CHAPTER II
Chapter II

Cabinet Mission – the disapproval and the Eloquent Press

Cabinet Mission's Effort to Bridge the Gap

“London, February 19 – Three British Cabinet Ministers are going to India to discuss with leaders of Indian opinion, the framing of an Indian Constitution. They are Lord Pethick Lawrence - Secretary of State for India, Sir Stafford Cripps – President of The Board of Trade and A.V.Alexander – First Lord of the Admirality.”¹

DECISIVE YEAR FOR INDIA – NEHRU ON COMING REFORMS – UPHEAVAL IF CABINET MISSION FAILS

Jhansi, March 2 – At a meeting today, Pandit Nehru said that 1946 would be the most eventful and decisive year for India and added: “The 150 year old British rule in this country has almost come to an end. They want to know from us if we would give them trade facilities in a free India. Well, I tell them frankly, it all depends on how you quit our country. If you leave a trail of bitterness behind, we can not have any track with you.”²

CONGRESS NEGOTIATIONS WITH CABINET MISSION DELEGATES TO BE SELECTED BY WORKING COMMITTEE

Bombay, March 11 – The selection of the Congress delegation to meet and negotiate with the British Cabinet Mission and the procedure to be adopted by the Congress in the matter of negotiations are likely to be discussed at the three-day session of the Congress Working Committee which meets here tomorrow at 2 p.m. Since the last meeting of the Committee at Calcutta three months ago, the political situation in the country, in the words of the Congress President “has undergone a revolutionary change.”³ No doubt the Cabinet Mission had evoked
hope in the minds of the leaders in India, expecting a peaceful solution and transfer of powers which would have been acceptable and the above mentioned newspaper clippings are the evidences to this hope. But how far it was successful or was it absolutely a failure that will be discussed in this chapter. The Cabinet Mission, however, decided the future activities at the last stage of the British rule in India.

The 'fundamental principles' of the Cabinet Mission as enunciated by Lord Pethick Lawrence in his scheme were constitution of a Union Government dealing with Foreign Affairs, Defence and Communications and two groups of Provinces, one of the Predominantly Muslim Provinces, dealing with all other subjects which the Provinces in the respective group desire to be dealt with in common. The Provincial Governments will deal with all other subjects and will have all the residuary sovereign rights. It was contemplated that the Indian (Princely) States will take their appropriate place in this structure on terms to be negotiated with them. The London Times reports—"Indians free to choose own position in world. Britain promises to help to attain speedy, self-government—Cabinet Mission's firm resolve to succeed—minority not to veto advance of majority"—says Mr. Clement Atlee, British Prime Minister.

The Cabinet Mission arrived in India on 24th March, 1946. At that juncture the most important issue was not the political issue between India and Britain but the communal question in India. The Muslims were extremely anxious about their future. A minority in India as a whole they "were troubled by the fear that their position and status in independent India would not be secure."

The Statesman, Calcutta reports:
CABINET MISSION IN DELHI – Welcome by Lord Wavell

New Delhi, March, 24 – Lord Pethick Lawrence, Sir Stafford Cripps and Mr. A.V. Alexander - the three Cabinet Ministers on whose labours in conjunction with Lord Wavell and India’s spokesmen the attention of the country is now focussed – arrived at New Delhi this afternoon and drove straight to the Viceroy’s House to begin their work. On the previous day Sardar Patel discussed about the outcomings of the negotiations and made some points which were covered by the newspapers. The March 23 issue of the Statesman reported: Patel on Cabinet Mission’s Task – Immediate Transfer of Power Demanded.

Bombay, March 22 – Sardar Patel on the eve of the British Cabinet Mission’s arrival in India, discussed today the prospects of the forthcoming negotiations. He made the following points:

1. India demands immediate transfer of power. She can brook no further delay.

2. The Congress is prepared to provide adequate safeguards to protect legitimate minority interests, but is not prepared to accept Mr. Jinnah’s demand for the division of India.

3. The Congress does not envisage any serious trouble if real power is transferred.

4. The next few weeks will present "the biggest and perhaps the last opportunity" to Britain to settle the Indian question amicably.

5. The present bitterness between Britain and India will disappear and a friendly alliance between the two countries is possible if power is transferred immediately.
6. In International and foreign affairs, independent India will always stand for world peace. She has no aggressive intentions.

7. Independent India will have her own army, strong enough for internal and external defence, but she will not require a huge standing army, as other nations because she has no intention of external aggression.

8. Independent India will try to maintain friendship with all nations.⁶

The programmes of the Cabinet Mission were pre-decided as reported by the Statesman: Cabinet Mission Programme – Gandhi and Jinnah to be interviewed – New Delhi, March 18, Invitations have been sent out on behalf of the Viceroy and the Cabinet Delegation to Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Jinnah for interviews with the delegation on April 3 & 4 respectively, according to an official communique.⁹

For the first three weeks after its arrival, the British Ministers carried on exploratory discussions with representative Indian leaders of all recognised groups and parties.

Between April 1 and 17 they interviewed 472 persons in 182 sittings. The Cabinet Mission proposals may be summed up in the following manner:

1) Formation of Union of India with both British India and Indian States.

2) Union would have jurisdiction over
   a) Foreign Affairs (b) Defence
   c) Communication and information

   It shall have power to raise finances required for these subjects.

3) Central Assembly and Union Ministry would be constituted by members elected from both the British India and Indian states.

4) All subjects other than union subjects would be provincial subjects.
5) States of British India were divided into three groups which are as follows:


2. Group B: Muslim dominated and/or majority provinces, Punjab, North Western Frontier and Sindh.

3. Group C: Mixed and Muslim majority Bengal and Assam.

The constitution of union and groups was envisaged to empower the provinces to reconsider the grouping at ten yearly intervals. In such reconsideration any province or any group had the liberty to opt out from the group by a majority decision in the Legislative Assembly. Sikhs in the Punjab opposed it. Assam, a Hindu majority province, objected grouping with Muslim majority Bengal. The proposal was initially accepted by Mahatma Gandhi but later on he opined it as "worse than Pakistan." Ultimately both Congress and Jinnah accepted the proposal.

The Congress Working Committee met on 12th April, 1946 to discuss on the scheme of Abul Kalam Azad and the Cabinet Mission. Abul Kalam's formula was that only three subjects would belong compulsorily to the Central Government i.e., Defence, Foreign Affairs and Communications & Information. All other functions and powers must reside with the provinces. Gandhi, who attended the meeting accepted the scheme and it became clear to the Working Committee that the Indian problem could not be solved on any other lines. But Azad's solution fell short of the demand of the Muslim League, which began to talk loosely of the partition of India and for the establishment of an independent State for the Muslim majority areas. But the Cabinet Mission dismissed the suggestion
of the League as unacceptable and was in favour of a solution more or less on the lines suggested by Azad.¹²

Negotiations continued at various places and several meetings were held after which the members of the Cabinet Mission framed their proposals which according to them was the best in setting up a new constitution in India. A conference was held in Shimla which opened on 5th May 1946 with a short address by Lord Pethick Lawrence, followed by preliminary statements by the parties. The Conference then proceeded to deal with the items of an agenda which were as follows:

AGENDA

1. Groups of Provinces:
   a) Composition
   b) Method of deciding group subjects
   c) Character of group organisation

2. Union
   a) Union subjects
   b) Character of Union Constitution
   c) Finance

3. Constitution – making machinery
   a) Composition
   b) Functions
      i) in respect of the Union
      ii) in respect of groups
      iii) in respect of provinces
On 8th May, 1946, the Secretary of State sent the presidents of the Congress and the Muslim League the following list of suggested points for agreement between the representatives of the Congress and the Muslim League:

1) There shall be an all-India Union Government and Legislature dealing with foreign affairs, defence, communications, fundamental rights and having the necessary powers to obtain for itself the finances it requires for these subjects.

2) All the remaining powers shall vest in the provinces.

3) Groups of provinces may be formed and such groups may determine the provincial subjects which they desire to take in common.

4) The groups may set up their own executives and legislatures.

5) The Legislature of the Union shall be composed of equal proportions from the Muslim – majority provinces and from the Hindu – majority provinces whether or not these or any of them have formed themselves into groups, together with representatives of the States.

6) The Government of the Union shall be constituted in the same proportion as the Legislature.

7) The constitutions of the Union and the groups (if any) shall contain a provision whereby any province can be a majority vote of its Legislative Assembly call for a reconsideration of the terms of the constitution after an initial period of 10 years and at 10 yearly intervals thereafter. For the purpose of such reconsideration a body shall be constituted on the same basis as the original Constituent Assembly and with the same provisions as to voting and shall have power to amend the constitution in any way decided upon.
8. The Constitution – making machinery to arrive at a constitution on the above basis shall be as follows:

A. Representatives shall be elected from each provincial Assembly in proportion to the strength of the various parties in that Assembly on the basis of $1/10^{th}$ of their numbers.

B. Representatives shall be invited from the States on the basis of their population in proportion to the representation from British India.

C. The Constituent Assembly so formed shall meet at the earliest date possible in New Delhi.

D. After its preliminary meeting at which the general order of business will be settled, it will divide into three sections, one section representing the Hindu – majority provinces, one section representing the Muslim majority provinces and one representing the States.

E. The first two sections will then meet separately to decide the provincial constitutions for their group and if they wish, a group constitution.

F. When these have been settled it will be open to any province to opt out of its original group and into the other group or to remain outside any group.

G. Thereafter the three bodies will meet together to settle the constitution for the Union on the lines agreed in paragraphs 1-7 above.
H. No major point in the Union Constitution which affects the communal issue shall be deemed to be passed by the Assembly unless a majority of both the two major communities vote in its favour.

9. The Viceroy shall forthwith call together the above Constitution – making machinery which shall be governed by the provisions stated in paragraph 8 above.

Mr. Jinnah sent a long letter to the Secretary of the State protesting that these points were a fundamental departure from the original formula proposed by the Secretary of State. According to him there were many objectionable features in the new suggestions and that no useful purpose would be served by a discussion of them. The Congress President also wrote to the Secretary of State expressing their objections to the compulsory grouping of provinces and parity. The Conference met on 9th and again on 11th but the meeting was not a success. Each of the parties was asked to furnish a statement setting out its attitude on the points that were still outstanding.

The Muslim League submitted a memorandum setting out its minimum demands in the following terms:

1. The six Muslim provinces (the Punjab, North-West Frontier Province, Baluchistan, Sind, Bengal and Assam) shall be grouped together as one group and will deal with all other subjects and matters except foreign affairs, defence and communications necessary for defence, which may be dealt with by the constitution – making bodies of the two groups of provinces – Muslim provinces (hereinafter named Pakistan Group) and Hindu provinces – sitting together.
2. There shall be a separate Constitution-making body for the six Muslim provinces named above, which will frame constitutions for the group and the provinces in the group and will determine the list of subjects that shall be provincial and Central (of the Pakistan Federation) with residuary sovereign powers vesting in the provinces.

3. The method of election of the representatives to the constitution-making body will be such as would secure proper representation to the various communities in proportion to their population in each province of the Pakistan Group.

4. After the Constitution of the Pakistan Federal Government and the provinces are finally framed by the Constitution-making body, it will be open to any province of the group to decide to opt out of its group, provided the wishes of the people of that province are ascertained by a referendum to opt out or not.

5. It must be open to discussion in the joint Constitution-making body as to whether the Union will have a legislature or not. The method of providing the Union with finance should also be left for decision of the joint meeting of the two Constitution-making bodies, but in no event shall it be by means of taxation.

6. There should be parity of representation between the two groups of provinces in the Union executive and the legislature, if any.

7. No major point in the Union Constitution which affects the communal issue shall be deemed to be passed in the joint Constitution-making body, unless the majority of the members of the Constitution-making body of the Hindu provinces and the majority of the members of the Constitution-making body of
making body of the Pakistan group, present and voting are separately in its favour.

8. No decision, legislature, executive or administrative, shall be taken by the Union in regard to any matter of a controversial nature, except by a majority of three-fourths.

9. In group and provincial Constitutions, fundamental rights and safeguards concerning religion, culture and other matters affecting the different communities will be provided for.

10. The Constitution of the Union shall contain a provision whereby any province can, by a majority vote of its Legislative Assembly, call for reconsideration of the terms of the Constitution and will have the liberty to secede from the Union at any time after an initial period of ten years.

The following were the points suggested on behalf of the Congress:

1) The Constituent Assembly to be formed as follows:
   i) Representatives shall be elected by each Provincial Assembly by proportional representation (single transferable vote). The number so elected should be one-fifth of the number of members of the Assembly and they may be members of the Assembly or others.
   ii) Representatives from the States on the basis of their population proportion to the representation from British India. How representatives are to be chosen is to be considered later.

2. The Constituent Assembly shall draw up a Constitution for the Federal Union. This shall consist of an All-India Federal Government and Legislature dealing with foreign affairs, defence, communications, fundamental rights, currency, customs and planning as well as such other
subjects as, on closer scrutiny, may be found to be intimately allied to them. The Federal Union will have necessary powers to obtain for itself the finances it requires for these subjects and the power to raise revenues in its own right. The Union must also have power to take remedial action in cases of breakdown of the constitution and in grave public emergencies.

3. All the remaining powers shall vest in the provinces or units.

4. Groups of provinces may be formed and such groups may determine the provincial subjects which they desire to take in common.

5. After the Constituent Assembly has decided the Constitution for the All-India Federal Union as laid down in paragraph 2 above, the representatives of the provinces may form groups to decide the provincial constitutions for their group and if they wish, a group constitution.

6. No major point in the All-India Federal Constitution which affects the communal issue shall be deemed to be passed by the Constituent Assembly unless a majority of the members of the community or communities concerned present in the Assembly and voting are separately in its favour. Provided that in case there is no agreement on any such issue, it will be referred to arbitration. In case of doubt as to whether any point is a major communal issue, the Speaker will decide, or, if so desired, it may be referred to the Federal Court.

7. In the event of a dispute arising in the process of Constitution-making the specific issue shall be referred to arbitration.

8. The Constitution should provide machinery for its revision at any time subject to such checks as may be desired. If so desired, it may be
specifically stated that the whole Constitution may be reconsidered after ten years.

A statement was issued by Attlee in the House of Commons on 16th May, 1946. Muslim League's repeated demand for the partition of the country and formation of an independent State for Muslims was rejected by the Mission. Their plan was in spirit the same as Azad's formula. Even Gandhiji was satisfied and said, "The Cabinet Mission Plan is the best political solution for a country like India."13

The Cabinet Mission recommended that the new Constitution should take the following basic form:

1) There should be a Union of India, embracing both British India and the States, which should deal with the following subjects: foreign affairs, defence and communications; and should have the powers necessary to raise the finances required for the above subjects.

2) The Union should have an executive and a legislature constituted from British – Indian and States' representatives. Any question raising a major communal issue in the legislature should require for its decision a majority of the representatives present and voting of each of the two major communities as well as a majority of all the members present and voting.

3) All subjects other than the Union subjects and all residuary powers should vest in the provinces.

4) The States will retain all subjects and powers other than those ceded to the Union.
5) Provinces should be free to form groups with executives and legislatures and each group could determine the provincial subjects to be taken in common.

6) The Constitutions of the Union and of the groups should contain a provision whereby any province could by a majority vote of its Legislative Assembly call for a reconsideration of the terms of the Constitution after an initial period of ten years and at ten-yearly intervals thereafter.

The publication of the Cabinet Mission's Statement was followed by broadcasts by the Secretary of State and the Viceroy. Sir Stafford Cripps also addressed a press conference at which he explained the background and implications of the Statement which, he stressed was 'not merely the Mission's statement, but the Statement of His Majesty's Government' and expressed the hope that the Indian people would accept it in the spirit of co-operation in which it had been drawn up. This was followed by another press conference at which the Secretary of State answered numerous questions on various aspects of the Cabinet Mission plan. The Congress Working Committee formally accepted the Cabinet Mission Plan on 28th June, 1946. Within a short time the Muslim League, under the leadership of Mohammad Ali Jinnah acknowledged the same and there was a sense of jubilation throughout the country.

But Jinnah made a long statement on 22nd May in which he described the Cabinet Mission's Statement as 'Cryptic with several lacunas.' He regretted that the Mission should have negatived the League's demand for the establishment of a complete sovereign State of Pakistan, which he said, was the only solution of the constitutional problem of India and which alone could secure stable
government and lead to the happiness and welfare, not only of the two major communities, but of all the peoples of the Indian sub-continent.

On 24th May, after much deliberation, the Congress Working Committee also adopted a resolution raising various points in regard to the Statement – particularly in the light of the Congress objectives. Among the important points raised by the Committee was that of the grouping of provinces.

On 25th May, the Cabinet Mission and the Viceroy issued the following statement:

1. The Delegation have considered the statement of the President of the Muslim League dated 22nd May and the resolution dated 24th May of the Working Committee of the Congress.

2. The position is that since the Indian leaders, after prolonged discussion, failed to arrive at an agreement, the delegation put forward their recommendations as the nearest approach to reconciling the views of the two main parties. The scheme stands as a whole and can only succeed if it is accepted and worked in a spirit of co-operation.

3. The Delegation wish also to refer briefly to a few points that have been raised in the statement and resolution.

4. The authority and the functions of the Constituent Assembly and the procedure which it is intended to follow are clear from the Cabinet Delegation's Statement. Once the Constituent Assembly is formed and working on this basis, there is no intention of interfering with its discretion or questioning its decisions. When the constituent Assembly has completed its labours, His Majesty's Government will recommend to Parliament such action as may be necessary for the cession of sovereignty to the Indian people, subject only to two matters which are mentioned in the Statement.
and which we believe are not controversial, namely, adequate provision for the protection of the minorities (paragraph 20 of the Statement) and willingness to conclude a treaty with His Majesty's Government to cover matters arising out of the transfer of power (paragraph 22 of the Statement).

5. It is a consequence of the system of election that a few Europeans can be elected to the Constituent Assembly. Whether the right so given will be exercised is a matter for them to decide.

6. The representative of Baluchistan will be elected in a joint meeting of the Shahi Jirga and the non-official member of the Quetta Municipality.

7. In Coorg the whole Legislative Council will have the right to vote, but the official members will receive instructions not to take part in the election.

8. The interpretation put by the Congress resolution on paragraph 15 of the Statement to the effect that the provinces can in the first instance make the choice whether or not to belong to the section in which they are placed does not accord with the Delegation's intentions. The reasons for the grouping of the provinces are well known and this is an essential feature of the scheme and can only be modified by agreement between the parties. The right to opt out of the groups after the Constitution – making has been completed will be exercised by the people themselves, since at the first election under the new provincial constitution this question of opting out will obviously be a major issue and all those entitled to vote under the new franchise will be able to take their share in a truly democratic decision.
9. The question of how the States' representatives should be appointed to the Constituent Assembly is clearly one which must be discussed with the States. It is not a matter for decision by the Delegation.

10. It is agreed that the Interim Government will have a new basis. That basis is that all portfolios, including that of the War Member, will be held by Indians; and that the members will be selected in consultation with the Indian political parties. These are very significant changes in the Government of India and a long step towards independence. His Majesty's Government will recognise the effect of these changes, will attach the fullest weight to them and will give to the Indian Government the greatest possible freedom in the exercise of the day-to-day administration of India.

11. As the Congress statement recognises, the present Constitution must continue during the interim period; and the interim Government cannot therefore be made legally responsible to the central legislature. There is, however, nothing to prevent the members of the Government, individually or by common consent, from resigning, if they fail to pass an important measure through the legislature, or if a vote of non-confidence is passed against them.

12. There is of course no intention of retaining British troops in India against the wish of an independent India under the new constitution; but during the interim period, which it is hoped will be short, the British Parliament has, under the present Constitution, the ultimate responsibility for the security of India and it is necessary therefore that British troops should remain.
The Sikhs, the Working Committee of the All-India Scheduled Castes Federation, the Congress to some extent were all dissatisfied. The Muslim League reiterated that a separate sovereign Pakistan was still the unalterable objective of the Muslims in India. A joint consultation was invited from Nehru and Jinnah but a complete deadlock was reached.

The Cabinet Mission left India on 29th June after a stay of more than 3 months. Meanwhile both the parties started preparation for the elections to the Constituent Assembly.

**The Election followed by ‘Direct Action’**

The election took place in July 1946 and the results went in favour of Congress with 209 seats out of 296 seats in the assembly. Jinnah was unhappy and the Muslim League under his instructions took the unwise decision of ‘Direct Action’ on 16th August 1946. The communal riots rocked the country, particularly Calcutta, Noakhali, Bihar, United Provinces and Bombay. The Country was under the threat of partition on the basis of communal disturbances. Due to the "Two Nation Theory" of Jinnah, he had already acquired the position of the leader amongst the Muslims.

Lord Wavell was eager to install a national government to tackle the post-war problems of India. The Congress was willing to join such a government but Jinnah was afraid of getting a back seat. He felt, there was no guarantee that the British were going to give him Pakistan in due course. He demanded that the Muslim League should have the exclusive right to nominate all the Muslim ministers of the proposed national government. The conference broke down on this point but another attempt was made by Wavell and he drafted a list of a national government himself which didn’t include any Congress Muslims but one
Unionist Muslim of the Punjab and other Muslims who were members of the Muslim League but this list was also rejected by Jinnah.

The Calcutta Review of June 1946, published Dr.Nareshchandra Roy's views on The Union Government Under the Cabinet Mission Proposals:

"The Cabinet Mission after considering population figures and other necessary and relevant facts declared itself unable to advise the British Government that the power which at present resides in British hands should be handed over to two entirely sovereign States. In other words it set its face against the demand for Pakistan made for the last six years by the Muslim League. (It has even recommended that "there should be a union of India, embracing both British India and the States")

The National Herald wrote Editorially "Constituent Assemblies have a way of developing character and devising a technique of their own. Our Constituent Assembly may gather round it such a force of popular opinion that it may react quite powerfully, if its will is thwarted. History furnishes the example of a mighty government tumbling at the first summoning of a States General. This Government is not stronger than that of the Bourbons." Nehru was in Lucknow, read the editorial in proof and approved it. It was on these lines that he later spoke at the Press Conference."

As per the report of The Times of India Bombay "The probable withdrawal of the Muslim League's acceptance of the British Cabinet Mission's plan for the future constitution of India was indicated today by a high League official, who declared it would be 'suicide' for the Muslims to participate in it as the situation now stands."
Wavell was anxious that an Interim Government should be set up as soon as possible. Such a government was finally formed by the Congress in September 1946 with Jawaharlal Nehru heading the Council of Ministers. In October, the Muslim League also joined the Cabinet but they decided not to participate in the Constitution making. The British Prime Minister, Clement Atlee, announced on 20th February 1947 that the British would transfer power to India latest by June 1948.17

There was a debate on the issue of India in both of British Parliaments. London Times reports – “An appeal on behalf of the British Cabinet Mission to the two major parties in India to put aside their keen Communal & party feelings and work together for the good of India was made by Lord Pethick Lawrence.

Mr. Churchill: “There was complete lack of agreement at the present time between the two principal communities. Between these two communities the gulf was never more wide than it was at present. Differences were never more acute. The deadlock was very grave.

It could not contemplate that British troops should be used to crush muslims in the interest of the caste Hindus. Whatever might be our responsibilities; whatever might be the day appointed for us to quit India, we must not make ourselves agents of a Caste Government or a particular sectional Government, in order to crush by armed force and modern weapons another community, which although not so numerous numbered 90,000,000. Lord Pethick Lawrence in House of Lords – while Congress has always stood for one United India, the claim of the Muslims have been for division of India into Hindustan and Pakistan. Therefore 1st task of the mission was not convince Indians of the sincerity of the British people in offering them independence within or without British
Commonwealth according to their choice; their second task was to bridge the apparently unbridgeable gap separating the rival views of the two great Indian parties. The first part is successful. 2nd part – Had direct personal contact, orally and by correspondence, with the most representative men and women in India, other sections and minorities. Their views profoundly influenced us in forming our opinion as to the best way to approach the problem."

The Congress wanted a single constitution making body while Muslim League wanted two separate Constitution making bodies -- one for Hindus and one for Pakistan.18 "Amidst unprecedented scenes of enthusiasm and wild cheering, the council of the All India Muslim League resolved to withdraw the acceptance of the British Cabinet Mission plan and to resort to direct action 'To achieve Pakistan' and to get rid of the present British slavery and the contemplated future caste Hindu domination."19 The League's decision was regretted in House of Commons. The news caused considerable gloom among members of all parties in the House of commons. Mr.Jinnah said "Direct Action intended for our self defence and in our own presentation."

Congress tried to bring Muslim League into confidence but Jinnah remained adamant to his decision. "Congress Working Committee make a direct appeal to Muslim League to reconsider its decision."20 The Times of India in its issue of 13.8.46 reports "H.E.Viceroy with the approval of His Majesty's Government has invited President of Congress for immediate formation of Interim Government. Congress to seek League co-operation by direct approach to Mr.Jinnah. Seats to be filled if offer is rejected."21 "Mr. Nehru writes to Mr.Jinnah seeking League
co-operation in formation of Interim Government."\textsuperscript{22} Sikhs decided to co-operate by entering Constituent Assembly and Cabinet. The Bombay Times reports – “Nehru – Jinnah talk yield no result. Coalition Cabinet now likely.”\textsuperscript{23}

“At a crucial moment when a peaceful settlement of India’s future was almost within sight, it was spoilt by some indiscreet utterances of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. In 1937 his outright rejection of Jinnah’s offer of Congress – League Coalition Ministry ruined the last chance of a Hindu Muslim agreement. His observations in 1946 destroyed the last chance – though a remote one – of a free united India.”\textsuperscript{24}

Jawaharlal Nehru after being elected President of the Congress took over the office in Bombay. He made a long speech in winding up the proceedings of the committee, explaining the position of the Congress vis-à-vis the Cabinet Mission Plan. He said that as far as he could see, it was not a question of the congress accepting any plan, long or short. It was merely a question of their agreeing to enter the Constituent Assembly and nothing more than that. They would remain in that Assembly so long as they thought it was for India’s good and they would come out when they thought it was injuring their cause. “We are not bound by a single thing except that we have decided for the moment to go to the Constituent Assembly.”\textsuperscript{25}

Later in a Press Conference also Nehru admitted that the Congress was bound by the procedure set down for election of members to the Constituent Assembly. He added “what we do there we are entirely and absolutely free to determine”. His observations on para 20 and 22 of the Cabinet Mission’s Plan are also crucial.

Para 20: “The Advisory Committee on the rights of Citizens, Minorities, Tribal and Excluded Areas will contain due representation of the interests affected and
their function will be to report to the Union Constituent Assembly upon the list of Fundamental Rights, clauses for protecting Minorities and a scheme for the administration of Tribal and Excluded areas and to advise whether these rights should be incorporated in the Provincial, Group or Union Constitution."

Para 22: "It will be necessary to negotiate a treaty between the Union Constituent Assembly and the United Kingdom to provide for certain matters arising out of the transfer of power."

Nehru made it clear that he did not like the interference of the British in the issue related to the minorities as it is an internal problem of India. "We accept no outsider's interference in it, certainly not the British Governments' interference and therefore these two limiting factors to the sovereignty of the Constituent Assembly are not accepted by us."26

Regarding groupings Nehru said that there will be no grouping of the provinces because some States and Group B and C will oppose it. His words created a genuine fear in the mind of Jinnah that Congress will not work in the proper manner even after accepting the Cabinet Mission Plan. Leonard Mosley an Englishman and intimate friend of Nehru said – "And on 10th July, after he (Nehru) had been elected President, he called the Press together for a conference to discuss his policy as the new head of Congress. It was a moment in history when circumspection should have been the order of the day. There was much to be gained by silence. The fortunes of India were in the balance and one false move could upset them. Nehru chose this moment to launch into what his biographer, Michael Brecher has described as "one of the most fiery and provocative statements in his forty years of public life." Did Nehru realize what he was saying? He was telling the world that once in power, the Congress would
use its strength at the centre to alter the Cabinet Mission Plan as it thought fit. But the Muslim League had accepted the plan as a cut and dried scheme to meet objections from both sides. It was a compromise plan which obviously could not afterwards be altered in favour of one side or another. In the circumstances, Nehru's remarks were a direct act of sabotage. Whether he meant them to be so, in the mistaken belief that Jinnah and the Muslim League were not really a force to be reckoned with or whether they were the ham-handed remarks of a politician who did not know when to keep his mouth shut will never be known. "

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad who had relinquished the Congress Presidentship in favour of Nehru said about the latter's Press Conference — "one of those unfortunate events which change the course of history." He also said "it was not correct to say (as Nehru did) that Congress was free to modify the (Cabinet Mission) Plan as it pleased."

As Nehru Jinnah talk yielded no result and Coalition Cabinet formation remained a distant dream, the situation worsened and tension prevailed everywhere. We get a clear picture from the unbiased daily reports published by the newspapers. "Over 90 killed and 900 injured in an unprecedented outbreak of violence which the observance by the Muslim League of 'Direct Action Day' in Calcutta." Two days later the estimate was "1000 died in Calcutta – 2000 injured." "City still strewn with dead bodies – Military and Police patrolling affected areas. Mr.H.S.Suhrawardy, the Chief Minister described the Calcutta Riots situation as much the same as it was in reply to an enquiry at 9.30 on Sunday night. While it is impossible in the present chaotic condition of the city to give a correct figure of the death roll, it would probably be no exaggeration to say that it must be over 2000."
Amrit Bazar Patrika of August 21 says – Strong Military Guard all over the city – streets still littered with stinking corpses – Increasing relief and peace activities.  

August 22nd issue of the same paper contained Nehru’s explanation to Jinnah - "Not to crush Anyone But to Win Him Over" – Nehru explains Congress policy in reply to Jinnah -

Pandit Nehru said in a Press statement – “I said nothing about crushing the Muslim League or any one else. Our policy has not been and will not be to threaten or crush anyone but rather to win him over if we can.” Jawaharlal Nehru was too late in making him understand anything. His earlier statements had come to Jinnah as a bombshell who opined that the Muslim League had accepted the plan as it was assured that the Congress had also accepted the scheme and that the plan would be the basis of the future constitution of India. Now that the Congress President had declared that the Congress could change the scheme through its majority in the Constituent Assembly, this would mean that the minorities were placed at the mercy of the majority. Jinnah argued that if Congress could change so many times while the British were still in the country and power had not come to its hands, what assurance could the minorities have that once the British left, Congress would not again change and go back to the position taken up in Jawaharlal's statement? The Direct Action taken up by the Muslim League Council, rejecting the Cabinet Mission Plan was due to the mistrust created by the wrong statements of Nehru. The resolution on the 'Direct Action' reads in part as follows: “whereas the Congress is bent upon setting up Caste Hindu Raj in India with the connivance of the British and whereas recent events have shown that power politics and not justice and fair play are the deciding factors in Indian affairs……now the time has come for the Muslim
Nation to resort to direct action to achieve Pakistan to assert their just rights, to vindicate their honour and to get rid of the present British slavery and the contemplated future Caste Hindu dominations."

16th August was a black day in the history of India and Calcutta was the worst sufferer. The Hindus were taken unawares, they were butchered ruthlessly, women were ravished, houses were plundered and burnt. This great killing and outrage were pre-planned and organised with the support of the Muslim League. It was even openly alleged that the Chief Minister Suhrawardy, shielded the worst ruffians in Calcutta and encouraged them to do their worst without any fear.

According to Abul Kalam Azad: "I found there (Dum Dum, Calcutta) a large military contingent waiting in trucks. When I asked why they were not helping to restore order, they replied that their orders were to stand ready but not to take any action. Throughout Calcutta, the Military and the Police were standing by, but remained inactive while innocent men and women were being killed."³³

Azad wrote – "This was one of the greatest tragedies of Indian history and I have to say with the deepest of regret that a large part of the responsibility for this development rests with Jawaharlal."³⁴

But Jinnah was also not innocent; he took advantage of Nehru's wrong remarks and availed the opportunity to separate himself. The dream of Pakistan was already there in his evil mind, which he tried to materialise at the cost of innocent lives. The Statesman wrote on the Calcutta riot of 16th August: "The latest estimate of dead is 3,000, who have lain thick about the streets. The injured number many thousands and it is impossible to say how many business houses and private dwellings have been destroyed. This is not a riot......For three days, the city concentrated on unrestrained civil war. Upon whom the main guilt for it
rests is manifest....where the primary blame lies is where we have squarely put it- upon the Provincial Muslim League Cabinet.....and particularly upon the Chief Minister.\textsuperscript{35}

**Preparation For Interim Government**

Not realising his folly or rather least bothered about its consequences Nehru negotiated with the Viceroy about the Interim Government. Greed for position, most probably had blinded him but what about the other great leaders, who could have prevented him? Mahabharata was repeated when like Dhritrashtra they all remained blind and allowed Nehru to carry on with his whimsical decisions!

The Interim Government was announced on 24th August, 1946 in the following communiqué:

"His Majesty the king has accepted the resignation of the present members of the Governor General's Executive Council. His Majesty has been pleased to appoint the following:-

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Dr.Rajendra Prasad, Mr.C.Rajagopalachari, Dr.John Mathai, Sir Shafaat Ahmad Khan, Mr.Jagjivanram, Sardar Vallabhai Patel, Mr.M.Asaf Ali, Mr.Sarat Chandra Bose, Sardar Baldev Singh, Syed Ali Zaheer and Cooverji Harmusji Bhabba.\textsuperscript{36} Two more Muslim members were to be appointed later.

"In a Broadcast from New Delhi His Excellency the Viceroy spoke to night of the formation of the Interim Government and made a special appeal to the Muslim League to reconsider their policy and join the Interim Government and enter the Constituent Assembly."\textsuperscript{37}
"The door of coalition is not closed," said the Viceroy and he gave all possible assurances to remove misgivings about the Congress tyranny but Jinnah refused to budge an inch.

Lord Wavell, the Viceroy visited Calcutta after the announcement of the Interim Government. He was shocked and afraid, the violence might be repeated and spread all over India. At that time Khwaja Nazimuddin, a prominent leader of the Muslim League in Bengal suggested that if the Congress would make an unequivocal statement that provinces could not opt out of groups except as laid down in the statement of 16th May, there was a chance that the Muslim League might join the Interim Government and the Constituent Assembly. After returning to Delhi, Wavell met Gandhi and Nehru and gave them an account of his visit to Calcutta. He told them that the only way to avoid such tragedies all over India was to set up coalition governments both in Bengal and at the centre. He handed over the draft of a formula to Gandhi and Nehru which he thought might satisfy the Muslim League. The following is the draft: "The Congress are prepared in the interests of communal harmony to accept the intention of the statement of May 16th that provinces can not exercise any option affecting their membership of the sections of the groups if formed, until the decision contemplated in paragraph 19(viii) of the statement of 16th May is taken by the new Legislature after the new constitutional arrangements have come into operation and the first general elections have been held."

Neither Gandhi nor Nehru was prepared to accept the formula. Mosley has given some details of the discussion:

Wavell: "Give me a simple guarantee that you accept the Cabinet Mission Plan."
“We have already said that we accept it, but we are not prepared to guarantee that we accept it in the way that the Cabinet Mission set it out. We have our own interpretations of what they propose.”

“Even if those interpretations differ from what the Cabinet Mission intended?”

“But of course. In any case, what the Cabinet Mission Plan really means is not what the Cabinet Mission thinks but what the Interim Government thinks it means.”

“It is a moment possibly the last we have to bring the League and the Congress together. And all I ask is a Guarantee (that no minorities in the groups should be allowed to opt out of them before the ten year period specified by the Cabinet Mission Plan).”

“To accept this is tantamount to asking Congress to put itself in fetter.”

“If so why did you accept it at all?”

“What the Cabinet Mission intended and the way we interpret what they intended may not necessarily be the same.”

The Home Government also did not agree with the Viceroy and instructed him, not to take any steps which was likely to result in a breach with the Congress and to form the Interim Government with the personnel already announced. So, the Interim Government was sworn in on 2nd September. One of the Ministers Sir Shafat Ahmed Khan was attacked on the eve of the assumption of office by the new Government. The Amrit Bazar reported – “Sir Shafat Ahmed Khan stabbed – Dastardly Attack on Interim Government Member – Seven Wounds Inflicted – Condition Improving and Reported to be out of Danger.”
The same paper reported in the same issue—"Jinnah Calls Viceroy's Statement Misleading – Text of Confidential Correspondence Released.

The Times of India reported—"Mr. Jinnah's reply to Viceroy (Lord Wavell) Translated appeal into concrete proposal by his deeds and action. Mr. Jinnah reiterates that the only solution of India's problem is a division of India into Pakistan and Hindustan which would mean real freedom for two major nations and every possible safeguard for the minorities in the respective states. The same paper from Poona reported—'Direct Action' condemned by League, Fear of Bloodshed – Calcutta riots eye-opener."

Amrit Bazar Patrika captured Jinnah's remarks on Wavell's Broadcast—"Jinnah on Wavell's Broadcast — "It has struck a Severe Blow to the Muslim League."

Unrest and violence continued all over the country particularly Calcutta. "600 murdered in Metiabruz – Harrowing Tales of Lord and Carnage 7 Temples Destroyed." Bitter scenes were reflected by the newspapers—"The Calcutta Police were deliberately deluded "by some members of the Muslim League Ministry" into believing there would be no trouble in Calcutta on August 16 – such is the charge made by Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose, Member designate of the Interim Govt. in an exclusive interview with the United Press of America in Calcutta on Thursday afternoon."

Amidst these disturbances, the Editor of Amrit Bazar Patrika attended a Conference in London. The September 1, 1946 issue of Amrit Bazar Patrika, Calcutta featured his experience: Mr. T.K. Ghosh back Home – Happy End of Mission – Black Out of Indian News in British Press Deplored. Mr. Tushar Kanti Ghosh, President of the All India Newspaper Editors' Conference who attended the Empire Press Union Conference session in London returned to Bombay
yesterday and left for Allahabad. In an interview Mr. T.K. Ghosh said that the Empire Press Union Conference session was a great success. Discussions among the delegates from the different countries were frank and the interchanges of ideas was very helpful. The outstanding features of the Conference were the unanimosity carried resolutions on the freedom of the Press, facilities of news communication, inland and between different countries and a suitable allotment of newsprint. "In Britain" said Mr. Tushar Kanti Ghosh, he was struck by the ignorance of the general public regarding India and her affairs. It was in the opinion of Mr. Ghosh, due to the lack of enterprise on the part of the British Press in feeding the public with the Indian news. Lack of space could be understood but the sort of blackout of Indian news which prevailed in the British Press could not be justified."43

Amrit Bazar Patrika played a leading role in Calcutta and in the country as a whole in inspiring people to carry on with their struggle for the achievement of freedom. The paper went into each and every details of the every day happenings:

"Jinnah accuses Viceroy of Betrayal – Frantic Call to Muslims For Unity To Achieve Pakistan."44 Next days paper reported – Black Day’ after Blood Bath. Liaquatali’s Incitement to Muslims For September 2. September 4 issue wrote “Imposing Flag Display In Calcutta – Celebration on Assumption of Office By Congress and September 9 issue published – “Nehru Just a Pawn in Interim Government. Suhrwardy’s Charges – plea for Acceptance of League’s Demands – Mr. H.S. Suhrwardy told the United Press of America today that he believed Muslim League would be willing to enter the Interim Government on a parity basis provided no non-League Muslim is included and with the assurance
that all major communal issues would be decided by a majority vote of both parties.\textsuperscript{45} The September 11 issue reported: "Mr. Suhrawardy Appeals to Pandit Nehru – Congress Co-operation with League Urged – Pleads for terms of Equality."\textsuperscript{46} The involvement of the Press was not liked by the British and as earlier they didn’t hesitate to suppress its voice. "Why This Softness For Goondas? Sj. Roy Condemns Police Attitude. Government urged to take drastic action – Premier Threatens Measures Against Press – Press Warned –

Mr. Suhrawardy: I agree that editorials that incite the section against another will be seriously taken notice of and I hope that these remarks which have come from the opposition are in support of the Government. I warn you that we are going to take steps, we are going to prosecute, we will ask securities and we shall suspend newspapers. As incidents have got to stop I ask and I demand your support in this behalf."\textsuperscript{47}

The paper also said – "The leading Liberal 'Manchester Guardians' warns Britain that if she wants India's friendship it will have to be earned. "We shall have to work hard to win it and to induce her to forget the past, "it declared."\textsuperscript{48} The Statesman reported "League likely to join Interim Cabinet as well as Constituent Assembly."\textsuperscript{49} The same paper reported in its issue of 27\textsuperscript{th} – "Viceroy in role of mediator – paving way for direct Congress – League talks. London hails Viceroy's Move."\textsuperscript{50} Wavell was of the opinion that without both, the Congress and the League being brought within the Interim Government no progress could be achieved in the solution of the problem. He visited Calcutta after the Great Calcutta Killings with the hope of bringing the League within the Government. Unrest and violence continued to spread in many other parts of India. The position of the League in the provinces at that moment was that only Sind had a
purely Muslim League Ministry. That was possible due to the blind partiality of the Governor to the League. In Punjab it was still a Unionist Party Ministry under Hayat Khan. In Bengal, Suhrawardy had to depend on Europeans and some Hindu members for securing the majority for his Ministry. In N.W.F.Province and in Assam, Congress Ministry had the majority behind them. Wavell discussed desperately with both — Gandhi and Nehru on one side and Jinnah on the other side. On October 2, Jinnah met Wavell who informed him of his failure to make the Congress agree to the proposal of abandoning its right to nominate a Nationalist Muslim. Jinnah on that day did not press this point but said that he would have to carry the Muslim League Working Committee with him for which he wanted certain other matters to be conceded. He proposed to send the Viceroy a Note setting out the points on which he required elucidation.\textsuperscript{51} The nine points mentioned in the notes of Jinnah were — (1) The Interim Government should consist of 14 members. (2) Six of the Congress would include one Scheduled Caste member but the League not being a consenting party to the selection the Viceroy should take the ultimate responsibility for the selection. (3) In the remaining 5, there must not be a Muslim of the choice of the Congress. (4) A convention to be created that on major communal issues, the majority of Congress and/or League members would have to be secured. (5) Rotational Vice Presidentship between Congress and League. (6) Three minority representatives are to be selected by the Congress but without any commitment of the League to the selection and also in case of any vacancy due to death or registration the selection of the new representatives should have the concurrence of both the Congress and the League (7) The most important portfolios should be equally distributed between the two. (8) This arrangement was not to be
changed without the consent of both parties. (9) Any long-term plan should stand over until a better and more conducive atmosphere is created. Wavell consulted Nehru on this Note and he presented his decision to Jinnah later. (1) agreed (2) Noted by the Viceroy; ultimate responsibility would be his. (3) Unable to agree. Each party to have complete freedom to select its own nominees. (4) It would be fatal to allow major communal issues to be decided by vote. (5) Rotation of Vice Presidentship not workable. But in case of the absence of the Viceroy and of the Vice-Presidency, a Muslim League member might be allowed to preside. Further, the Viceroy undertook to nominate a League Member as Vice – Chairman of the Coordination Committee of the Cabinet who might be allowed to preside in the absence of the Vice Chairman. (6) Both parties would be consulted in filling up vacancies of the three minority seats. (7) Jagjivan Ram to continue with his Labour Portfolio, being accepted both. There would be equal distribution of the most important portfolios. Details are a matter for negotiations. (8) Agreed (9) Basis for participation in the cabinet is the acceptance of the Statement of May 16. I assume that the League council will meet on a very early date to reconsider its Bombay resolution which had rejected the May 16 offer. Much discussions followed and ultimately Jinnah agreed that the League would join the Government. The Times of India, Delhi reported “All India Muslim League is understood to have decided to join the Interim Government” – Letter sent to Viceroy.52

The 15th October issue informed the readers – “Reformation of Interim Cabinet. Mr.Jinnah asked to submit five names.53 On 16th the paper published the names nominated by Jinnah: Liaquat Ali Khan (U.P.), I.I.Chundrigar (Bombay), Abdul Rauf Nistar (N.W.F.P.), Gazanfar Ali Khan (U.P.) and Jogendra Nath Mandal
The headlines were thus: India's New Coalition Government. Five Seats Allotted To Muslim League. Another S.C.Member Nominated. Mr.Sarat Bose, Shri S.A.Khan and Syed Ali Zahem resign. Although on 15th October, a press communiqué was issued to the effect that these five Muslim League members had been appointed as nominee of the League in the Interim Government, Jinnah continued to delay in calling the League Council to rescind the July 29 resolution and in the meantime the League did not stop its campaign for Direct Action in the form of non-payment of taxes, defiance of law and order, economic boycott of Hindus, organisation of Muslim National Volunteers etc. Communal bitterness continued to be there in the air.

The first action of the League leaders after entering the Government was the Noakhali Communal strife – deliberately organised to terrorise the Hindus in an area where they were in a minority of about 25 percent against 75 percent Muslims. In a Press Conference, Liaquat Ali said that the League was entering into the Government "in the interest of the Muslims and the people of this sub-continent." He said India was not a nation and "under the present government of India Act, there is no such thing as collective or joint responsibility." Jinnah made it very clear that their purpose in joining the Government was to see that Government should not be allowed to do anything administratively or by convention which would in any way prejudice or militate against the problem of future Constitution. The League members of the Interim Government were sentinels to watch Muslim interest. Division alone will give both Hindus and Muslims freedom in the shortest possible time. India's civil strife will continue until absolute Pakistan is achieved." He also said: "Exchange of population will have to be considered as far as possible. There is no such thing as Indian. The
Interim Government had no right to interfere in provincial matters even in case of
riots and civil fighting." The Muslim League claimed that "with the entry of
Muslim League representatives into the Interim Government the establishment of
Pakistan was bound to be a dominant issue in any political settlement concerning
India."

The Cabinet Mission Plan was 'a monstrous edifice built on sagging
foundations.' It provided for a weak Central Government which was a cross
between a federation and a confederation. The grouping of the provinces was
unjust and arbitrary, mainly because of geographical contiguity. The clubbing of
Assam with Bengal was wrong; similarly that with Punjab and NWFP was wrong.

None of the parties were satisfied by the Cabinet Mission Plan and it became
unworkable in the atmosphere of distrust and hatred which was observed all over
the country in 1946. The complicated procedure of the plan was also defective.

The members of the Cabinet Mission merely tried to balance the opposing
forces while trying to find a constitutional settlement. The three-tier Scheme
(Centre, Groups, Provinces) had the impressive appearance of a serious attempt
to come to grips with the Indian problem, but in the circumstances of a struggle
for power, it was impracticable and inopportune. It would have certainly resulted
into frequent clashes between the centre, the Groups and the Provinces and
between the Congress and the League making the task of administration almost
impossible. The members of the Mission did not think clearly of the ultimate
consequences of such provisions. They are anxious to placate the Congress
and the League and therefore their recommendations brought Pakistan into
existence through the back-door by the Group scheme and at the same time they
would have maintained a façade of a united India.
Jawaharlal Nehru and the Cabinet Mission

Nehru had recognised that there were certain positive aspects of the Cabinet Mission scheme despite the shortcoming which any plan of constitutional advance was bound to have in the surcharged atmosphere of 1946. His priority was to the formation of a Constituent Assembly and the scheme had provided for such a body to be constituted on the democratic principle of population strength. Nehru particularly approved the provision for democratic method of decision by simple majority in the case of communal problems, though he was not opposed to safeguard for minorities. Particularly gratifying to him was the provision for an Indian Union of the Provinces and the States and the rejection of the Pakistan idea completely. He viewed the anomalies in the scheme as a product of the desire of the members of the Cabinet Mission to save Indian unity at any cost. Nehru always stressed the importance of the right of the Indians to decide their own destiny.\(^5\)

While Nehru accepted the proposal to protect the rights of the Muslim minority, he condemned the lack of such protection to other minorities such as the Sikhs, in the scheme. He took exception to this unequal treatment of communities. He regretted that the provision in the scheme pertaining to grouping of the provinces was ambiguous and led to diverse interpretations. The Muslims regarded the compulsory grouping of the provinces as one of the fundamental proposals of the Cabinet Mission and were not prepared to compromise on this issue.\(^5\) He disliked the compulsory grouping of six Muslim provinces. He did not appreciate fully the British desire to accept a constitution agreed to by the principal political parties in India and its unwillingness to impose one. The British view was realistic and rational in the sense that having been imposed a constitution they
would have had to remain in India in order to implement the same. But they had decided to withdraw from India as soon as possible as they had extracted everything from India and there was nothing left. Hence they shifted the responsibility of working out a constitution for independent India entirely on the Indians.

Though the Congress had accepted the plan, Nehru was unhappy over some of the recommendations and made some undiplomatic statements in a Press Conference on 10th July 1946 which created a permanent enmity between Congress and Muslim League and on the whole between Hindus and Muslims: Jinnah no doubt was a cunning, crafty, greedy man who got the opportunity to oppose the Congress directly and justify his demand for Pakistan. Many historians believe that if the congress and its leaders like Nehru had exhibited greater humility and a little less certainty of righteousness, probably its ideal of an India of united communities could have been saved.

Although the Muslim League demanded an independent Pakistan but the leaders were still in a dilemma what to do. That's why initially they accepted the Cabinet Mission plan and then participated in the Interim Government. Even when they gave a call for 'direct action' they carried on with their experimentation with constitutionalism and a confederal India.

The policy of the British Government was contradictory and indecisive because of which it lost control over events. Lord Wavell ended up losing the trust and confidence of both Congress as well as Muslim League. At this moment, the Press became eloquent.

The National Herald reported of – Postal Service Dislocated – Strike in many parts of the country. Hindustan Times reported – "Muslim League to Reject
the Cabinet Mission Plan. Probable withdrawal of the Muslim League's acceptance of the British Cabinet Mission Plan for the future constitution of India was indicated on Wednesday by Nawabzada – Liaquat Ali Khan, General Secretary of the Muslim League, who declared that it would be "suicide" for the Muslims to participate as the situation now stands. . . . . .60.

A report on the situation arising out of the postal strike appeared in the National Herald of 23rd July 1946 – "Tele-Communications in Bombay have been virtually paralysed at standstill since Sunday midnight when over 1,650 telegraphists, clerks and other operating staff working in the Central Telegraph Office struck work.

Hindustan Times reported – "Nearly 300,000 men working in the various textile mills and factories in Bombay observed general strike today in sympathy with the striking postmen. In the Presidency proper, the total number of men idle will be about half a million. 61

The National Herald reflected – Support Nehru's Resolution – Pakistan not to be Tolerated – Ambedkar Hopes for United India. 62

The Lucknow edition of "The Pioneer" reported about the decision of the newspapers – "Calcutta papers to suspend publication on protest against order of Bengal Government publication of news relating to communal riots in Bengal." 63

The Calcutta edition, next day wrote – "20 Calcutta papers cease publication. 64 'The Pioneer' on 16th November highlighted Jinnah's doubt: Jinnah Doubts Success Of Present Arrangement: "League in Interim Cabinet are just 'sentinels.' We shall certainly resist any attempt which directly or indirectly prejudices or militates against our demand of Pakistan." 65
The Meerut issue of the same paper depicted Nehru's reaction: Nehru threatens Big Struggle: Highly strained relation at the Centre: Limit of Patience Reached: "League or no league we shall go ahead with Constituent Assembly."  

The same issue also focussed on Jinnah's reactions: “Jinnah’s men forming ‘King’s Party’ inside Govt – Viceroy in confusion. Jinnah – “No representatives of Muslim League will participate in the Constituent Assembly.”

Bose and Vithalbhai Patel jointly said "We are clearly of the opinion that as a political leader Gandhiji has failed. “This was reported by the newspapers. Jinnah’s panacea for rioting, suggested exchange of population, breakdown of India discussed in London, Congress – League difference on fundamentals, abandoning of Round Table Conference – everything was reported and analytically discussed by media. Gandhi’s warning against Council bickerings, his fear of India passing to UNO after the quit of the British was also discussed. The Press reported – “Goodbye to freedom if things come to such a pass.”  

The ‘Morning News’ reported : League May Frame Separate Constitution : Congress is like a Lawyer with a Bad Case – says Qaiyum Khan.

Hyderabad, December 30 – “The view that if the Congress High Command do not accept the British Cabinet interpretation of the statement of 16th May as regards Grouping, the Muslim League would be forced to keep out of the Constituent Assembly and achieve Pakistan “even by force if necessary,” was expressed by Khan Abdul Qaiyum Khan, Frontier League leader in the interview today.”

From the same paper we come to know that Muslim women were urged to join National Guard. Mrs.Roquia Anwar, Chief Lady Organiser of Muslim National Guard, Bengal issued a statement which was published in the newspaper –
"Today the necessity of preparing our womenfolk to defend the honour and prestige of the Muslim Nation against any aggression is only too realistic."

Impossibility of Hindu – Muslim Unity was indicated by the newspapers. The papers felt that the everyday happenings proved the impossibility of unity. The Muslims declared that the Congress and the Hindus should know that the Muslims had awakened and were prepared to make every sacrifice for the achievement of Pakistan.

The papers also hinted at Britain's responsibility in India's future. In an article in “Spectator”, Mr. Godfrey Nicholson, Conservative Member of Parliament for Farnham (Surrey) wrote: "Briton's have got to make up their minds as to what they would do if the Constituent Assembly produced no results at all or produced a constitution which Britain's obligations to the minorities forced them to reject."

'Morning News' of January 4 reported: "No Nation In World Has Done Greater Harm Than British."  

The newspapers unanimously said that the British were playing with one section of the Muslims. Shri Jagjivan Ram in a meeting said that the evil intention of the British behind this will never be successful. He hoped that "the British would part with power in all goodness. If not, another freedom movement would be started on a larger scale which the British had not witnessed before and would be compelled to leave the country."  

Jawaharlal Nehru declared in the A.I.C.C. that the Congress was not going to commit itself to any reference to the federal Court or to any authority. He made this declaration in answer to a question raised by a delegate with regard to the paragraph in the Statement of December 6 saying that the Congress had agreed to refer matters of interpretation to the Federal Court. "The questions asked
whether this was not a misstatement and whether acceptance of the Statement of December 6 would not be acceptance of this misstatement. The following is the statement of Sir S.Radhakrishnan under the Headlines in Morning Glory: “The British Connection will End: Must End.”

“There were people who held that within the Cabinet Mission’s plan it would not be possible for us to achieve real unity or true freedom or economic security. They argued as a matter of history that revolutionary changes in other countries had been brought about through violent action and asked how we could effect those changes through negotiations and discussions in a Constituent Assembly.”

From the day to day news coverage in various English newspapers it is clear why the Cabinet Mission failed. A separate sovereign Pakistan was the unalterable objective of the Muslims in India. The Congress and the Muslim League had accepted the long term plan but their acceptances had been conditioned by their own interpretations of all the controversial issues. The genuine expectations that the cabinet Mission, in consultation with the Indian leaders would find some satisfactory solution fizzled out into the thin air, straining the Hindu-Muslim unity forever.
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