
6 Gandhi-Jinnah Talks, op.cit.
7 Ibid, Appendix C, p.87.
8 Ibid, p.57.
may be the non-committal attitude of Jinnah. If Jinnah did not agree to Gandhi’s terms, the latter had asked for counter-terms in the light of the Lahore Resolution, which Quaid-i-Azam wanted him to sign. But Jinnah never came out with the counter-terms; he merely shifted the ground of talks. It was as clear as anything that Jinnah did not want to commit himself and thus windup the bargaining position of the Muslim League. If Jinnah had offered some very concrete proposals, he would have committed the Muslim League, of which he was the official spokesman, without drawing out an equally strong commitment on behalf of the Congress Party.

Gandhi might have agreed to his terms. Then, an effort would have begun for the release of the Congress leaders. Neither Gandhi nor Jinnah was sure that the British government would concede such a demand, in fact it appeared that if there were any chance of Congress-League unity, they would raise the greatest obstacles in the way. The proposals might have remained before the country for months, possibly years and during this period a pressure was likely to be exerted on the Muslim League to further circumscribe their demands, “in the interests of the country.” Moreover, who could have said that the British government might not have come out at the psychological moment, with something better.

The atmosphere was quite favourable in September 1944 for the friendliest discussion between the Congress and the League. Nevertheless, it lacked reality that was necessary for these discussions ending in a settlement. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the Congress President who had been detained at Ahmednagar Fort at that time disliked “Gandhiji’s acts of commission and omission” which resulted in “a new respect for Jinnah.” He wrote, “When in July 1944, I read the report that Gandhiji was corresponding with Jinnah and going to Bombay to meet him, I told my colleagues that Gandhiji was making a great mistake...Later events proved that my apprehensions were correct.”

10 *The Sind Observer*, 19 July 1944.
12 Ibid, p.98.
SAPRU PROPOSALS

Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, who was sincerely trying to break the communal impasse for some time, suggested the Standing Committee of the Non-Party Conference to appoint a Committee to go into the matter of the future of India. The Committee was not to be charged with the duty of bringing about a settlement in the sense that “the document would be executed, signed, sealed and delivered.” It was to understand the point of view of each party and act as a “conciliation board” by establishing contacts with leading party leaders. Subsequently, it was supposed to recommend a solution based on the views of all parties. The parties were to be given the liberty to accept it in part or in full or to reject it outrightly.

Gandhi agreed to this plan. But he stipulated that the Committee should not contain any representatives of the recognised political party - Congress, Muslim League, Hindu Mahasabha or any other. Also, the person chosen to serve on the committee should be those “who had not definitely committed themselves to any particular view since the breakdown of the Gandhi-Jinnah talks.”\textsuperscript{15}

The standing committee met in New Delhi on 19 November 1944. It resolved “to appoint a committee which will examine the whole communal and minorities question from a constitutional and political point of view.” It desired to be in touch with different parties and their leaders including the minorities interested in the question and to “present a solution within two months to the Standing Committee of the Non-Party Conference...[that would] take all reasonable steps to get that solution accepted by all parties concerned.”\textsuperscript{16}

Sapru told a press conference on the same day that the committee would consist of persons who were not actively associated with any recognised political party and who had not publicly expressed their views on the communal problem. The basic idea, according to


\textsuperscript{16} \textit{Indian Annual Register}, 1944, Vol. II, p.239.
him, was to lift the discussion of the communal and political problem from the partisan to a judicial and impartial level.

He hoped that two former judges of the High Court and possibly one or two Englishmen would serve on the Committee. He explained that if any party declined to co-operate there would be no recrimination. Though, the fact would be recorded. He declared that he enjoyed Gandhi's support and hoped that the government of India would adopt a reasonable attitude towards the committee's request for information and statistics.\textsuperscript{17}

The Standing Committee met again at Allahabad on 3 December and named the members of the "Conciliation Committee." Sapru said that it was his intention to write to the leaders of various parties, requesting them to agree to interviews. The Committee would determine its own procedure. He reiterated that the Committee was not supposed to write a detailed constitution. Its purpose was to investigate whether there was a possibility of reconciling conflicting views and of suggesting basis on which a constitutional structure might be built.\textsuperscript{18}

The personnel of the Committee were Sir T.B. Sapru, (Chairman), M.R. Jayakar (who could not attend), Bishop Foss Westcott, S. Radhakrishnan, Sir Homi Mody, Sir Maharaj Singh, Muhammad Yunus, N.R. Sarkar, Frank Anthony, and Sant Singh.

On 10 December, Sapru wrote to Jinnah explaining the \textit{raison d'être} of the "Conciliation Committee" and asking him if he would "allow me and one or two other members of the Committee to see you in order to obtain clarification on the practical aspects of the problem."\textsuperscript{19} In his reply of 14 December, Jinnah regretted that he could not recognise the Non-Party Conference or its Standing Committee. He wrote, "I cannot recognise the Committee recently appointed by the Standing Committee of the Non-Party Conference.

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\textsuperscript{17} Ibid, p.239-241.
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid, p.241-242.
\end{flushright}
for the purpose and the manner in which you propose to proceed and deal with the present political situation.”"20

The proposals of the “Conciliation Committee” were published on 8 April 1945. In its final session at New Delhi, the Committee unanimously passed fifteen resolutions dealing with the broad outline for the future constitution of India. Its main proposals21 may be summarised as follows:

1) The division of India in any form or shape to be opposed.
2) A constitution-making body of 160 persons, to be established for drafting the future Constitution.
3) Native states to be allowed to join the proposed Union of India as units.
4) No Province of British India may elect, not to accede to the Union, nor may any unit — whether a province or a state which had acceded — be entitled to secede therefrom.
5) A list of fundamental rights to be incorporated in the future Constitution.
6) An independent ‘minority commission’ to look after the rights and interests of the minorities to be provided.
7) Separate electorates to be abolished.
8) The constitution-making body, the central legislature and the central executive to be constituted on the basis of parity between Hindus (other than scheduled castes) and Muslims.

The report of the Committee concluded by recommending that “in the event of these proposals being unacceptable to the various communities and parties and their failure to reach an agreement on any other basis, His Majesty’s Government should set up an interim government in India and proceed to establish machinery for drafting the new constitution generally on the basis of the principles underlying these proposals, enact it in Parliament and put it into operation at the earliest possible date.”22 K.M. Munshi welcomed it as “a highly workable solution of the Indian deadlock.”23

22 Ibid, p.316.
23 Ibid, p.316.
But as the Muslim League, the Hindu Mahasabha and the Sikh League could not appreciate it, the brilliance and expertise of Sir Sapru’s proposals and his eminent and reputed team was wasted. The Muslim League opined that the political deadlock could only be overcome if the Congress and the League agreed on the essentials of the future Constitution and the interim arrangements. Jinnah characterised the Conciliation Committee as “nothing but hand-mades of the Congress who have played and are playing to the tune of Mr. Gandhi”. He warned that, “Muslim India will not accept any attempt to change the present Constitution in any way which would directly or indirectly, be on the basis of a united India.”

The Hindu leaders of Bengal opposed it so did the Sikhs who rejected the whole report as inadequate for the protection of Sikh interests. V.P. Menon believed that the Conciliation Committee “failed in its effort to advance the position” because of the recommendation for joint electorates and stress on Indian Union which “made the Muslim League’s attitude all the more hostile.”

DESAI-LIAQUAT PACT
The failure of the Sapru proposals, however, did not close the doors of negotiation between the Muslim League and the Congress. In early 1945, the Congress and the Muslim League co-operated with each other on the constitution of a provisional national government. This was made possible due to the efforts of Bhulabhai Desai, the leader of the Congress parliamentary party and Liaquat Ali Khan, the de facto leader of the League assembly party.

Desai saw Sir Evan Jenkins, then Private Secretary to the Viceroy, on 13 January which was followed by a Desai–Viceroy meeting on 2 January. Terms of the Desai-Liaquat pact were conveyed to the Viceroy in this meeting. Desai claimed that these proposals had

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24 V.P. Menon, op.cit., p.179.
28 V.P. Menon, op.cit., p.179.

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Gandhi’s support and also claimed that Jinnah was aware of his negotiations with Liaquat Ali Khan and of the agreement reached between them and had approved them.

The pact stipulated the following:

1) “The Congress and the League agreed that they will join in forming an interim government in the centre. The composition of such government will be on the following lines:
   a) An equal number of persons nominated by the Congress and the League.
   b) Representatives of minorities (in particular the scheduled castes and the Sikhs.)
   c) The Commander-in-Chief.

2) “The government will be formed and [will] function within the framework of the existing Government of India Act. 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 resorting to any of the reserve powers of the Governor-General or the Viceroy. This will make them sufficiently independent of the Governor-General.

3) “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 Committee members of the Congress.

4) “The steps by which efforts would be made to achieve this end are at present indicated to take the following course:

   “On the basis of the above 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. When the Governor-General invites Jinnah and Desai either jointly or separately, the above proposals would be made declaring 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 provisional governments on the lines of a coalition.”

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When these proposals were conveyed to the Viceroy, he transmitted them to the Secretary of State for India with the opinion that they got an excellent opportunity of going forward in the political and constitutional spheres.

But His Majesty's Government raised some important questions. What was the guarantee that the interim government would support the war effort? Was the pact aimed at depriving the Governor-General of his right to select the members of his Council? How far would the new Councillors be subjects to the discipline and control of their party caucuses? How far would the Congress support Desai? How would the minorities and non-Congress Hindus and non-Muslim League Muslims be provided for?

To enable himself to answer these questions, the Viceroy planned to see Jinnah and Desai and seek clarification. In the meantime, Jinnah issued a statement disclaiming any knowledge of the pact. But this did not deter Desai and Liaquat Ali Khan from persisting the pact's validity and canvassing support for it.

As Jinnah was then at Bombay, the Viceroy asked Sir John Colville, the Governor of Bombay, to see Jinnah on his behalf and to find out if the latter's opinion. He had found Desai's proposals worth pursuing if Jinnah was willing. Sir Colville was also asked to request Jinnah to come to Delhi to discuss matters with the Viceroy and Desai. When Colville met Jinnah, Jinnah manifested his ignorance of the Desai-Liaquat talks and also revealed that the pact was without the authority of the Muslim League.30

It is important to indicate here that these occurrences are shrouded in mystery as except V.P. Menon’s *Transfer of Power*, no other primary source has even mentioned of the

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30 V.P. Menon, op.cit., p.177-78.
happenings and obviously there is a veil of secrecy regarding the talks. At the utmost one may assume that Liaquat Ali Khan and Desai reached some sort of agreement, tentative or definite and Jinnah later repudiated it. Jinnah’s actions were either because Liaquat had overstepped his sphere of authority or because Jinnah himself had changed his mind. It is uncertain. The leaders of the Congress repudiated Desai despite Gandhi’s support. Desai had to pay a heavy price of political extinction for his audacity in drafting this agreement.

Nevertheless, the Desai-Liaquat Pact was a stepping-stone toward negotiations that later shaped up at Simla. Congress-League parity was for the first time mentioned and conceded, in this pact. Inspite of getting negative response from both Jinnah and the Congress leaders, the Viceroy; who was very much impressed by the clause of the Desai-Liaquat Pact, went to London for talks with the British Government in May 1945. His proposals were identical with those of the pact. These “London talks” culminated in the call for Wavell Plan.

**WAVELL PLAN**

Lord Wavell, the Viceroy urged the Churchill Government for steps to improve conditions in India. He informed that the “present Government of India cannot continue indefinitely or even long.” Though, he was himself an imperialist and disliked the idea of leaving India, he viewed with caution the differences in the attitude of two parties - Muslim League and Congress. But, at the same time he realised that “the British people will not consent to be associated with a policy of repression nor will British soldiers wish to stay here in large numbers after the war to hold the country down.”

Believing that the country was now on “the edge of a volcano”, he appealed to His Majesty’s Government “If we want India as a Dominion after the war, we must begin treating her much more like a Dominion now.”

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31 Prabha Arun have accused that “Since Jinnah himself was not sure of his popularity at that time, these negotiations came to a halt due to his hesitation to take a decision that might...consequently degrade the position of the League.” (Prabha Arun, *Pathway to Pakistan*, Intellectual, New Delhi, 1992, p.114.)
33 Penderel Moon (ed.), *op.cit.*, p.98.
very urgent and very important, that the problems would be just as difficult at the end of war and...[therefore, there was] no reason to postpone the issue." No doubt, he was afraid of another Congress revolt in the wake of agrarian revolt, labour troubles, army disaffection and the presence of INA who were military experts.

This was certainly a tangible situation; the war had ended in Europe but was continuing in Asia. All the Congress Working Committee members were in jail except for Gandhi. Every effort of bringing about a unity between the giants – Congress and the Muslim League - was failing embittering the existing situation. Above all there was the question of the India’s future. All these factors were making the Viceroy restless. He wanted a solution to the Indian problem. On 14 June 1945, the Viceroy broadcast his proposals that were “to ease the present political situation and to advance India towards her goal of full self government.”

On the same day, the Secretary of State, Lord Amery at the House of Commons made a statement: “The British Government was most anxious to do their utmost to assist the Indians in the working out of a new constitutional settlement ... [and] they are willing to make possible some step forward during the interim period if the leaders of the principal Indian parties are prepared to agree to their suggestions and to cooperate in the successful conclusion of the war against Japan as well as in the reconstruction of India which must follow the final victory.” The next day all the members of the Congress Working Committee were released.

The Viceroy sent an invitation for the Simla Conference to be held on 25 June to Maulana Azad, who was the Congress President and was released only a day before. In spite of

38 Gandhi was toying with the idea of asking Wavell to re-intern him. (Rajmohan Gandhi, *The Rajaji Story*, Vol.II, Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan, Bombay, 1984, p.101.)
39 *Speeches of Lord Wavell, 1943-47*, New Delhi, 1948, p.73-76.
40 *His Majesty's Government Statement on India, 14 June, 1945, Official Report of the House of Commons (Microfilm)* NMML.
his ill-health, Maulana Azad accepted the invitation and nominated Humayun Kabir, the member of Bengal Legislative Council to act as his Secretary during the Conference.43

Apart from Maulana Azad and Jinnah, there were representatives of the Provincial Governments, the leaders of the Nationalist Party and European Group in the Central Legislative Assembly, Gandhi, N. Shiva Raj to represent the Scheduled Castes and Master Tara Singh to represent the Sikhs.44 The Hindu Mahasabha leaders were not invited.45 In all there were twenty-one invitees.46

Maulana Azad convened a meeting of the Working Committee on 24 June and “expressed the opinion that though his [WavelPs] offer was not different from that of Cripps, we should accept it” owing to the “changed circumstances.” He strongly felt that “Once the war was over, the British would have no special reason to seek our co-operation. It was, therefore, not desirable for us to reject the Wavell Offer. We should participate the Conference with a view to accept the terms if they were at all suitable.”

The Working Committee including Gandhi accepted his views but emphasised that they should endorse a few proposals of their own at the Conference.47 Maulana Azad “was impressed by the frankness and sincerity of the Viceroy”, “who pointed out that the war was approaching its end. It would, therefore, be to India’s advantage to accept the offer and co-operate with the British in bringing the war to a victorious close.”48

In order to reach an understanding between the Congress and the League, Wavell intended to include in the proposed Executive Council, Congress Hindus as well as one from outside the Congress and Muslims from the League as well as non-League Muslims, possibly a member of the Unionist Party ruling over the Punjab. Whereas, the policy

43 Ibid.
46 V.P.Menon, op.cit., p.191.
48 Ibid, p.113, 112.
suited Maulana Azad, it met with vehement opposition from Jinnah who insisted that all Muslim members ought to be League nominees.49

The Conference was jeopardised in spite of achievements on certain principles. Representation for minorities, wholehearted support to the war effort and continuance of the reconstituted Executive Council under the Government of India Act till the end of the war were some of the agreed achievements of the Conference. Maulana Azad was angered by Jinnah’s insistence as the sole Muslim body and outrightly refused to yield to his obduracy. He reiterated that the Congress should have the freedom to nominate any Indian it liked regardless of his religion. He added that if the Congress should participated, it must only on the basis of Indian nationhood or not participate at all. Maulana Azad was supported by Khizr Hayat Khan who “was helpful and co-operative in solving problems as they arose.”50

True to the nationalist character, the Congress, out of its five nominees to the Executive Council, chose two Hindus, one Muslim, one Christian and a Parsi. Muslim League nominated 5 League Muslims but decried the presence of a Muslim name in the Congress list. Lord Wavell included four more names to the list of 5 names each of Congress and Muslim League, which included the name of one Muslim – Khizr Hayat Khan.

Jinnah again vehemently opposed this. Reacting to Jinnah’s attitude, Maulana Azad remarks: “The League was supposed to be the guardian of Muslim interests and yet it was because of its opposition that the Muslims of India were denied a substantial share in the Government of undivided India.”51

The Viceroy, who felt irritated by the Muslim League could not accept its stand as reasonable yet, did nothing to improve the matters at the Conference and like all shrewd diplomats left the matters to be solved mutually. He remained a mute spectator, and this time taking the side of the Congress went ahead with the ‘divide and rule’ policy.

51 Ibid, p.121.
Subsequently, the Conference was declared to have failed and that the new Council would not be formed.

If the Viceroy had gone ahead, keeping vacant a decent number of seats for Jinnah to fill if he changed his mind, the latter might have given in. The League’s chief was conscious of the advantages of the office and the disadvantages of the wilderness, to his party. If Jinnah had refused still to co-operate, Muslim support might have chosen more moderate leaders outside or within the League. In any case, a popular government promised by Wavell would have been installed.  

Maulana Azad, who expressed a press statement, also felt this. "The British Government cannot absolve themselves of the responsibility for the communal problems here. Whether it is today or tomorrow, they must take up a firm stand on a just and fair basis. There is no other alternative but to do so. And once a decision is taken, we must move forward. Those who are prepared to go forward must be allowed to go forward and those who wish to be left out should be left out. Without determination, nothing can be done. Wavering minds and faltering steps will never carry up forward in the path of progress. We must think before we take a step, but once we decide, hesitation is not a virtue but a sign of definite weakness."  

But if Wavell would have gone ahead, this would have meant a Congress dominated Council to which Wavell was opposed. All his overtures to secure Hindu-Muslim unity and League-Congress parity was but a mask, behind which there was a deep hankering to keep hold on to the Indian Empire. This was admitted by Wavell himself a year later.  

ELECTIONS TO THE CENTRAL AND PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURES

The Second World War ended on 15 August 1945 with the surrender of Japan. A British victory along with "a resounding victory for the Labour Party which secured, for the first
time in its history, a clear majority in the House of Commons along with the 
triumph in the war, "an honourable retreat" from India. The new Government headed by 
Clement Attlee summoned Lord Wavell home and he returned to India with another 
programme.

He announced the holding of elections to the central and provincial legislatures, which 
were long postponed owing to the war, in the winter of 1945-46. An Executive Council 
was to be worked out after the elections, "which will have the support of the main Indian 
Parties." But, these elections were not going to give power to the Indians at the centre, 
even in the provinces, where they would form ministries. Their authority would be 
restricted. So, the Indian reaction to this pronouncement of Lord Wavell was not 
favourable.

The AICC characterised the proposals as "vague and inadequate and unsatisfactory" and 
pointed out the omission of any reference to independence. In spite of the disapproval of 
the official plan, the Congress decided to contest the forthcoming election. Maulana Azad 
stated, as the "Labour Party had always been friendly to India...[so] it was desirable that 
we should give it an opportunity of proving its bonafides ... [therefore] we should not start 
a new movement but participate in the General Elections."60

The elections were fought not over independence but on the issue of a united or divided 
India. The elections were held in two stages. In December 1945, the central legislative 
assembly was elected. The Muslim League won every single Muslim seat, the "Nationalist 
Muslims forfeiting their deposits in many instances." The Congress success in the non-
Muslim constituencies was equally spectacular. The Congress won all the general seats in

56 R.C. Majumdar, Struggle for Freedom, Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan, Bombay, 1988, p.721.
61 V.P. Menon, op.cit., p. 226.
the central assembly (57 seats with 91.3 per cent of the votes) while League candidates won the reserved seats for the Muslims (30 seats with 86.6 percent of the Muslim votes).62

Early in 1946, the provincial elections were held. Again the two main parties swept their respective constituencies. The Congress won a total of 930 seats, gaining an absolute majority in 8 provinces. The Muslim League captured 428 out of the possible 492 Muslim seats.63 The Congress came out victorious in almost every province “except Bengal, Punjab and Sind.” In these three provinces, the position was complex.

In Bengal, the Muslim League was the single largest party and captured almost half the seats. In the Punjab, the Unionist Party and the League were balanced in almost equal numbers. In Sind also, the Muslim League won a large number of seats but could not achieve a majority…In the North Western Frontier Province…all the efforts of the League failed and the Congress was able to form the government.”64

While forming Ministries in the provinces, Maulana Azad as a gesture of goodwill invited the members of the Muslim League to co-operate, both in the provinces where Congress had absolute majority and also where it was the single largest party. But Jinnah did not allow the members of the Muslim League to respond to the invitation.65 Congress had a clear majority in Assam where it formed a ministry under Gopinath Bardolai. One Nationalist Muslim was included in the Cabinet.

Muslim League had been offered two seats on the condition that it agreed to work the Congress parliamentary programme but the League rejected the offer. Similarly, the Congress formed ministries in Bihar, the UP, Bombay, Madras, CP and Orissa, where Congress offered to co-operate with the League but the League rejected. In Sind, as no party got the clear majority, another election was held in which the League commanded a clear majority.

63 I.H.Qureshi, op.cit., p.238.
64 A.K.Azad, op.cit., p.132.
In Punjab, the results of the elections were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political parties</th>
<th>Seats won</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Muslim League</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congress</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akali Sikh</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unionist</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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In Punjab, the Congress and the Sikhs entered into an alliance and stipulated three conditions for their co-operation with the League:

1) That, the Congress would be free to nominate as ministers persons belonging to any community.
2) That, the Congress-Akali group would have half the seats in government.
3) That, extra-provincial questions, like Pakistan would not be brought before the Assembly.

These terms were unacceptable to the League. Eventually, a coalition was formed between Congress, Akali Sikh and Unionists under Khizr Hayat Khan and a ministry was formed. 66

The great skills and statesmanship shown by Maulana Azad, in the negotiations which led to the formation of the Punjab coalition ministry, won him accolade. 67

During this time, a new wave of nationalism was seen on the Indian political scene. There were strikes in the Navy and Air Forces at Bombay and Karachi. The Indian Armed Forces were restless to rise against the British who were quick to realise the worsening situation. 68 Maulana Azad cites the reason of this revolt as: “The Defence Forces had recruited during the war a large proportion of young men who came from different provinces and different social classes. The earlier British practice of recruiting from only certain selected groups had been abandoned under the pressure of war needs. The young men who had now joined the armed forces, accepted the British at their word that after the

66 Civil and Military Gazette, 7 and 21 March 1946.
war India would become free.”69 But as the British did not maintain this promise, they all rose in revolt. Nehru hailed it as the breaking down of the “iron wall” between the army and the people.70

Moreover, the public trials of INA officers71, who had been captured after the surrender of Japan “excited great public enthusiasm.”72 It provided the political parties with excellent material for propaganda against the Government.73 It also showed England “that the tide of nationalism was running very fast in India and that it was time for clear and definite action.”74 Besides, after the elections to the central and provincial legislatures, questions were raised whether the centre would still remain British.75

CABINET MISSION

To answer all these questions the British Government, on 16 February 1946, announced the sending of a “three-man cabinet delegations”76 consisting of Lord Pethick Lawrence, the Secretary of State for India; Sir Stafford Cripps, the President of the Board of Trade and A.V. Alexander, the First Lord of the Admiralty. Regarding the Mission, on 23 March Prime Minister Atlee announced, “My colleagues are going to India with the intention of using their utmost endeavour to help to attain her freedom as speedily and fully as possible. What form of government is to replace the present regime is for India to decide; but our desire is to help her to set up forth with the machinery for making that decision…”77

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68 Shan Muhammad, Muslims and India’s Freedom Movement, Institute of Objection Studies, New Delhi, 2002, p.196.
71 It was Maulana Azad’s idea that “if the Government proposed to prosecute the officers of INA, the trial should be public.” (A.K. Azad, op.cit., p.143.)
72 Ibid.
74 V.P.Menon, op.cit., p.234.
75 Rajmohan Gandhi, op.cit., p.116.
76 Ibid.
The Cabinet Mission arrived in India on 23 March. It immediately invited the leaders of the Congress and Muslim League for consultation to the following programme. “First, preparatory discussions with elected representatives of British India and with Indian states in order to secure the widest measure of agreement as to the method of framing a constitution. Second, the setting up of a Constitution-making body. Third, the bringing into being of an Executive Council having the support of the main Indian parties.”

Maulana Azad met the Mission on 6 April. He clearly clarified that the Congress expected to talk on the basis of national unity and independence and on the assumption that the future Constitution would be drawn up by a Constitution-making body. The Congress wanted a federal government with as many subjects as possible, such as defence, communications and foreign affairs, autonomous provinces in which the residuary powers would be vested. Gandhi was satisfied with the stand taken by Maulana Azad. He, at first was suggesting C. Rajagopalachari formula as the possible compromise.

Jinnah, who was interviewed the next day, emphasising the disunity pointed out that throughout her history, India had never been under a single Government, and that ever since any real political power was transferred to the Indians, the British Government had given separate electorates to the Muslims. “The differences in India were far greater than those between European countries and were of a vital and fundamental character... No Government could survive unless there was a dominant element which could provide a ‘steel frame’. This frame had hitherto been provided by the British, who had always retained the key posts in the Civil Services, the Police and the Army. It was necessary to have a ‘steel frame’ for an independent India...[which would be based upon] common railways, customs and so forth...”

79 Indian Annual Register, 1946, Vol. 1., p.129.
81 Ibid, p.149.
82 Rajmohan Gandhi, op.cit., p.117.
83 I.H. Qureshi, op.cit., p.246.
The Mission met various leaders from Hindu Mahasabha, Liberals, Sikhs, Scheduled Castes Federation, the All India Depressed Classes’ League, Socialists etc. – and acquainted itself with their views. The Mission met Jinnah again on 16 April and the Secretary of State informed him that the Mission had come to the conclusion that “the full and complete demand in the form presented by Jinnah” was not possible and gave him two alternatives to choose from:

a) a smaller but sovereign state, and

b) a larger state within the Indian Union as a separate federation.\textsuperscript{85}

“Jinnah accepted the idea of an All-India Union... as a part of a comprehensive constitutional settlement [because] he was not yet so sure of his strength and that of the Leagues’ vis-à-vis either the Congress or the British Government as to prefer the risk of undisputed blame for a breakdown, to the risk of having to make good.”\textsuperscript{86} But, Jinnah demanded “the right of the Muslims to frame their own group and provincial constitutions for the ‘six Muslim Provinces’ through a separate constitution-making body.”\textsuperscript{87}

Maulana Azad was called in on 17 April and was mentioned of the Mission’s talk with Jinnah and was asked to opine on the demand of Jinnah. Maulana Azad expressed his inability to comment on matters as such without consulting his Working Committee. The negotiations went on till almost the end of April with a short interval. On 27 April it proceeded further discussions and asked the Presidents of Congress and Muslim League to nominate representatives to carry on negotiations.\textsuperscript{88} The Congress nominees were Maulana Azad, Sardar Patel, Nehru and Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan; while Jinnah, Liaquat Ali Khan, Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar and Nawab Ismail Khan represented the League.\textsuperscript{89}

Discussions regarding conversion of the Executive Council into a temporary national government and devising a long-term constitutional solution\textsuperscript{90} were held. Unfortunately,

\textsuperscript{85} Ibid, p.248-49.
\textsuperscript{87} V.P. Menon, \textit{op.cit.}, p.263.
\textsuperscript{89} Shan Muhammad, \textit{Muslims and India’s Freedom Movement}, p.196.
\textsuperscript{90} Rajmohan Gandhi, \textit{op.cit.}
the differences between Congress and the League could not be resolved and the discussions failed to indicate any solution.\textsuperscript{91}

It must be admitted that, though, the Cabinet Mission aimed for a united India\textsuperscript{92} yet, the British allowed the anti-unity passions of the Muslim League to be roused to such a pitch that they were not able to control them.\textsuperscript{93} The members of the Mission, such as A.V. Alexander were “distrustful of the capacities or integrity of non-white races”\textsuperscript{94} and eschewed all possible attempts of union. He, like the Viceroy was an “imperialist” and disliked any idea of leaving India.\textsuperscript{95}

The British attempted to delay the transfer of power on the convenient alibi that there was no agreement between the two main parties on power sharing.\textsuperscript{96} Azad or Nehru did not notice this, but Gobind Ballabh Pant was able to insinuate this early, which later proved to be true.\textsuperscript{97} On 16 May, the Cabinet Mission was officially declared a failure and the Mission now worked upon “a three tier constitution.”\textsuperscript{98}

The proposals were presented in two instalments.\textsuperscript{99} The Mission suggested the formation of a Union of India, consisting of British India and the States. It dealt with Foreign Affairs, Defence and Communication and the grouping of the provinces into A, B and C classes in accordance with their location and communal population. It was supposed to send representatives for the constitution-making body to draft a final constitution for India.\textsuperscript{100} This meant a weak centre with powerful confederation of which section A was consisted of Hindu majority provinces such as Madras Bombay, UP, CP, Bihar and Orissa and three Chief Commissioner’s provinces. While the other two sections B – with Punjab, NWFP, Sind and Baluchistan – and Section C with Bengal and Assam were for the

\textsuperscript{91} A.K. Azad, \textit{op.cit.}, p.155.
\textsuperscript{92} Prabha Arun, \textit{op.cit.}, p.43.
\textsuperscript{93} V.S. Rai, \textit{op.cit.}, p.4.
\textsuperscript{94} Rajmohan Gandhi, \textit{op.cit.}
\textsuperscript{95} Penderal Moon (ed.), \textit{op.cit.}, p.394.
\textsuperscript{96} V.S. Rai, \textit{op.cit.}
\textsuperscript{97} \textit{A Bunch of Old Letters, From G.B. Pant to Nehru, 15 August 1945}, p.503.
\textsuperscript{98} I.H. Qureshi, \textit{op.cit.}, p.247.
Muslim majority provinces of north west and north east respectively. The sections had the power to set up intermediate level executives and legislatures of their own. The provinces also had rights to opt out of the Federal union after the first election of its Legislative Council.\textsuperscript{101}

Although, both the League and the Congress criticised it, yet neither of them was in a mood to reject it as a whole. Muslim League accepted the proposals on 6 June. But the Congress took time to decide. It mostly examined the para 15 of the proposal which implied that it was not mandatory for either Assam or the NWFP to join a Muslim grouping. It read: “Provinces should be free to form groups with executives and legislatures and each group could determine the provincial subjects to be taken in common.”

Since this did not reflect the will of the Frontier people at that time, Badshah Khan did not agree to it, even though there was a provision that he could opt out later. The plan had enough leverage to the centre in Delhi to manipulate the eventual dealing of the Frontier from Punjab and Sind. M.S. Korejo blamed Badshah Khan that his short-sightedness resulted in India’s partition, although Maulana Azad was all for persuasion to accept it.\textsuperscript{102}

Another conflicting clause of the proposal was para 19. The Congressmen were enthusiastic and took it to mean, “we will hear no more of that mischievous cry of Pakistan.”\textsuperscript{103} Believing that the implications of grouping became clear that the scheme might enable Sind in addition to the NWFP to keep itself detached from the Muslim Group. Rajendra Prasad felt that “the statement has, in most emphatic and categorical terms rejected Pakistan.”\textsuperscript{104} The Congress accepted the plan on 24 June. The acceptance of the Cabinet Mission Plan by the two parties was so hedged in by mutually incompatible reservations that it would never have worked. The League in its 6 June resolution regarded

\textsuperscript{101} Penderal Moon (ed.), \textit{op.cit.}, p.478.
\textsuperscript{104} \textit{Ibid.}
grouping to be compulsory.\textsuperscript{105} While Gandhi was aspiring that provinces would be free not to join any groups even to begin with.\textsuperscript{106} The decisive step that led to the creation of Pakistan is attributed not to Jinnah, but to Congress leaders. The Congress quickly realised that Jinnah had won both a disproportionately large shares in the proposed distribution of power and a centre so weak that an effective government of a united India would be frustrated.\textsuperscript{107}

The Congress Working Committee in its resolution of 25 June decided that it would join the proposed Constituent Assembly with a view to framing the constitution of a free, united and democratic India.\textsuperscript{108} The new Congress President Nehru, declared at a press conference on 10 July that the only commitment made by his party was to participate in Constituent Assembly elections. About the grouping scheme, he declared that it would probably never come to fruition because NWFP and Assam would have objections to joining Sections B and C respectively.\textsuperscript{109}

Jawaharlal’s backing out from his commitment on the Cripps Formula opened the eyes of the Muslim League and Jinnah began to insist upon the partition of the country.\textsuperscript{10} Because it became clear that once insistence was granted, the Hindu majority would not stick to its commitments and would enforce its will in the future framing of the country’s constitution and running its affairs.\textsuperscript{111}

Maulana Azad was in a dilemma. Neither could he repudiate the Congress President’s statement, which would weaken the organization nor was he willing to give up the Cabinet Mission Plan, which would ruin the country. He painfully persuaded Nehru to call for a meeting of working Committee and reiterated that the Congress has accepted the Cabinet Mission Plan.\textsuperscript{112} On 25 May, Maulana Azad wrote to the Viceroy suggesting that a
convention might be established to recognise the responsibility of the interim government
to the Central Legislative Assembly. The Viceroy accepted his request.

But, Muslim League was not prepared to take the Congress statement at its face value and
rejected Jawaharlal’s invitation to cooperate in the formation of an interim government.
On 19 July, the Muslim League officially withdrew its acceptance of the plan and called
upon the Muslims to observe 16 August as “Direct Action Day” to achieve Pakistan.

GENESIS OF TWO-NATION THEORY
The history of the genesis of the idea of two-nation theory, which grew into Pakistan is
very long and can be traced back from the days of Bengal’s partition. It was the
Government’s policy of divide and rule, which had decided to divide Bengal, so as “to
split up and thereby weaken a solid body of opponents to our rule.”

Much was done for communal harmony, through joint functions during Id and “National
Dinners” etc. But the secular Hindus like Bipin Chandra Pal began to say the “Hindus
shall help the realisation of the present national ideal, not by ceasing to be Hindu nor by
ignoring his peculiar course of development, but by developing the higher features of his
own culture and civilisation. So, the Mohammedan shall best contribute to the common
progress of the nation by developing his own special excellence.” The emphasis laid
was on being distinct. In fact, Bipin Chandra Pal also visualised a “federal structure” for
India in which, the units were to be based not on language, but the religious communities
Hindu, Muslim and Christian. Each of these units “would preserve its distinctive features
and by cultivating them contribute to the common national life of India.” Only one short
step thus logically divides Pal’s ‘composite patriotism’ from the two-nation theory.

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113 Gwyer and Appadorai (ed.), op.cit., p.595.
114 Ibid, p.596.
117 Note of H.H. Riley, 6 December 1904, Home (Pub.) A, 164, February 1905, NAI.
118 Amrita Bazaar Patrika, 3 November 1905.
120 Bangadarshan, August-September 1906.
121 Ibid, p.424.
Similarly, Rabindranath Tagore brought out a conception of national unity and suggested that the Hindus, Muslims, Christians etc., “each form a party of their own” and cooperate with each other.¹²² Such theories could provide a platform on which traditionalist Hindus and Muslims could come together for a while without impairing their orthodoxy as happened during the Khilafat Movement. But its limitations make each community hostile to each other. The ‘federal’ India with religious communities as its basic components would open the door for a partition of the country on communal lines.

Since 1917, V.D. Savarkar was preaching the gospel of Hindu Rashtra. R.N. Agarwal in his book, The National Movement has stated that Savarkar advised Hindus to capture power and establish the foundations of a true Hindu Raj. “He said that India was inhabited not by a homogenous nation but by two nations – Hindus and Muslims. The Muslims were clearly told that there was no future for them in India except as a minority.”¹²³

Shankar Achari Kurtkoti, former President of the Hindu Mahasabha, proclaimed that “India belongs to the Hindus; and the Muslims, who are only guests, should learn to behave like guests.” Lala Hardayal, a former member of Indian Civil Services, was equally frank “to attain Swaraj, we do not need Muslim assistance, nor is it our desire to establish a joint rule. A joint Hindu-Muslim state is sheer non-sense, which under no circumstances can exist.”¹²⁴

In 1923, the Hindu Mahasabha began to look at India as the holy land of Hindus. They claimed that the Hindus were a nation in their own right and the Muslims had no place in a Hindu Raj.¹²⁵ Their main slogan was “Hindi, Hindu, Hindustani.”¹²⁶ In 1933, Bhai Parmanand ruled out any prospect of Hindu-Muslim unity as ridiculous.¹²⁷ To him, the solution lay in the Hindus assimilating the entire Muslim population, or vice versa. But it

¹²⁴ Ibid.
¹²⁶ Subhadra Joshi, Nehru on Communalism, Sampradayikta Virodhi Committee, New Delhi, 1965, fn.3, p.2.
¹²⁷ Ibid.
was an impossible task. He proceeded to outline a new solution: “It struck me a long time ago that the only satisfactory avenue of unity is to effect complete severance between the two peoples. It should be partitioned in such a manner as to secure the supremacy of Islam in one zone and that of Hinduism in the other.”

In 1924, Lala Lajpat Rai wrote a series of articles published in the newspapers like The Hindustan Times, Bombay Chronicle, Swarajya and Tribune. In these articles, he suggested the partition of Punjab into two provinces; West Punjab with a large Muslim majority to be a Muslim-governed province and East Punjab with a large Hindu-Sikh majority to be a non-Muslim governed province. He also advocated the formation of other Muslim provinces where compact Muslim communities existed. But he made it clear that “these Muslim provinces would not be a part of a united India”, but that there would be a Muslim India and a non-Muslim India.

In 1925, the Mahasabha adopted a document called ‘Mere Vichar’ by Lala Har Dayal saying that the, “Future of India lay in: (i) Hindu Sanghathan (ii) Hindu Raj (iii) Shuddhi of Muslims, and (iv) Conquest and Shuddhi of Afghanistan and the Frontier.” To militarise the Hindus, Pt. Malaviya organised, training them in the art of killing Muslims. Bloody riots took place in the places he visited. Even Birla, prescribed the partition of India as a solution in preference to the safeguards for the Muslims in a united India in 1936. Michael O’ Dwyer has accused the leading men of Arya Samaj to be “largely responsible for the growing tension between Hindus and Mohammedans…”

These kind of separatist ideas also began to grow in the minds of Muslims. In 1930, Mohammed Iqbal at the Allahabad session of the Muslim League, devised a scheme of creating a “Muslim India within India” to be “the final destiny of the Muslims at least of northern India.” He continued: “if the principle that the Indian Muslim is entitled to full and free development in his own Indian homelands is recognised as the basis of a

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130 Rajendra Prasad, op.cit., p.17-23.
131 K.L.Gauba, op.cit., p.22.
132 Michael O’ Dwyer, India As I Knew It, Mittal Publication, Delhi, 1988, p.183.
permanent communal settlement" he will be ready to stake his all for the freedom of India.  

He emphasised that this was his personal idea and that he believed the Muslims to stand by the federal idea. He enunciated his doctrine in view of India’s variety in climates, races, languages, creeds and social systems and contemplated the consolidation of the Muslims in the North West in one political unit of an all India federation. This he regarded as the ‘territorial solution’ of the communal problem. Iqbal did not ask for partition of India. His reference to ‘state’ does not denote “a separate or sovereign state but a big province within and as a part of the proposed Indian Federation.”

Iqbal was strongly opposed to separate electorates and thought that if the Muslim provinces were given autonomy they might be able to arrive at a better understanding with the other communities, rather than on the basis of separate electorates. He romanced with the idea of a true federation, in which the residuary powers were to be left entirely to self-governing units and the central federal government was to exercise only those powers, which were expressly vested in it by the free consent of the federal units. This was definitely not an imagination of a politician but of the first and foremost student of Islam.

The idea of ‘Pakistan’ was first mooted by a small group of Muslim students of the Cambridge University in January 1933. When the Joint Parliamentary Committee was carrying on its work of examining witnesses four of these students, Mohammed Aslam Khan, Sheikh Mohammad Sadiq, Chowdary Rahmat Ali and Inayatullah Khan brought a four-page pamphlet, entitled ‘Now or Never’. In this pamphlet, they for the first time advocated the idea of a partition of the country. The theory that the Muslims are a separate

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133 Shamloo (ed.), *Speeches and Statements of Iqbal*, Lahore, 1948, p.11.
136 S.P. Varma, op.cit., p.63.
138 Pakistan was coined by Chowdary Rahmat Ali in 1933.

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nation, and are therefore entitled to a separate state of their own was for the first time advocated in this pamphlet.

The proposed nation was to be provided with a homeland in the provinces of Punjab, Kashmir, Sind and the North Western Frontier. They pointed out that nothing should come in the way of the creation of this new Muslim State since it would be twice in size and equal in population to France.\(^{140}\)

These young students of Cambridge were clear about their difference from Iqbal’s ideas. They took pains to emphasise this difference and pointed out that whereas Iqbal has proposed amalgamation of these provinces into a single state forming a unit of the all India Federation, they wanted these provinces to be constituted into an independent state. The Muslims were not to be duped into a Hindu-dominated federation where they could not be masters of their own destiny and captains of their own souls.\(^{141}\)

But these thoughts were considered merely as the “vapourings of a few young enthusiasts”\(^ {142}\) and the Muslim representatives at Round Table Conference brushed it aside as merely “a Students’ Scheme” and considered it “chimerical and impracticable.”\(^ {143}\) It seems, as if the idea had gone into the brain of Rahmat Ali as wine for he reiterated the same arguments in a new pamphlet that he had brought forward when he returned India in July 1935. He enquired if Burma could be separated from India, why Pakistan could not be constituted into a separate state. In fact, Rahmat Ali seems to have made it the mission of his life.\(^ {144}\)

In 1940, he issued another pamphlet, ‘Millat of Islam and the Menace of Indianism’. In this pamphlet, he pointed out that the choice before the ‘millat’ or the Muslim people lay between the “reconstruction in Asia and destruction in India.” He condemned

\(^{141}\) C. Rahmat Ali, op.cit., p.222-223.
\(^{142}\) S.P. Varma, op.cit., p.64.
\(^{143}\) Uma Kaura, op.cit., p.170.
\(^{144}\) Rahmat Ali, op.cit., p.214.
Indianisation and pointed out that severing of ties with India which "never was and never would be the Muslim motherland" could only save the millat.\footnote{145} Gradually, Rahmat Ali extended his scope of movement beyond North West Frontier Provinces and began to talk of not one single Muslim state but a number of Muslim states. The North West Frontier Provinces was to be constituted as Pakistan and Bengal, with its hinterland of Assam, was to become the 'Bangs Islam'. Similarly, "by saving right of self-determination" the State of Hyderabad was to become Usmanistan "as a part of our patrimony" and these three independent Muslim states were to form a triple alliance.

Jinnah who since 1946 rallied for it imbibered this idea of Pakistan. He began to express that both the Congress and the British had held pistols at his head and "Today, we also have forged a pistol and are in a position to use it...This day we bid good bye to constitutional methods."\footnote{146}

A tug of war, which started between the Congress and the League for power, resulted into "an orgy of blood shed, murder and terror. Hundreds of lives were lost. Thousands were injured and property worth crores of rupees was destroyed. The League began to loot and commit acts of arson. Soon the Calcutta city was in the grip of ruffian of both the communities."\footnote{147}

**MUSLIMS AGAINST THE IDEA OF PAKISTAN**

Muslim political parties, groups and opinions began to persuade Jinnah to abandon his pertinacity for creating Pakistan and criticised him. Maulana Husain Ahmed Madni, blaming the British for political deadlock urged that "we cannot forget our aims of freedom and self-government even to the end of our lives."\footnote{148} He added that Pakistan would be of no use and would only strengthen the hands of imperialists.\footnote{149} He wrote an

\footnote{145}Ibid, p.213.  
\footnote{146}N.Mansergh (ed.), op.cit., Vol.VIII, p.86.  
\footnote{147}A.K.Azad, op.cit., p.169.  
\footnote{149}Shan Muhammad, Muslims and India's Freedom Movement, p.189.
open letter to Jinnah and emphasised that “we do not see political well being and prosperity for the Indian Moslems without achieving independence for the country.”

The Majlis-i-Ahrar, the militant nationalists of Punjab, vigorously condemned the scheme of Pakistan. Its leader Chaudhary Afzal Haque of Lahore exhorted those Muslims who considered the Muslim League as their saviour. He said: “It is the irony of fate that [Muslims] has become a victim of Muslim capitalists who wants to deliver him from Hindu users only to throw him into the hands of Muslim jagirdars. Hindu is looting him as an enemy and he [Muslim] would exploit him in the garb of a friend.”

Further castigating the concept of ‘Pakistan’, Afzal Haque said, “Ahrars consider this ‘Pakistan’ as ‘Palidistan’ [The land of Satan]...” Maulana Ataullah Shah Bukhari refused to acknowledge Quaid-i-Azam as the leader of the whole of India and condemned his slogan of Pakistan as a “big hoax.” Ghulam Ghaus Sarhadi called Jinnah’s scheme of Pakistan a “Castle in air” and turned down Jinnah’s appeal to merge into Muslim League.

All India Muslim Majlis Manifesto, an offshoot of the nationalist Muslim Organization, was bitterly critical of the Pakistan scheme. Its President Khan Bahadur Sheikh Mohammed Jan called it suicidal and said that Hindus and Muslims were interdependent for their national and economic life and to create geographical barrier would be blunder. The Muslim Majlis stood for “working up a glorious future” and they were “determined to play an important part in India’s struggle for independence.” He called Jinnah a ‘reactionary’, ‘selfish’ and ‘self-styled’ leader and said that he had “blocked the way to the goal of freedom and national unity.” He condemned his reactionary leadership as a powerful weapon in the hands of the British government to resist the aspiration of 40 million people in their struggle for freedom.

152 Ibid.
The Azad Muslim Conference, an organisation of Ansars also opposed the two-nation theory. Its President Khan Bahadur Allah Baksh declared India was “an indivisible whole and ... the common homeland of all the citizens, irrespective of race and religion.” It unequivocally emphasised that the goal of Indian Muslim was ‘complete independence’. It resolved, “any scheme which divides India into Hindu India and Muslim India, is impracticable and harmful to the country’s interest generally and those of Muslims in particular.” They aspired to build a new India which will neither be a ‘Hindu India’ nor a ‘Muslim India’ but an India in which every Hindu, every Mussalman and in fact every citizen would find the highest satisfaction in all walks of life and reiterated their slogans of ‘unity’ and ‘brotherhood’ of all people of India.157

South India Muslim Anti-Separation Conference, a body formed in the wake of Pakistan demand opposed the scheme in a gathering at Madras. It reiterated that on the basis of language, literature, science, philosophy, art and religion, it could be stated correctly that the Hindus and Mussalmans of India “had evolved a common point of view, a common way of living, a common civilisation” since many centuries. Its President Muhammad Yusuf Sharif asserted that “The unity between the Hindus and the Muslims was not artificial but real, fostered by age-long association and close contact and that the Hindus and the Moslems could evolve a common nationality and continue to work together for the common goal of all.”158

Opposing the Pakistan scheme, Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan declared, “We do not ask for freedom, that there may be a Muslim Raj here and Hindu Raj elsewhere. If that is what Pakistan means I will have nothing to do with it...If you want real freedom for Punjab... Then that Punjab will not be Pakistan, but just Punjab, the land of five rivers; Punjab is Punjab and will always remain Punjab whatever anybody may say. This, then briefly, is

156 The Modern Review, May 1940.
158 The Modern Review, July 1941.
the political future which I visualise for my province and for my country under any new constitution.159

When he was exhorted by Penderal Moon to accept Pakistan concept as the best solution, Sikandar Hayat Khan got bewildered and replied, “How can you talk like this? You have been long enough in Western Punjab to know the Muslims there. Surely you can see that Pakistan would be an invitation to them to cut the throat of every Hindu bania... I do hope I won’t hear you talk like this again. Pakistan would mean massacre.”160 His son Khizr Hayat Khan Tiwana, who opposed Jinnah tooth and nail and aligned himself with the Congress, procured these views.

Sir Sultan Ahmed also treated the Pakistan scheme with disfavour. In a treatise, A Treaty Between India and the United Kingdom, he rather suggested that the Hindus and Muslims to accept 40 percent representation, depressed class 10 percent, Indian Christians, Anglo-Indians, Sikhs and Parsis etc. 10 percent. The Cabinet was also to reflect the same percentage of representation.161

Mohammed Asif Qidwai saw no reason in League’s demand for a separate homeland. He accepted that the problems of Muslim minority had assumed gigantic proportion but the solution the League had suggested was regarded unhealthy. To Asaf Ali, “Even if the demand of separate homeland was granted what would happen to the Muslims who would be left in the Hindu India which will be by far the larger part of the country.”162

Even the Bengali Muslims who had followed the Lahore Resolution felt perturbed by the new stand and Jinnah assured them that “the (Pakistan) resolution was not meant to amend the Lahore Resolution, but only to have a separate Constituent Assembly from that of ‘Hindustan in order to prepare two constitutions on the basis of Lahore Resolution.”163

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159 Asghar Ali Engineer, Indian Muslims: A Study of the Minority Problem in India, Ajanta, Delhi, 1985, p.103.
161 The Modern Review, February 1945.
As the partition of Bengal became a real possibility, within the context of the division of India in early 1947, the Bengal Muslim League leaders were divided between ‘Divisionists’ and ‘Unionists’. The former wanted division of Bengal. Akram Khan, Hamidul Haq Choudhary and Nurul Amin led it. The Suhrawardy and Abul Hashim group wanted to keep a united, independent Bengal164 as was promised by the Lahore Resolution.165

In February 1947, Abul Hashim secretly discussed with Sarat Chandra Bose, a veteran Bengali Congress leader, plans for mobilising a movement for Sovereign Bengal. The publication of these plans created a countrywide sensation in the press against the proposal. In April and May, Suhrawardy and Abul Hashim frantically tried to work out an agreement with the willing Congress leaders, and also publicly pleaded with the Hindu intelligentsia for a united Bengal. Suhrawardy said, “that he has visualised Bengal all along as a Sovereign Independent State and not a part of any Union.”166 He also stressed, “the cry for the partition of Bengal is nothing but an attempt to get the rich prize of Calcutta and thus deprived the Muslims of trade and commerce”.167 Abul Hashim argued that the Lahore Resolution “never contemplated the creation of any Akhund (united) Muslim State.168

On 26 April Suhrawardy met Mountbatten and tried to convince him, “that given enough time he was confident that he could get Bengal to remain as a complete entity...[and] that he could get Jinnah to agree that it need not join Pakistan if it was prepared to remain united.” Though Mountbatten said that he was himself “against splitting India up into many units” and he favoured keeping Bengal “as one economic unit”, but he was not very enthusiastic about its Sovereign Status.169

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165 ibid, p.12.
166 Pakistan Times, 29 April 1947.
167 Pakistan Times, 9 May 1947.
168 Pakistan Times, 1 May 1947.
In the third week of May, an agreement was reached for a united Bengal between H.S. Suhrawardy, Abul Hashim, Fazl-ur-Rahman (who had moved the famous Lahore Resolution.) and Abdul Malik on the League side and Bose and two other Congress leaders. The agreement was subject to the approval of the high command of the two parties.\textsuperscript{170} Suhrawardy "once more" tried to "impress upon the Quaid-i-Azam" the terrible disaster that was on its wake to overwhelm Bengal and particularly the Muslims of Bengal, if Bengal is partitioned.\textsuperscript{171}

Besides, the Momin Conference, Krishak Praja Party, All India Shia Conference, Khudai Khidmatgars, Anjuman-i-Watan of Baluchistan and Independent Muslims all of them supported the call for United India and opposed the Pakistan Scheme.\textsuperscript{172} But it was the irony of the situation that the Communist Party confused the situation and supported the concept of Pakistan identifying it with Muslims nationalism and aspirations of the Muslim masses. It completely ignored the linguistic and cultural divergences between the Muslims of different regions.\textsuperscript{173}

Jinnah now began to look towards the imperial government and hoped that "If the British declared their decision in favour of Pakistan, there would be no trouble, the Hindus will accept it."\textsuperscript{174}

The later part of 1946 saw the communal disturbances unleashing the worst horror in almost every part of the country.\textsuperscript{175} While Jinnah blamed the Cabinet Mission, the Congress and Gandhi\textsuperscript{176} blamed it as "a political demonstration by the League."\textsuperscript{177} Jinnah was now onwards banking on a "deliberate provocation of violence"\textsuperscript{178} so as to accede to

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{170} Civil and Military Gazette, 27 May 1947.
\item \textsuperscript{171} Hasan Zaheer, \textit{op.cit.}, p.12.
\item \textsuperscript{172} Shan Muhammad, \textit{Muslims and India's Freedom Movement}, p.192.
\item \textsuperscript{173} Asghar Ali Engineer, \textit{op.cit.}, p.11.
\item \textsuperscript{174} Jinnah expressed this on 22 January 1946, (N. Mansergh (ed.), \textit{op.cit.}, Vol. VI, p.384.)
\item \textsuperscript{175} Shan Muhammad, \textit{Muslims and India's Freedom Movement}, p.198.
\item \textsuperscript{176} Pyarelal, \textit{op.cit.}, p.236.
\item \textsuperscript{177} The Statesman, 20 August 1946.
\item \textsuperscript{178} Brian Lapping, \textit{op.cit.}, p.66.
\end{itemize}
his demand for Pakistan even without its claim to represent the will of majority of Muslims.  

Instead of making any arrangement to deal with the growing communal riots, the British government began to fan it. Official passivity was cited by British sources themselves. The Viceroy’s effort to set up a short-term Interim Government at the centre with both the Congress and the League participating failed because the League wanted the proportion of five Congress Hindus, five League Muslims, one Sikh and one Scheduled Caste. The Congress rejected it as a step back from even the Simla Conference.

The Viceroy began to realise the need for getting the Congress into the Interim Government, even if the League stayed out. He believed, “If Congress will take the responsibility, they will realise that firm control of unruly elements is necessary and they may put down the Communists and try to curb their own Left Wing. Also I should hope to keep them so busy with administration that they would have much less time for politics.”

The Director of the Intelligence Bureau also noted that the “labour situation is becoming increasingly dangerous...until a responsible Indian Government is introduced at the centre, there is little that can be done.” With this intention, the British government formally invited the Congress on 12 August to form a Provisional Government at the centre with the assurance that “it will be for you to consider whether you should first discuss them (the proposals) with Mr. Jinnah.”

Nehru sought Jinnah’s co-operation but even a personal discussion led to no result. Afraid of an uprising, the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State instructed Lord Wavell to go

179 Sumit Sarkar, Modern India, p.327.
183 Home (Poll.) 12, July 1947, NAI.
ahead. On 2 September 1946, the Interim Government with Nehru as Vice-President took office. It was composed of 12 members. Jinnah was, however, brought into the Interim Government not by Nehru but by the Viceroy on 26 October. Even though Jinnah had openly declared that they were “going into the Interim Government to get a foothold to fight for our cherished goal of Pakistan.”

The Muslim League did everything to act as a check on the Congress seeking the Viceroy’s veto of measures. This naturally angered the Congress, which began to suspect that the Viceroy was playing a power game. Nehru regretted the choice of the League nominee and wrote to the Viceroy on 26 October, “The choice itself indicated a desire to have conflict rather than to work in co-operation.”

In fact, the conflict between the Congress and the League was a part of the imperial strategy to delay withdrawal from India. Writing to Cripps on 15 December Sardar Patel described the British invitation as “a betrayal.” The British government succeeded in its plan. As both the League and the Congress continued to confront each other, the Congress could not concentrate in its programme of communal harmony, which resulted in a large-scale violence in Bengal and Punjab.

NWFP now began to rally for Pakistan. The Pathan Congressmen, including Abdul Qayyum Khan, deserted the Congress and five thousand Red Shirt volunteers resigned.

In fact, by 10 August 1946, Wavell was outlining the Pakistan scheme, as a solution to the problem, in view of the Congress and the League disagreements.

188 Cited by V.P. Menon, op.cit., p.317.
192 Abdul Wali Khan, Facts are Facts – The Untold Story of India’s Partition, Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi, 1989, p.93.
The Labour government in view of intolerable situation in India decided upon two alternatives, either to re-establish its power in India against the determined opposition of the major political elements or transfer responsibility immediately. The British government chose the latter course which carried risks "but perhaps less than the alternative." Attlee and his colleagues were also afraid that a civil war in India might lead to totalitarian tendencies and decided upon urgent action of a new personal approach to break the deadlock.

On 20 February 1947, the British government with "definite intention" decided to transfer power "into responsible hands" not later than June 1948. The declaration also stated that in case the Constituent Assembly failed to frame an agreed constitution, the government would consider "to whom the power of the Central Government in British India should be handed over on due date". It was also decided upon whether as to exercise "some form of Central Government for British India in whole or in some areas to the existing Provincial Governments or in such other way as may seem most reasonable and in the best interests of the Indian people." Regarding the princely states, the British government did not "intend to hand over their powers and obligations under Paramountcy to any government of British India."

Maulana Azad praised Attlee's declaration. He writes, "Mr. Attlee's decision was governed by his determination to help India attain independence. Anyone with the slightest imperialist tendencies could have easily exploited India's weakness. In fact, Hindu-Muslim differences had always been exploited by the British government. This was their supreme defence against Indian demand for independence. Mr. Attlee was resolved that nobody should ever bring such a charge against the Labour Government."

But at the same time, Maulana Azad felt that Lord Wavell's stand to transfer power after the communal problem was solved might have been correct. He writes, "If Lord Wavell's..."
advice had been followed and the solution of the Indian problem deferred for a year or two, it is possible that the Muslim League would have got tired of opposition. Even if the Muslim League had not taken a more positive attitude, the Muslim masses of India would have probably repudiated the negative attitude of the Muslim League. It is possible that perhaps, the tragedy of Indian partition may have been avoided.199

It seems that Maulana Azad failed to realise that Lord Wavell was an imperialist. Had the British government deferred its independence announcement, it would not have helped the Indian aspiration for freedom nor have it stabilised the communal problem; rather, it would definitely given a scope to the colonists to try to accentuate it further to hold India back.

Lord Mountbatten, the new Viceroy plunged into the negotiations with leading political parties, but as the Congress and the League failed to reach an amicable settlement decided upon the partition of India. The Congress accepted it.200 When Lord Mountbatten broadcasted the plan for the division of the country, Sardar Patel was first to accept it. Jawaharlal, who was firm opponent of the partition, was won over by Mountbatten.

This change in the thinking of the top ranking leaders of the Congress hurt Maulana Azad who stood firmly for an undivided India. To him, the partition of India was harmful not only to the Muslims but also to the whole country and he was convinced that the Cabinet Mission plan was the ‘best solution’ to the Indian political scenario.201 Korejo observes, “Maulana Azad, who firmly believed that the Muslim leaders of the Muslim minority provinces, must continue the struggle within the Congress, otherwise, should India be partitioned...the Muslim minority in India would be left without any senior level leadership.”202

Maulana Azad truly believed that the real problem of the Indian people was economic and not communal. He was afraid that the partition would create more problems than it can

200 The Hindustan Times, 14 August 1994.
solve. He felt that only in an undivided India could the communal frenzy subside with the lapse of time.\textsuperscript{203} Maulana Azad, as a seasoned statesman, saw in the truncated Pakistan a disaster for the Muslims and felt that by accepting such a decision Jinnah “would be committing suicide.”\textsuperscript{204}

Maulana Azad knew that Mahatma Gandhi had always opposed the vivisection of India, so he rushed to him. Gandhi assured him “If the Congress wishes to accept partition, it will be over my dead body. So long as I am alive, I will never agree to the partition of India. Nor will I allow Congress to accept it.”\textsuperscript{205} “India’s vivisection is like the vivisection of my own body.”\textsuperscript{206}

Gurdarshan Singh Dhillon accused Gandhi and the Congress. He wrote, “its [Congress] pleas for a unified India was just superficial became clear when Mahatma Gandhi leading his associates supported and pleaded for the partition of India, leaving Abdul Ghaffar Khan, ‘Frontier Gandhi’ and his associates ‘Khudai Khidmatgars’, nationalist Muslims led by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and the Sikhs stunned and betrayed.”\textsuperscript{207} “The letting down of the Red Shirts and the Sikhs was not an act of carelessness on the part of the Congress leaders nor even a blunder but an act of gross and unpardonable betrayal.”\textsuperscript{208}

Maulana Azad was greatly shocked when the Mahatma “began to repeat arguments which Sardar Patel had already used.” He recorded, “For two hours, I pleaded with him but could make no impression on him. In despondency, I said at last, ‘If even you have now adopted these views, I see no hope of saving India from catastrophe’.”\textsuperscript{209}

Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan expressed the bitterness at the Congress betrayal and character later when he said, “We Pathans never wanted partition, nor did I even agree to it. I fought...”\textsuperscript{202 M.S. Korejo, op. cit., p.135.}
\textsuperscript{203}Shan Muhammad, Muslims and India’s Freedom Movement, p.199.
\textsuperscript{205} A. K. Azad, op. cit., p.203.
\textsuperscript{206} The Times of India, 18 August 1996.
\textsuperscript{207} Gurdarshan Singh Dhillon in Gopal Singh (ed.), op.cit., p. 247.
\textsuperscript{209} A.K. Azad, op.cit.
for a united independent India. We ourselves wanted Pakhtoonistan within India for Pushto-speaking people. We gave hundred percent support to the Congress right up to the end. I opposed my Muslim brothers in Muslim League and firmly stood by the Congress to win freedom for all Indians. But the Congress let us down. The Congress had promised to keep India united and the Congress had supported our demand for Pakhtoonistan – a home for Pushto-speaking people. We had fully trusted Mahatma Gandhi, Panditji and Sardar Patel, but when they should have stood firm and united for which we had all fought so long, the Congress accepted partition and deserted us. What a tragedy [?], the result was that you in India became independent and we Pathans are still slaves. You see that I am still fighting for Pakhtoonistan and live in exile.”

On 1 May 1947, when the Congress Working Committee met, Frontier Gandhi attended the meeting and sat close to Mahatma. Though “he was down with fever, yet he was pressing Gandhiji’s limbs on being dissuaded by the latter he became emotional and said “it is last day, so let me. It will make me well. Before long we shall become aliens…The end of our long fight will be to pass under the domination of Pakistan – away from Bapu, away from India, who knows what the future holds for us.”

The news of the acceptance of the Mountbatten Plan by both the political parties spread like wildfire. It administered a severe blow to the nationalist Muslims. Jamiat-ul-Ulema, which had always stood for a united India, vehemently criticised the Congress. The Ulemas deeply distrusted the western-educated League leaders and were deeply “concerned about the position of Muslims who would be left in a predominantly Hindu India if a separate Pakistan were formed.”

The Momin Ansar, the Ahrars, the Shia Conference condemned and rejected the partition as not a solution of the multifarious problems facing India. On June 8, the Khaksars tried to oppose the League against the partition. Even Jinnah was baffled and tried to call off partition. But partition had become the fait accompli and now nobody could have

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211 M.S. Korejo, op.cit., p.179.

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Nehru was in a hurry to take over the charge of the truncated country. The subcontinent was partitioned on 14 August 1947. When partition actually took place, rivers of blood flowed in large parts of the country. Innocent men, women and children were massacred.

Maulana Azad gave a speech at Delhi’s Red Fort after partition, requesting Muslims not to go to Pakistan. He said, the partition was against the grain of the Indian culture which did not believe in “divorce before marriage.” At the meeting of the Working Committee, Maulana Azad said, “Partition was a tragedy for India and the only thing that could be said in its favour was that we have done our best to avoid division, but we had failed...We should accept our defeat but we should at the same time try to ensure that our culture was not divided.”

213 Shan Muhammad, op.cit., p. 201.
214 Choudhary Khaliquzaman, Pathway to Pakistan, Longmans Green, Karachi, 1961, p.386.